

**THE INFLUENCE OF ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE ON
CUSTOMER ISSUE RESOLUTION: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL
STUDY ON SUVARNABHUMI AIRPORT IN THAILAND**

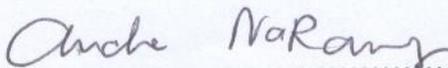
Akaparp Borisuth

**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy (Development Administration)
School of Public Administration
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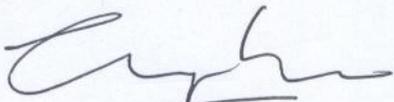
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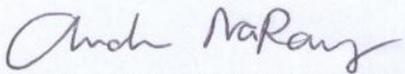
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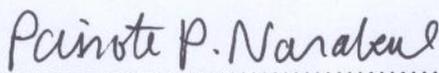
Professor..........Major Advisor
(Anchana Na Ranong, Ph.D.)

The Examining Committee Approved This Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Development Administration).

Assistant Professor..........Committee Chairperson
(Thanapan Laiprakobsup, Ph.D.)

Professor..........Committee
(Anchana Na Ranong, Ph.D.)

Assistant Professor..........Committee
(Chandra-nuj Mahakanjana, Ph.D.)

Assistant Professor..........Dean
(Pairote Pathranarakul, Ph.D.)

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ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation	The Influence of Organisational Structure on Customer Issue Resolution: A Phenomenological Study on Suvarnabhumi Airport in Thailand
Author	Mr. Akaparp Borisuth
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The purpose of the current study was to explore and describe the lived experiences of division directors (DDs) of Suvarnabhumi Airport in Thailand in resolving customer issues. More specifically, it aimed to understand the influence of organisational structure on customer issue resolution. This study employed qualitative methods and phenomenological explication to understand the central phenomenon. In this study, the researcher used purposive samples comprising of nineteen participants. All participants were currently directorial employees whose titles rested at implementation level at Suvarnabhumi Airport. Participants were deliberately selected from the relevant departments to demonstrate the extent to which they provided a certain level of services or support to resolve customer issues. By employing a modified van Kaam method by Moustakas (1994) with structured interviews and interview protocol, in association with field note taking and observation techniques, the researcher obtained the intended data. Five core themes emerged during the analysis and interpretation of the data. The first core theme revealed that understanding and awareness of “customer’s expectation” could bring about customer’s satisfaction. The second core theme delineated that “decent structure” of the organisation considerably promoted greater issue resolution. The third core theme suggested that “leadership” played its part by acting as either catalyst or inhibitor through various factors affecting issue resolution to a certain extent. The fourth core theme illustrated that effective “human resource management” contributed to better

issue resolution. Lastly, the fifth core theme disclosed a surprise finding in that “merit system and patronage system” interestingly affected issue resolution.

Results of the current study appeared to support the purpose of the study. By that, the lived experiences of nineteen DDs in resolving customer issues were explored and described thoroughly. More specifically, theme two which emerged from the current study indicated that decent structure could bring about the improvement of customer issue resolution. This result implied that organisational structure influenced customer issue resolution. For a deeper understanding of the result of the study in relation to its purpose, the researcher applied Structural Contingency Theory. By this, it elucidated that the airport as an organisation would inevitably change its internal structure to fit its dynamic environment in order to survive, even more so to become more competitive. The presupposition of Structural Contingency Theory helped make the result of this study become more insightful and comprehensible when it revealed theme two (decent structure) that found influencing airport customer issue resolution.

Intriguingly, amongst four out of five emergent themes including theme two (decent structure), theme three (leadership), theme four (human resource management), and theme five (merit system and patronage system), there seemed to be an implicit interrelationship whenever customer issue resolution was addressed. In particular, theme five (merit system and patronage system) was seen as a surprise finding since, in previously similar studies, this theme never emerged. Moreover, neither merit system nor patronage system had been attended to in previously similar studies.

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I would never have been able to accomplish my dissertation without the guidance of my committee members, helps from friends, and support from my family.

I would first like to express my sincere gratitude to my advisor Prof. Anchana Na Ranong for continuous support of my dissertation, for her patience, motivation, and immense knowledges. Her guidance helped me in all time of research and writing of this dissertation. I could not have imagined having a better advisor and mentor for my Ph.D study.

Besides my advisor, I would also like to thank the rest of my dissertation committee: Assistant Prof. Thanapan Laiprakobsup as the Committee Chairperson, and Assistant Professor Chandra-nuj Mahakanjana as the Committee member, for their insightful comments and encouragement, in particular, for the hard questions which enlightened me to widen my research from various perspectives.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	ix
LIST OF FIGURES	x
CHAPTER 1 BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Statement of the Problem	10
1.2 Significance of the Study	11
1.3 Purpose of the Study	15
1.4 Research Question	16
1.5 Scope of the Study	17
1.6 Limitation of the Study	18
1.7 Definition of Key Terms	19
1.8 Benefit of the Study	21
1.9 Organisation of the Study	22
CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	23
2.1 Browsing and Documentation	23
2.2 Overview of Organisational Theories	25
2.3 Organisational Structure	28
2.4 Organisation Performance and Effectiveness	33
2.5 Importance of the Leadership – Performance Relationship	35
2.6 Relationship between Leadership Styles and Organisational Structure	39
2.7 Customer Issue Resolution	41
2.8 Summary	45

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	48
3.1 Research Design	49
3.2 Appropriateness of Qualitative Method to the Current Study	51
3.3 Instrumentation	52
3.4 Data Collection	56
3.5 Pilot Test Results	57
3.6 Data Collection Process	58
3.7 Validity	61
3.8 Triangulation of the Findings	63
3.9 Reliability	63
3.10 Data Analysis	64
CHAPTER 4 RESULTS	67
4.1 Demographic Findings	68
4.2 Data Analysis Process	71
4.3 Interview Findings	72
4.4 Validity and Reliability of Interview Findings	95
4.5 Summary	96
CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSIONS	98
5.1 Emergent Themes and Discussions	99
5.1.1 Theme 1 Customer's Expectation	102
5.1.2 Theme 2 Decent Structure	103
5.1.3 Theme 3 Leadership	106
5.1.4 Theme 4 Human Resource Management	107
5.1.5 Theme 5 Merit System and Patronage System	108
5.2 Limitation of the Study	118
5.3 Contribution of the Study	118
5.4 Suggestion for Future Study	121
5.5 Summary	122
CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSIONS	124

BIBLIOGRAPHY	128
APPENDICES	145
Appendix A Informed Consent for Participants	146
Appendix B Request for Participation	147
Appendix C Transcriber (Traslater) Confidentiality Agreement	148
Appendix D Pilot Test Interview Questions	149
Appendix E Interview Script/Protocol	150
Appendix F Final Interview Questions	151
BIOGRAPHY	152

LIST OF TABLES

Tables	Page
1.1 Issues and Complaints Reported during the First Half of the Year 2012	4
1.2 World Ranking of Suvarnabhumi Airport from 2007 to 2014	6
1.3 Previous Research Studies within Airport Context and Their Focal Areas	14
2.1 Correlation between Leadership Style, Structure, and Strength of Leadership	41
2.2 Summary of Historical Studies in Relation to the Current Study	43
4.1 Examples of Horizontalized Relevant Statements	73
4.2 Examples of Textural Themes and Relevant Statements	75
4.3 Themes (Bold Major Subjects) and Its Invariant Constituents	76
4.4 The Invariant Constituents and the Participants to Whose Expressions were Relevant	80
4.5 Issue Type Associated to Internal Function	83
4.6 Customer Concerns	84
4.7 Forms of Resolution	85
4.8 Internal Functions	86
4.9 Factors Affected Issue Resolution	87
4.10 Perception to Current Structure	90
4.11 Recommended Structure	93

LIST OF FIGURES

Figures	Page
1.1 Organisational Structure of Munich Airport	7
1.2 Organisational Structure of Incheon Airport	7
1.3 Organisational Structure of Changi Airport	8
1.4 Organisational Structure of Haneda Airport	8
1.5 Organisational Structure of Suvarnabhumi Airport	9
1.6 Thailand's Transport Infrastructure Development Strategies during 2015-2022	12
2.1 Map of Literature Review	25
3.1 Preparation Steps Prior to Conducting an Interview	57
4.1 Age Range of the DDs	69
4.2 Years of Experiences as DD	69
4.3 Educational Levels of the DDs	70
4.4 Genders of the DDs	70
4.5 Factors Affecting Customer Issue Resolution	90
5.1 Analysis Process Revealed Five Core themes	101
5.2 Five Core themes Emerged	112

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

It makes much of the fact that the Thai economy has long depended on two major sectors, which are Export and Tourism. According to UN Trade in 2012, exports generated income to Thailand at 229.5 billion USD, equivalent to 2/3 of GDP, whilst Tourism produced 29.1 billion USD, accounting for 6% of GDP. These days air transport contributes a lot more to these two sectors owing to its advantages in the light of speed and conveniences. By this, airports, as a key component of air transport modes, is seen as a major channel that considerably promotes those two economically crucial sectors. The incessant influence of globalisation these days makes air transport become more and more dominant because of the non-boundary scheme. As a result of globalization, the demands of airport customers became more complicated. Those customers include air passengers, airline operators, concessionaires, tenants, meeters and greeters, local residents, shippers, and exporters, not to mention new streams of aviation business models such as Low Cost Carriers (LCC), Strategic Alliance of air carriers and so forth. As a result, not only the number of passengers, but also cargo is constantly on the rise. Complex environment as such make it more difficult for airport managers to make decision. (Janney & Dess, 2004, p. 60).

In the past, transport could considerably help better develop people's lives by bringing necessary resources from one area to others and vice versa. By this, the area of origin and destination, including the route in between, became more and more significant. The more routes, the more distributions of development. This development could be possible providing that accessibility for transport must be available. Previously, transport depended very much on land and sea modes. Some remote areas such as backyards or the wilderness, however, was too far fetched since accessibility was insurmountable. Air transport played a strikingly different role by making it possible to reach the area where sea and land transport could not. Some countries even regarded airports as the main streets of the country owing to its

advantages to provide access to and from any place without limitation. By that, airports became more necessary as time went by.

The pivotal years of air transport in Thailand began through the development of aviation during the reign of King Rama 6 when the first aircraft appeared in a public flying display from Saigon to Thailand from 31 January to 6 February 1910. By a royal initiative, Thailand purchased the first aircraft for the study and for military purposes. The Ministry of Defence later purchased more aircraft for the sake of national security. By then, it brought about the needs for airports to accommodate an increasing number of aircraft. In 1917, the area in front of the Royal Bangkok Sports Club, however, was chosen to be used as the airport “Saprathum Airport”. Interestingly, it became the very first airport in Thailand. During its first decade, aviation in Thailand played its part solely in military strategies. After World War I, there were an increasing number of aircraft purchased, both by the Ministry of Defence and by abundant donations from indigenous people of many provinces. All aircraft were used throughout the country, making provinces where donations came from become airports of their own. At the end of World War I, the Ministry of Defence came to realize that aviation could also be beneficial to the nation in other areas including commerce and air transport. Consequently, in 1921, the Ministry of Defence then started operating a postal airline to help support postal services in remote areas where ground transport was too inconvenient such as the North East. Later, aircraft were further used for transporting other civil services provisions including medical supplies and nurses to tackle epidemics in rural areas and for airlifting patients. In 1933, the government administration made significant progress to separate military aviation from civil aviation by imposing a Royal Decree particularly for this regard. Ever since, the later government continuously developed civil air transport alongside its related policy. As a result, commercial aviation brought about relevant bodies in the form of state enterprises to operate and own all civil airports throughout the country. One of those was the Airport Authority of Thailand which was later privatised by going public and turned into the Airport of Thailand. The heyday of the airport was revitalised with the influence of a strong stream of globalisation ever since. (Department of Civil Aviation, 2013) In general, there were four categories of airports in terms of ownership and usages (Young &

Wells, 2011). The first category was the airport that was both privately owned and privately used such as a private airport or a personal airport. The second category was the airport that was privately owned but publicly used, for example Samui Airport and Suvarnabhumi Airport. The third category was the airport that was publicly owned and privately used, most of which were military airports for instance. The last category were those airports that were both publicly owned and used such as the airports that belong to the Department of Civil Aviation of Thailand.

In Thailand, it was widely known that airports under the administration of Airport of Thailand plc. (AOT) were regarded as the most crucial ones since all of them were positioned by the Thai government as regional gateways of Thailand according to their capacities and locations throughout the country. By that, there were six regional airports administrated by AOT. Chiang Mai Airport and Mae Fah Luang Chiang Rai Airport are in the Far North. Phuket Airport and Hatyai Airport are located in the Deep South. The last two in the central part of Thailand are Suvarnabhumi Airport and Don Muang Airport.

Amongst those airports of AOT, the governments designated Suvarnabhumi Airport as the Primary Commercial Airport of Thailand since its inaugural opening on 28th September 2006. Initially, the design of this airport aimed to accommodate a maximum of 45 million passengers a year on its first phase and 60 million a year on its second phase. The latter was scheduled to commence after 5 years from the very first opening. Unfortunately, the second phase was too stagnant, whereas the number of passengers has kept growing too quickly and has currently reached near 53 million per year. Attached to such growing number of passengers were increasing demands and their diversities that became more challenging to the airport. It is worth noting that to operate the airports successfully, airport employees need to resolve its customer issues effectively to guarantees its customer satisfaction.

There have been abundant studies on organisations and their performance including effectiveness or the like. Most studies paid large attentions to the relationships between either organisational performance or effectiveness and various components of the organisation such as structure, strategy, technology, culture, humanity, power or authority within the organisation. Evidently, organisational structure appeared to be one of the most dominant aspects amidst a great deal of

studies conducted by many scholars. The focal point of the current study, however, is organisational structure in relation to its effectiveness in terms of customer issue resolution.

In the light of privatisation on 30th September 2002, AOT administrators made long attempt to modernise various components of the airport ever since. Astonishingly, organisational structure barely received attention to such an extent that the rigid and hierarchical structure of Suvarnabhumi Airport persists up until now. Over the course of the past decade, dissatisfaction of the airport customers has been incessant, most of which has been owed to the ineffectiveness of the airport's customer issue resolution. Table 1 illustrates an example of a series of issues and complaints from airport customers emerging during the first half of 2012 at Suvarnabhumi Airport.

Table 1.1 Issues and Complaints Reported during the First Half of the Year 2012

Type of Issue/Complaint	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	Total
Facilities	37	28	23	30	16	29	163
Performances of SA officer/Staff under SA supervision	19	41	35	28	36	12	171
Discourteous manager of SA officer/Staff under SA supervision	24	17	37	23	15	19	135
Baggage lost/pilferage	15	3	4	5	4	0	31
Cleanliness	3	1	2	3	5	4	18
Unfavorable temperature in main terminal building	3	1	2	4	3	4	17
Safety issues	1	5	1	4	1	1	13
Price appropriateness	1	1	2	3	3	2	12
Noise pollution	2	1	1	1	1	0	6
Hawk/quack	1	0	0	1	1	0	3
Traffic	1	0	1	0	1	0	3
Ground transportation	0	1	1	1	0	0	3

Source: Airport of Thailand, 2012.

More importantly, one of the evidences that has globally demonstrated the effectiveness of Suvarnabhumi Airport was its ranking in the world arena. By this, there were several parties which held surveys and contests. One of those widely received the most attention was orchestrated by the Airports Council International (ACI). This very body has nearly 257 airport members around the world. ACI established the programme called Airport Service Quality (ASQ) that seeks excellent airports in terms of service quality. Since 2007, Suvarnabhumi Airport had been participating in this programme. To score and rank airports annually, ASQ browsed for excellent airports by addressing several areas known as key performance indicators that demonstrated the results of how effective certain airports could be. Those indicators were categorised into eight groups that included

- 1) Access (Ground transportation/Parking facilities/Value for money of parking facilities/Availability of baggage carts/trolleys),
- 2) Check-in (Waiting time in check-in queue /Efficiency of check-in staff/Courtesy and helpfulness of check-in staff),
- 3) Passport/Personal ID Control (Waiting time at passport/Personal ID Inspection/Courtesy and helpfulness of inspection staff),
- 4) Security (Courtesy and helpfulness of security staff/Thoroughness of security inspection/Waiting time at security inspection/Feeling of being safe and secure),
- 5) Finding your way (Ease of finding your way through airport/Flight information screens/Walking distance inside the terminal/Ease of making connections with other flights),
- 6) Airport Facilities (Courtesy and helpfulness of airport staff/Restaurant/Eating facilities/Value for money of restaurant/Eating facilities Availability of bank/ATM facilities/moneychangers/Shopping facilities/Value for money of shopping facilities/Internet access, Wi-Fi/Business, Executive lounges/Availability of washrooms, toilets/Cleanliness of washrooms, toilets/Comfort of waiting/Gate area),
- 7) Airport Environment (Cleanliness of airport terminal/Ambience of the airport), and
- 8) Arrival Services (Passport/Personal ID inspection/Speed of baggage delivery service/Customs inspection.

The aforementioned indicators represented airport performance in terms of satisfaction of the airport users. Amongst the 257 airports, Suvarnabhumi Airport, despite its long attempts, found itself ranked out of the top ten best airports since 2007 up until now. Table 1.2 demonstrates the world ranking of Suvarnabhumi Airport as appeared in the ASQ programme.

Table 1.2 World Ranking of Suvarnabhumi Airport from 2007 to 2014

Year	Scores	World Rank
2007	3.90	40
2008	4.12	29
2009	4.23	24
2010	4.19	45
2011	4.31	40
2012	4.38	42
2013	4.43	36
2014	4.48	38

Source: Airports Council International, 2014.

Typically, airports chosen for the first top ten differed in each particular characteristic such as embraced technology, designed infrastructure, special service scheme, management pattern and so on and so forth. Having said that, one thing they had in common appeared to be a simple and plain organisational structure. Figure 1.1 to 1.4 illustrates examples of the organisational structures of those airports found in high ranking by ASQ during the last decade whilst Figure 1.5 demonstrates the organisational structure of Suvarnabhumi Airport whose rank was rather far from the top ten.

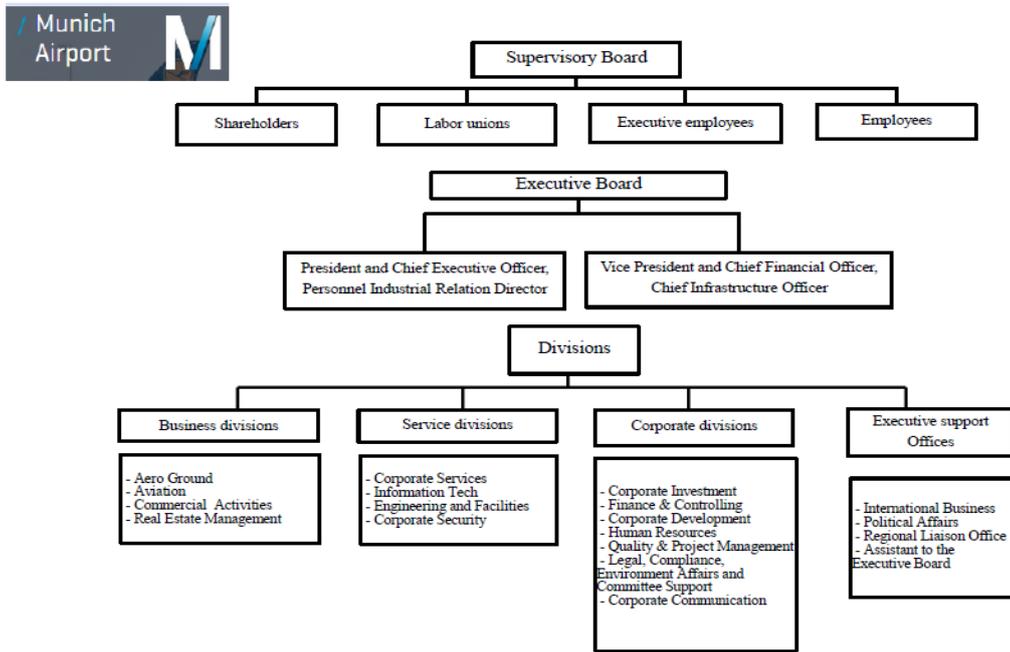


Figure 1.1 Organisational Structure of Munnich Airport

Source: Munich Airport, 2016.

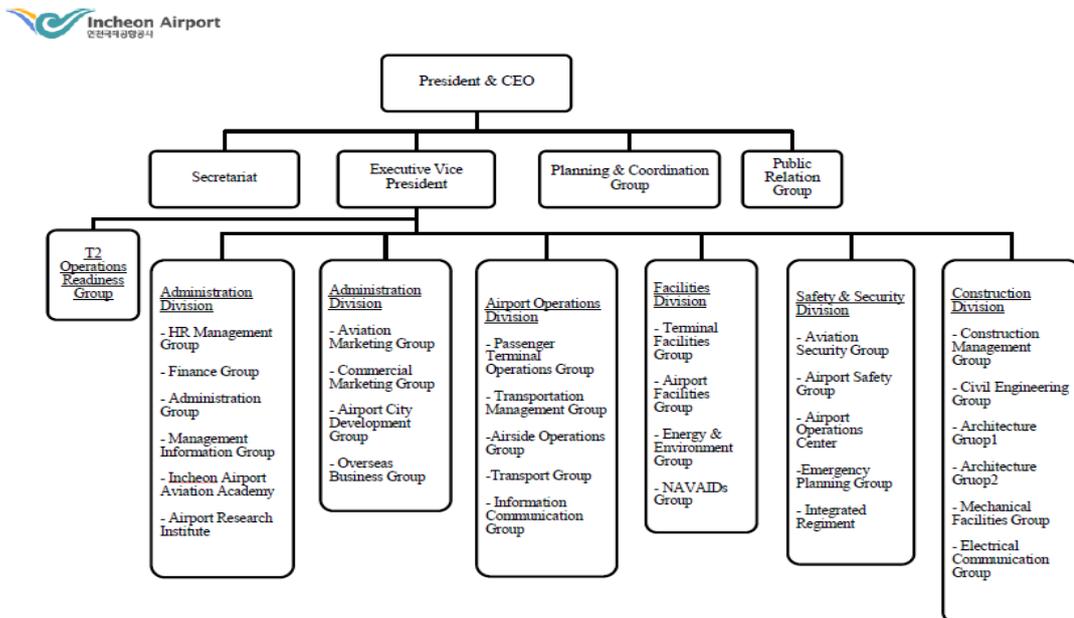


Figure 1.2 Organisational Structure of Incheon Airport

Source: Incheon Airport, 2015.

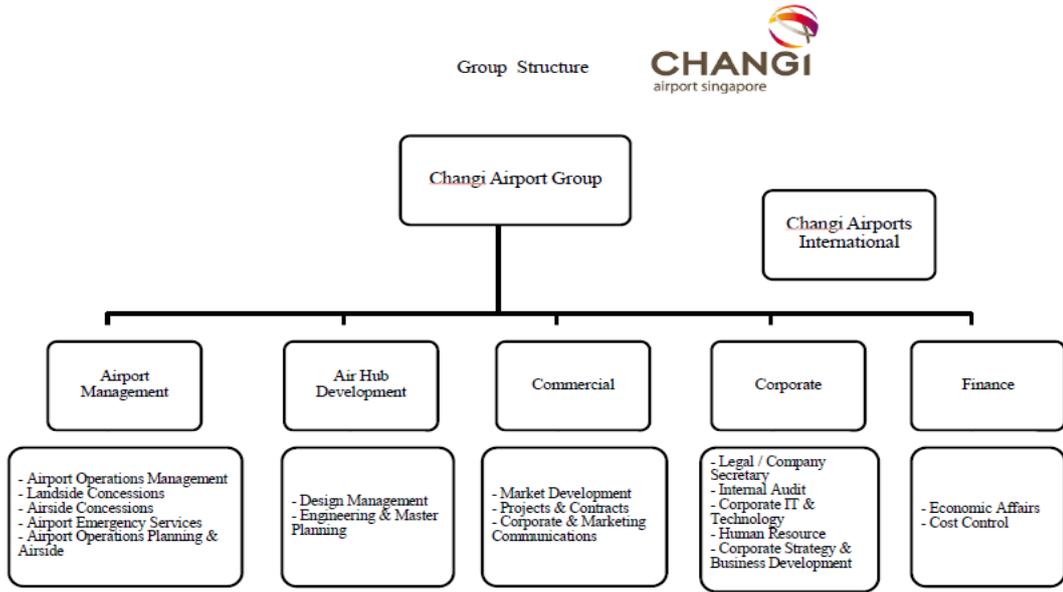


Figure 1.3 Organisational Structure of Changi Airport

Source: Changi Airport Group, 2016.

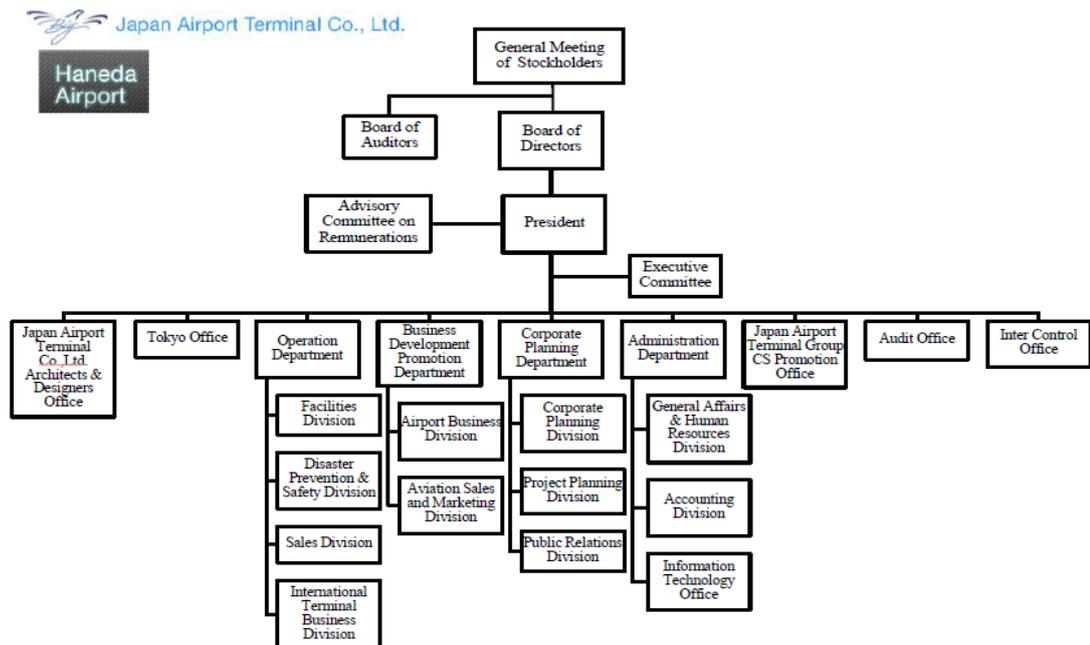


Figure 1.4 Organisational Structure of Haneda Airport

Source: Japan Airport Terminal, 2016.

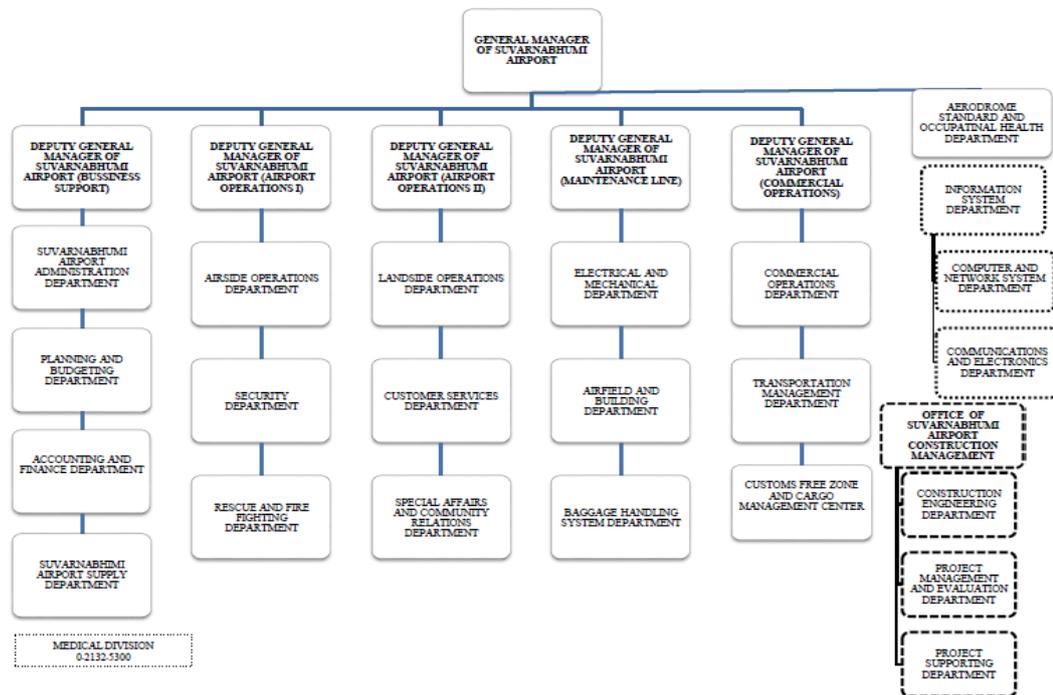


Figure 1.5 Organisational Structure of Suvarnabhumi Airport

Source: Airport of Thailand, 2011.

Serious concerns in this regard were looming resulting from remaining series of complaints on various issues, and in particular from lower ranking in the global arena. Major issues that were always found relating to dissatisfactions of airport customers included too frequent delay of the flights, congestion were ubiquitous at both airside and landside of the airport, passengers missing flights, cargo and baggage being left behind or getting lost, and in the worse cases, aircraft incidents and accidents. These phenomena drove concerned parties, both from public and private sectors, to become more attentive, even more so to call for drastic amelioration with a strong sense of urgency.

As noted by some scholars, issue resolution appeared to be key to customer satisfaction. Some of them further pointed out that a complex organisational structure evidently influenced issue resolution (Chan, 2005; Longman & Mullins, 2004; William, 2007). By a similar token, it is not too difficult to extrapolate that one major cause of airport customer dissatisfactions is the complex organisational structure of Suvarnabhumi Airport, including disconnectedness amidst its many layers of

management. It is a proven fact that a flatter organisational design favourably demonstrates a greater flow of communication across the entire organisation, greater decentralisation, and greater empowerment. Organisations at this stage, however, appear lean and nimble. By this, it not only bolsters faster response to the needs of customers, but also monitors possible changes emerging within the market. That is to say, the organisation becomes more capable for swift adaptation.

Furthermore, some groups of scholars saw complex organisational structure as impediment to customer issue resolution, and thus resulting in customer dissatisfaction (Chan, 2005; Longman & Mullins, 2004; William, 2007). In the current study, frontline division directors have been working through the complex structure of Suvarnabhumi Airport. Conditions as such make it insurmountable to resolve customer issues effectively. Over time, the situation becomes even worse.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Hitherto, frontline division directors have worked through the complex organisational structure of Suvarnabhumi Airport. Some studies further indicated that a complex organisational structure as such, however, appears to be impediment to customer issue resolution and results in customer dissatisfaction (Chan, 2005; Longman & Mullins, 2004; William, 2007). Added to that, a study on the effects of direct customer contact suggested that there is a great deal of stress when organisations frustrated employees' ability to satisfy customer demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2005). In the extent to which dissatisfaction is growing, airport administrators paid attentions to various issues and found that a remedy was so required at the earliest opportunity to develop a better resolution on customer issues to improve customer satisfaction in Suvarnabhumi Airport. Along almost past decades, AOT attended to various issues to serve such a purpose including developing more advance information technology, formulating broader strategic policies, improving human resource management, establishing newer and stronger culture, expanding infrastructure, increasing budgeting and so on. Astonishingly, the organisational structure of Suvarnabhumi Airport was one of the last components to receive attention. More importantly, there never were designs or improvements on the

structure in an attempt to accommodate customer satisfaction. That is to say, airport administrators apparently omitted the significance of customer issue resolution in relation to organisational structure, whereas dissatisfactions of the customers are still a great problem. Perhaps, this could be considered as a caveat when Salierno (2006, p. 19) pointed out that weaknesses in the area of client satisfaction tended to pose a very significant risk to the organisation.

1.2 Significance of the Study

By examining the airport context, it could help make better understanding of the influence of organisational structure on customer issue resolution. In general, the function of airports is to provide various services, particularly to resolve everyday issues of airport users. Its organisational structure by this sense could be seen as the rudiment that defines duties, authorities and interconnectedness between internal departments that allow airport employees at the implementation level effectively perform their duty in terms of resolve issues of airport users. Consequently, it represents effectiveness and performance of the airport as an organisation.

More importantly, according to the cabinet approval regarding Thailand's transport infrastructure strategies during 2015 – 2022, enhancing air transport is one of the five action plans that was essential to the development of the country, particularly to improve quality of life for Thai people. The urgent phase of the plan commencing from 2015 covers all modes of transport. By this, airports become more and more important because of the fact that airports are the main player in air transport to help achieve the cabinet's goal. Figure 1.6 depicts the overview of the strategy and action plans of the cabinet.

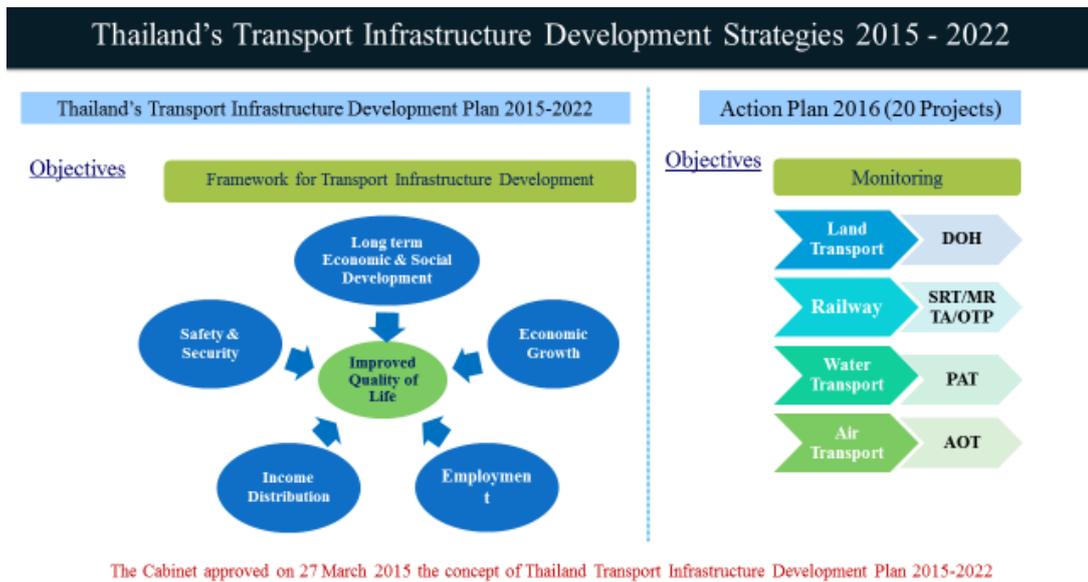


Figure 1.6 Thailand's Transport Infrastructure Development Strategies during 2015-2022

Source: Office of Transport and Traffic Policy and Planning, 2016.

Moreover, it was worth noting that ineffective issue resolution of Suvarnabhumi Airport was considerably significant in many ways. Since services of airports are genuinely public, as a result they can spontaneously create effects in such a way that cover a wide range of people in society, both domestically and internationally. As a protagonist in air transport of Thailand, Suvarnabhumi Airport, with its ineffectiveness, to a certain extent inhibited economic growth as earlier discussed. Most seriously, ineffective issue resolution could even lead to serious accidents or incidents of aircraft operation by which inevitably puts lives and properties in peril. After all, ineffective issue resolution of the airport could be deleterious to images and reputation of the nation as a whole. Examining the influence of organisational structure on customer issue resolution in the airport context thus, not only helps generate better understanding, but also helps provide constructive guidance for the betterment of the airport organisational structure.

The current qualitative phenomenological study made attempt to explore and describe the lived experiences of frontline division directors of Suvarnabhumi Airport in resolving customer issues. Moreover, it aimed to understand the influence of

organisational structure at the implementation level on issue resolution. By this, the word “explore” required an answer that demonstrated what something was like or how it worked, and so on. Whilst the word “describe” demanded an answer that examined the subject thoroughly and considered it from various perspectives. The researcher theoretically developed the current study from suggestions proposed by previous research studies in that the relationship between organisational structure and customer issue resolution should be further studied under different kinds of settings for a deeper understanding of the relationship as such.

Airports these days are operating under an ever-changing environment resulting from a strong stream of globalisation. By this, the demand of airport customers become more and more complicated. To achieve its goal that aims to satisfy its customers, airports, therefore, will need to adapt their components including the structure to respond in a faster and more effective way. That is to say, in doing so, it is inevitable for airports to change in order to fit the dynamic environment. The misfit lowers performance, eventually leading to a performance crisis and adaptive structural change into fit (Chandler, 1962). By this, the current study applied Structural Contingency Theory to elucidated phenomenon as such for a better understanding, only because and to the extent that this theory has a focal point on the relationship between organisational structure and its environment. To be more specific, an organisation according to the theory will need to adjust its structure in order to survive or even to be more competitive within its environment. The more dynamic the environment, the more necessary for the structure to adapt to fit. As a result, Structural Contingency Theory appeared to be appropriate to the current study.

This current study thus embraced Structural Contingency Theory as its presupposition. This theory, however, put forward a major framework for the study of organisational design (Donaldson, 2001). It suggested that the structure fit the contingency be the most effective organisational design. Morgan (1997), one of the best historically known scholars, elucidated that organisational structure, to a certain extent, affected organisational performance. Whilst Donaldson (2001) elaborated that, the fit between structure and contingency affected organisational performance; therefore, structural change was inevitably required to move from misfit to fit. What Donaldson proposed seemed corroborative to Galbraith (1977) who previously suggested that an organisation whose internal features best matched the demand of environment, achieve the best adaptation/performance. In addition, some other

scholars later articulated that the negative influence of organisational structure could relatively affect customer satisfaction (Chan, 2005; Longman & Mullins, 2004; William, 2007). There have been hitherto no previous studies on the influence of organisational structure at the implementation level on customer issue resolution, particularly in an airport context. The current study was conducted in Suvarnabhumi Airport, which was unprecedented to relationship as such. Table 2 illustrates the major field being addressed amidst previous research studies within the airport context and the focal areas under which research was conducted. None of them studied the relationship between organisational structure and customer issue resolution or the like.

Table 1.3 Previous Research Studies within Airport Context and Their Focal Areas

Management	Environment	Technical approach
1. HR-Training/Appraisal/Learning	1. Noise	1. Biometric
2. Customer expectation/satisfaction	pollution	
3. Privatisation		
4. Benchmarking		
5. Strategic approach		
6. Business model		
7. Decision making		
8. TQM		
9. Ownership		
10. Management style		
11. Just-in-time		
12. Project controversial management		
13. Conflict management		
14. Size and growth		
15. Culture/career		
16. Key element in managing airport		

Source: By Author

The current qualitative, phenomenological study aimed to explore and describe the lived experiences of frontline division directors in resolving customer issues at Suvarnabhumi Airport, particularly to understand the influence of organisational structure at the implementation level on customer issue resolution. Outcomes of the study divulged instructive literature, which contained a thorough perspective and information for the leader of AOT (the president) to scrutinise when restructuring an organisation was required to promote more effective customer issue resolution.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the current qualitative, phenomenological study is to explore and describe the lived experiences of frontline division directors in resolving customer issues at Suvarnabhumi Airport, specifically in order to understand the influence of organisational structure at the implementation level on customer issue resolution.

The phenomenological explanation principally made an attempt to disclose behavioural structure and reveal the lived experiences that constituted the relationship of people and how the world influenced individual behaviour (Van Kaam, 1966). Therefore, this qualitative phenomenological study is logically appropriate to the purpose of the study.

The current study employed a modified van Kaam method by Moustakas (1994) incorporated with structured and recorded interviews to provide the intended data. The researcher also applied the observation technique along the interview process. Information received during the interview process was triangulated against pertinent document exploration and other employees, both at higher and lower ranks. The sample for current qualitative, phenomenological study comprised nineteen directorial-level employees in accordance with Creswell's (2007a, 2007b) suggested sample size for phenomenological studies. In the current study, the purposive sample of directorial-level employees included frontline division directors whose jobs were to provide services or support, one way or another, to customers. All of those samples were currently working for Suvarnabhumi Airport. By its nature, purposive sampling

deliberately selected participants to comprehend the central phenomenon (Creswell, 2007a).

The intent of the current study was to provide leader literature with a more thorough perspective regarding the influence of organisational structure at the implementation level on customer issue resolution from the frontline division director perspective. Presumably, the data should yield decisive information for leaders to consider under more scrutiny when structuring an organisation that bolsters customer issue resolution.

1.4 Research Question

The overarching research question determined the kind of data to collect, and provided guidelines on the interpretation and analysis of the data (Moustakas, 1994; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Creswell, 2007a). According to Moustakas (1994), when constructing questions, several keywords ought to be included in the interview questions to ensure succinct wording to be obtained and comment to be freely spoken during the interview process. The use of the word “how” helped participants respond with concise and clear wording whilst the word “perceive” facilitated participants to provide individual perceptions about the question as it pertained to the individuals’ personal experience (Moustakas, 1994). Added to that, the word “describe” encouraged participants to express details associated to the question and individual experiences in an open-ended format (Moustakas, 1994). Lastly, the word “experience” allowed participants to share the views and opinions of individual experiences in line with the posed research question (Moustakas, 1994).

The overarching research question that guided the current study was “What are the lived experiences of frontline division directors in resolving customer issues, specifically to understand the influence of organisational structure at the implementation level on customer issue resolution?”

From the overarching question, sub questions were derived.

- 1) What were the lived experiences of division directors of Suvarnabhumi Airport in resolving customer issues?
- 2) What factors affected how division directors resolved customer issues?

3) How did organisational structure at the implementation level influence customer issue resolution?

4) What was the recommended organisational structure which bolstered customer issue resolution in Suvarnabhumi Airport?

Since the sample consisted of division directors whose duties were to provide service or support to customers to resolve their problems, question a) thus aimed to explore how division directors of Suvarnabhumi Airport resolved customer issues through their lived experiences. Presumably, answers to this question should provide a corpus of data, both relevant and irrelevant to the study. Question b) was expected to reveal and perhaps allow the researcher to categorise emergent factors or groups of factors that, to a certain extent, affected the way division directors resolved customer issues. Question c) emphasised how organisational structure influenced the way division directors resolved customer issues. Either positive or negative influence, as such, was clarified, including to what extent such influence was seen from divisional employees' point of view. Supposedly, the answer to question c) should lead to question d) which sought for what kind of organisational structure the division directors far preferred according to their perspectives for better customer issue resolution.

The overarching research question and its sub questions appropriately supported the purpose of the study since answers to these questions should be helpful to understand the lived experiences of frontline division directors in resolving customer issues, specifically to understand the influence of organisational structure at the implementation level on customer issue resolution. In addition, by taking the answers to these questions into consideration, the leader was able to design an organisation that was likely to increase customer satisfaction.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The setting of this research study was limited solely to Suvarnabhumi Airport. Theoretically, there were several dimensions to measure service quality (Douglas & Corner, 2003, p. 167; Yang, 2003, p. 311). As found in many work of scholars in this area, many of them considered service quality from the customer's point of view,

whilst fewer addressed the management perspective (Farahani & Torma, 2010). The current study, however, focused on management perspectives. More specifically, the focal point was the service provider perspective. The sample of the study was comprised of nineteen directorial level employees whose jobs currently provided support or services to customers of the airport in one way or another. All of those samples were currently working for Suvarnabhumi Airport. In particular, sampling was purposive by which framed the focal point to division directors of Suvarnabhumi Airport whose jobs rested at the implementation level of the organisational structure. Reasonably, this study was focused at this level of the organisational structure only because, and to the extent that, employees at this level practically confronted customer issue resolution. Their authority to resolve issues for customers were rigorously constrained and granted only within the scope that the organisational structure at the implementation level allowed. In addition, it was none other than the president of AOT who was entirely authorised for organisational restructuring in so far as he received appropriate and adequate information in this regard.

The phenomenological explanation generally attempted to disclose behavioural structure and reveal the lived experiences that constituted the relationships of people and how the world influenced individual behaviour (Van Kaam, 1966). By a similar token, the current study, from its phenomenological approach, intended to explore and describe the division directors' experiences on customer issue resolution. Moreover, it aimed to understand how the organisational structure at the implementation level influenced the division directors' ability to resolve customer issues.

1.6 Limitation of the Study

Since the current phenomenological research study embraced purposive samplings, which were nineteen division directors of Suvarnabhumi Airport, this small sample size became limitation to the Generalisability and Representativeness of the population. By its nature, purposive sampling and the small sample size were likely to limit the applicability of the current study to different setting. In this regard, Creswell (2007a, 2007b) explicated that the Generalisability of the findings tended to

decrease when embracing a purposive sampling strategy. Consistent to many scholars, the sample size of nineteen participants was, however, adequate and acceptable for a qualitative, phenomenological research study (Morse, 1994; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Creswell, 2007a, 2007b;).

During the interview process, the candour of the participants in providing information, including the length of time available to conduct the study, was uncontrolled to some extent and, therefore, resulted in limitations as well. Moreover, the validity of the current study was limited to the reliability of the instrument being used. For the current qualitative, phenomenological study, the researcher here was one of the instruments per se, thus the ability of the researcher to study participants in the certain location could possibly be another limitation. Lastly, to gain permission to access and interview all participants was not always certain; therefore, the researcher could expect further levels of limitations.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

Leedy and Ormrod (2005) explained that the definition of terms section normally provided insight into the meaning of terms used throughout the research study. The definition included the term defined, the general class in which the term belonged to, and specific traits related to the research study. The following were the terms that paved the way to further the comprehension and conceiving of the current, qualitative, phenomenological study.

Bracketing: To set aside previous judgements and experiences about the phenomenon under study (Moustakas, 1994, Creswell, 2007b).

Customer Issue Resolution: A formal procedure to log, investigate, and resolve any customer dissatisfaction or problems. The overarching aim of such a process is to turn a dissatisfied customer into a satisfied one.

Customer Satisfaction: A key component of a successful and prosperous organisation. It links to higher profit margins and greater employee satisfaction, customer retention, and repeat purchases (Berry & Parasuraman, 1992; Jones &

Sasser, 1995; Schneider & Bowen, 1995; Conrad, Brown, & Harmon 1997; Appiah-Adu & Singh, 1999).

Empirical, Transcendental Phenomenological: A description of the phenomenon as experienced by the research subjects (Husserl, 1981; Moustakas, 1994; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

Epoche: The method used by the researcher to observe and describe the phenomenon without taking into account personal experiences (Husserl, 1981).

Globalisation: This word defines all those processes by which the peoples of the world incorporated into a single world society (Albrow & King, eds., 1990).

Internal Organisation: For the current study, refers to multiple divisions in Suvarnabhumi Airport under study.

Lived Experience: A reflexive or self-given awareness that inheres in the temporality of consciousness of humans (Wilhelm, 1985).

Organisation Effectiveness: The term describes the degree to which organisations attain all the purposes they were supposed to (Strasser, Eveland, & Deniston, 1981, p. 323).

Organisation Performance: Traditionally focuses on productivity, profit, growth, and stability, whilst contemporarily focused on quality, durability, and customer satisfaction (Scott, 2003).

Organisational Structure: It describes the configuration of an organisation (Latham & Vinyard, 2004). By this, it refers to the sum total of the ways in which an organisation divided and coordinated its labour into distinct tasks with an attempt for effectiveness (Mintzberg, 1979).

Phenomenological Study: Type of the study describing the lived experiences of research participants related to a specific concept or phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994; Creswell, 2007b).

Task Environment or Specific Environment: refers to the forces and institutions outside the organization with which an organisation interfaces in the course of conducting its business. The specific environment of each organisation is unique and changes with conditions. The important constituents of task environment are customers, suppliers, competitors, and pressure group.

1.8 Benefit of the Study

Weakness in the area of client satisfaction, as pointed out by Salierno (2006), could put organisations at a very significant risk. Spontaneously, customer issue resolution of the airport, in terms of public services, was likely to cause tremendous effects, either negative or positive, to such an extent that covered a broad range of people, both domestically and internationally. By this, it inevitably reflected the reputation of the nation as a whole. Moreover, according to the current cabinet development strategy, Suvarnbhumi Airport was one of the key players in promoting the economic growth and the stability of the country. Effectiveness of the airport obviously became one of many that represented either success or failure of the cabinet. Most importantly, there had been thus far no previous research studies pertaining to the influence of organisational structure on customer issue resolution in the airport context. After all, the outcome of the study should not be only a theoretical contribution, but also beneficial to practitioners.

By theoretical contribution, the outcome of the study should help illustrate the contribution of Structural Contingency Theory in a given context, notwithstanding its shortcoming argued by many scholars. The current qualitative research study, however, provided theoretical contribution by introducing an address of the two variables that were organisational structure, customer issue resolution, and their relationship in a newly studied context. The researcher developed the current study from suggestions made by previous studies to the extent that those two variables should be studied under different settings for a deeper understanding the influence of organisational structure on customer issue resolution. Intriguingly, the current study over those two variables was conducted in an airport context that was unprecedented to the research community.

By beneficial to practitioners, the current research study was believed to reveal literature beneficial to airport leaders to employ when restructuring an organisation to overcome organisational structure barriers in an effort to resolve customer issues. To some extent, this literature should be applicable to other airports under the

administration of Airport of Thailand owing to the similarity of the setting. Moreover, apart from organisational structure, the outcome of the study perhaps should provide data that is more comprehensive for airport leaders to develop for better customer issue resolution.

1.9 Organisation of the Study

This research study is organised in the following manner. Chapter 2 demonstrates a literature review with an overview of organisational theories, some relevant leadership theories, and underpinnings of issue resolution. Chapter 3 details research methodology including research design and its appropriateness, population and sample, central instrumentation of the study, and the pilot test. Moreover, it demonstrates how the researcher mustered and analysed data. Validity and reliability of the obtained information are elaborated here as well. Issues in Chapter 4 include demographic data, interview findings, and various details of implication. Chapter 5 is the key part of the study that dedicates thorough discussions of the findings including limitation, contribution of the study, and of course suggestion for future research. Lastly, chapter 6 provides a concise and compact conclusion to the whole study.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Chapter 1 introduced the purpose of the current study that aimed to explore and describe the lived experiences of frontline division directors who were involved in resolving customer issues at Suvarnabhumi Airport. This was in an attempt to understand the influence that an organisational structure at implementation level have on customer issue resolution. In chapter 2, literatures whose findings pertained to the current and the previous studies were analysed . This chapter too demonstrated how researcher reviewed literatures. By this, it illustrates from what sources data were retrieved and scrutinised. Areas to be explored thoroughly included historical overview of organisational theories and the studies towards organisational structure. Other factors that were determinant to organisational performance and effectiveness were also discussed including significant leadership style that could to a certain extent be relevant to bolstering organisation for better customer issue resolution. Researcher examined various dimensions of organisational performance and effectiveness including how they related to customer issue resolutions. This chapter also articulated the extent to which organisational structure influenced customer issue resolution particularly when comparing to other factors such as leadership style and etc. Lastly, issue resolution for customer was explored. The summary of chapter pointed out how all of the aforementioned related to the current study. The chapter ended up with roughly anticipated conceptual framework stemmed from review of the literature.

2.1 Browsing and Documentation

Researcher began the process to review the literature, as guided by Gravetter and Forzano (2012), by browsing and fetching general ideas relevant to the current study. Then, researcher turned to be more specific by focusing and searching most recently published materials pertaining to the current study. By embracing the words

and themes, researcher was able to locate pertinent researches in journal database. Gradually, researcher browsed through journal abstracts to seek only relevant articles. All of these obtained resources was thoroughly scrutinised to comprehend and to trace for new themes and relevant issues to the current study. This process was well saturated once it shed no further light to the topic of the study.

In this study, sources of data being retrieved were imperative. Retrieving was conducted via electronic databases of the National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA) incorporated with Endnote application. Those sources of data included ABI/INFORM, ProQuest, and major textbooks relevant to the topics. Additional searches were also done through internet with search engines such as Google, Ask Jeeves etc. Series of keywords being addressed included organisational structure, performance, effectiveness, customer satisfaction, issue resolution, complaints resolution, dispute resolution, leadership style etc.

Once corpus of datas were gathered, identifying and selection were later conducted (Foss & Waters, 2007, p. 75-112). Obtained data were codified then unnecessary or irrelevant ones were eliminated by sorting. Researcher carried out code checking to ascertain genuinely relevant data with proper coding. Once remaining data was made relevant, researcher was able to create conceptual schema, the review was then written up. Figure 2.1 illustrated framework of literatures being reviewed in this study.

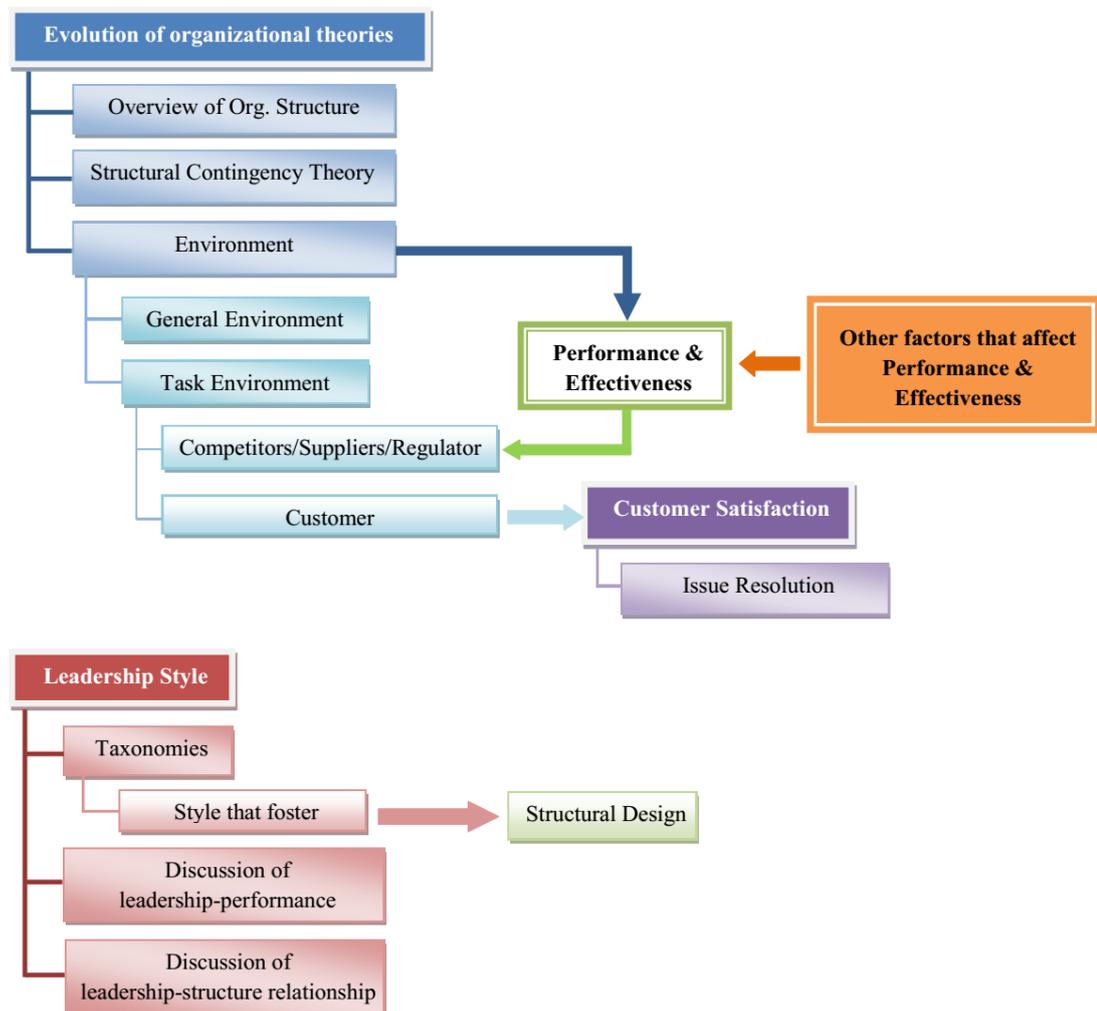


Figure 2.1 Map of Literature Review

Source: By Author

2.2 Overview of Organisational Theories

In terms of economic stream, historically there had been three evolutions of economic growth. Firstly, the nationalism that emerged during 1870-1945. Secondly, the foreign trade investment which began sometime during 1945-1980. Until recently, it was the globalisation that appeared to be mainstream. The influence of globalisation had such an enormous impact that it created a great shift in the paradigm of organisational theories. In the wake of an economic expansion during the pivotal

decades of industrial revolution, this phenomenon put strong forces towards organisation and evolved it ultimately. (Scott, 2003). By pondering over historical overview of organisational theories, it clearly demonstrated the momentum that fully swung from hierarchical organisation to team-based and self-managed team. One of the main drives was due to the fact that organisation needed to compete and survive amongst rivalry within global environment.

Jaffee (2001, p. 4) put big picture of the evolution in community of organisational theories by elucidating that there were three major perspectives that most scholars agreed in common. The Rational System whose attention was mainly paid to two key elements which were goals and formal social structures (Scott, 1987, p. 22). The Natural System whereof focused on the informal rules and structures including the role of human participants (Scott, 1987, p. 23). Lastly, the Open System that saw organisation as not hermetically sealed entities but collectivities that considerably depended on and influenced by environmental agents and resources (Scott, 1987).

Structural design of the organisation, as widely acknowledged, evolved from Taylor's Scientific Management Theory that put strong endeavour on matching employee to the task (Sandrone, 1997). In 20th century, hierarchical organisations with many management layers were ubiquitous since this feature was in favour of providing certain level of control over employee (Sandrone, 1997). On the contrary, later in 21th century, traditional approach was strikingly challenged by newer paradigm that regarded employees as knowledge workers (Kogan & Muller, 2006; White, 2003). By this paradigm, it encouraged managers to rather lead employees than manage them (Drucker, Dyson, Handy, Saffo, & Senge 1997; Geldhart, 1999; Kogan & Muller, 2006).

For Open System, it tremendously challenged traditional theories by proffering presumption of dependence upon the environment and overall strategy of the organisation rather than one best design fit all (O'Toole, 1977; Badham & Wall, 2000). By this, the new paradigm of self-managed team that stemmed from Open System emerged and paved the way to a more effective organisation which lead to customer satisfaction (Tata & Prasad, 2004). Scholars whose studies fell into this approach postulated that changing from top-down organisation to self-managed global

virtual team was likely to improve customer satisfaction (Tata & Prasad, 2004). In addition, some scholars had every reason to believe that the negative influence of organisational structure could affect customer satisfaction (Longman & Mullins, 2004; Chan, 2005; William, 2007).

Historically, a large number of scholars paid attention to various factors that affected organisation on different dimensions such as size (Kimberly, 1976), technology (i.e. Woodward, 1965; Hickson et al., 1969; Mohr, 1971), and environment of organization (i.e. Burns & Stalker, 1961; Khandwalla, 1973; Pfeffer & Leblebici, 1973). Albeit different addressing points, most scholars coincidentally aimed to make organisation become more effective. Morgan (1997) however developed a model to help practically analyse organisational effectiveness. By this model, major factors and how they interacted one another were taken into consideration included environment, strategy, structure, technology, culture or human approach, and authority. Number of scholars later even went further by studying other newer factors in newer dimensions. Most studies however focused on dyadic relationship at micro level that was individual level than organisational level. Intriguingly, they appeared to ignore the degree to which each individual factor affected organisational performance when comparing to others. Hansen and Wernerfelt (1989) elaborated that empirical evidences of linkage to performance abound within each paradigm, but very few works were done to integrate the two and evaluate the relative effect of each on the organizational profitability.

Having said that it was not too difficult to say that organisational structure received a great deal of attentions as seen in numerous studies along the past decades, most of which made focal point towards organisational effectiveness. Unfortunately, there were rarely studies over dyadic relationship between organisational structure and customer satisfaction as the outcome of its effectiveness particularly in terms of customers issue resolution. This study thus aimed to fill up this gap as discussed later in this chapter.

During the past long decades, structure of the organisation widely received attention as earlier mentioned. Many studies found firmly pointed fingers to organisational structure in an attempt to make it more effective in terms of interaction with its environment. This approach paved the way to newer concept known as

modularized organisation whose characteristic adhered to result-oriented accountability and decentralised decision-making. Characteristics as such appeared to well coordinate between organisations through non-hierarchical organisational structure (De Paolo & Scoppa, 2006; Wigand, 2008). One could say that the ample influence of Open System brought about tremendous changes in organisational design. For the sake of effectiveness, immense endeavours had been put to re-engineer organisation. By this, it meant organisation was obliged to transition from hierarchical or vertical to horizontal or flat business units. In doing so, newer concept known as team based was embraced and unnecessary layers were consequently obliterated (LaRue, Childs, & Larson, 2004). Only because and to the extent that hierarchical organisation with many layers of management traditionally sought to provide more control whilst flatter organisation with fewer layers of management far preferred little control or never.

Presumably, it was not impossible to delineate that the setting of the current study that was Suvarnabhumi Airport was truly considered as rigidly hierarchical one since it currently held many layers with many departments that demanded highly control over employees.

2.3 Organisational Structure

Since the current qualitative, phenomenological study deliberately employed structural contingency theory as its rudiments, researcher thus explored this very theory exhaustively. Over the past course of decades, organisational structure was one of many amongst others within organisational theories community to which a great deal of studies paid attention thus far. As found in many studies, structure of organisation had been addressed in various dimensions. Child (1972) for example, pointed out that most available model being applied to studying organisational structure interpreted organisational structure as a product of primarily economic constraints which contextual variables were assumed to impose. Rather, he arguably addressed political process as essentially a focal point whereby power-holders within organisation decided upon courses of strategic action. Some scholars (Aldrich & Herker, 1977) addressed organisational structure in terms of boundaries. By this,

boundaries were a defining characteristic of organisation. Boundaries were the link between the environment and the organisation. Mintzberg's (1979) point of view bore some sense of resemblance to the current study as he defined organisational structure as the sum total of the ways in which an organisation divided and coordinated its labour into distinct tasks with an attempt for effectiveness.

By advocating the idea of five basic parts, (the operating core, the strategic apex, the middle line, the techno structure, and the support staff) he put forward widely known five basic configurations of structure which included the Simple Structure, the Machine Bureaucracy, the Professional Bureaucracy, the Divisionalized Form, and the Adhocracy. Unfortunately, his suggestion was not unimpeachable as it left significant gap by not connecting a description of structure to its context that was genuinely how an organisation functioned in reality.

Later, one of the newer paradigms in organisational structure, researchers emphasised on structural contingency whereof environment related to the structure of complex organisations (Burns & Stalker, 1961; Katz & Kahn, 1966; Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967). It was to say that most of the studies based on structural contingency theory always took organisational structure as their main focus. By contingency, it meant possible variables that moderated characteristic or effectiveness of organisation (Donaldson, 2001). Jones (2001) as well described contingency as effectiveness of structure or strategy of the organisation.

The first attempt to seek variations in organisational structure to environmental factor emerged in Dill's (1958) earlier case study. Later, this theory had been developed incessantly to fill the gap and was made more explanatory (Mintzberg, 1981; Alexander & Randolph, 1985; Drazin & Van de Van, 1985; Gresove, 1989; Morgan, 1997). Donaldson (2001) for example, was the one who saw organisation rather dynamic than static. By this, he developed the so-called Neo-Contingency Theory to surmount traditional barrier of the theory.

Having said that there had not been many studies that put an attempt to demonstrate the extent to which structural contingency theory was useful for explaining why organisations varied in effectiveness (Pennings, 1975). Based upon Open System approach, structural contingency theory however was astonishingly interesting amongst the others as it clearly proffered linkage between structure and

performance in terms of survival of organisation in its environment. For many, the structural contingency theory had to incorporate effectiveness. That was to say, the theory focused on structure to fit for effectiveness albeit various arguments on this relevance.

This theory however had been criticised a great deal. Many scholars argued its weakness. Some of those included its ambiguity such as what was meant by environment and which of its variables had explanatory power for structural differences amongst organisation (Pennings, 1975). Albeit it was likely that structures most consistent with environmental conditions should be most effective, there were certain level of difficulty to develop comparable criteria of effectiveness across different type of organisation (Pennings, 1975). In the light of historic studies conducted by Burns and Stalker (1961), it was reasonable to infer that organisational effectiveness was contingent upon the structure being consistent with the environment. Nonetheless there were weak evidences upon which such conclusions were based (Mohr, 1971). Moreover, only few studies provided operational definitions of effectiveness (Mohr, 1971). For example, Yuchtman and Seashore (1967) saw effectiveness as the ability of the organisation to exploit the environment in the acquisition of critical resources whilst Price (1968) described effectiveness as the degree of goal achievement. Furthermore, it was not always clear what it meant by consistency. Organisation could be seen effective to some criteria and ineffective to others. Perrow (1972 as cited in Pennings, 1975) for example, addressed technology and indicated that once technology was a routine, bureaucratic structure would be effective in profit making or market share though job satisfaction or morale could be low. Whilst Burns and Stalker (1961 as cited in Pennings, 1975) addressed effectiveness in terms of prevalent feelings of satisfaction that could be orthogonal to profit or market penetration. By this, it meant one should never strictly rely on a composite criterion or a single effectiveness criterion in studying the structural contingency theory. Also, some of the criteria of organisational effectiveness had an external referent, for example, production, number of new customers, whilst others had an internal referent such as satisfaction.

Intriguingly, the goodness of fit between environmental and structural variables had little bearing on the effectiveness of the organisation, regardless of whether it had an external or internal referent (Pennings, 1975).

Notwithstanding its shortcomings, this theory however immensely contributed to theorists and practitioners to such an extent that many scholars later conducted a lot more studies for further understanding about organisational structure and performance within its environment. Those studies included what Morgan (1997) clearly postulated which was organisational structure to a certain extent affected its performance. Whilst Donaldson (2001) further expanded that the fit between structure and contingency could affect organisational performance. As a result, Donaldson (2001) ascertained that structural change was inevitably required to move from misfit to fit for better performance and certainly to sustain survival of the organisation. What Donaldson proposed was seen corroborative once we looked back when Galbraith (1977) suggested that organisation whose internal features best matched the demand of environment achieve the best adaptation and in return best performance. In a more specific approach, other scholars put forward that the negative influence of organisational structure could relatively affect customer satisfaction (Longman & Mullins, 2004; Chan, 2005; William, 2007).

In regard to this, the study conducted by Salas (2009) whose focal point was to explore the relationship between organisational structure and customer issue resolution was seen as the most relevant to the current study. The point to be noted was that the setting and samples in that study were rather specific and thus Salas suggested further studies should be replicated within different settings and participants for deeper understanding of relationship. Added to that, there had been hitherto no previous studies on the influence of organisational structure at implementation level on customer issue resolution particularly in airport context. Nearly 854 studies were conducted employing airport as setting however none of them paid attention to those two issues and relationship in between. That was to say airport was an unprecedented setting for the study towards this dyadic relationship.

Practically, one could concede that Structural Contingency Theory implied that environment determined to a large extent what the internal structure of a given organisation should look like (Jaffee, 2001, p. 214). By this, the success of

organisation thus depended very much upon how it conformed to the demands placed on it by the environment (Jaffee, 2001). Therefore, to adapt and survive, organisation was obliged to match its internal structure with the variation and complexity that existed in the environment (Ashby, 1954; Jaffee, 2001). According to Shivers-Blackwell (2006), flat organisation had the privilege in being more effective in responding to rapid changes in the external environment due to the better flow of information across the entire organisation. This was due to the fact that the customers always change and were far too unpredictable. Thus, management was necessitated to focus internally and externally to survive in the best interest of the organisation (Drucker et al., 1997; White, 2003; Hammer, Leonard, & Davenport, 2004; Kogan & Muller, 2006)

It was conceivable to say that, in the light of Structural Contingency Theory, quality of the environment led to the greater performance of an organisation. By environment, it meant all things outside the boundaries of the organisation that either shaped or influenced a particular organisation (Jaffee, 2001, p. 3). Organisation in this sense thus could obtain the necessary nourishment for survival as long as they had the appropriate complex structure (Jaffee, 2001). Some scholars attended the significance of structure from other dimension by expounding that even knowledgeable, skilled, and motivated employees never deployed their discretionary time and talent unless the organisational structure and job design offered latitude to act (Bailey, 1993; Huselid, 1995).

The focal environment where organisation obliged to fit here was external. It referred to the major factors and forces outside the organisation. All of them had the potential to affect performance of an organisation significantly. It has been known for sometimes that external environment was divided into two parts, mega environment or general environment and specific or task environment. External environment was widely proven that it impinged the effectiveness of an organisation to a certain extent. Task environment or specific environment referred to the forces and institutions outside the organisation with which an organisation interfaced in the course of conducting its business. Such forces and institutions were directly pertinent to the achievement of the organisational goals since they had direct and immediate impact

on decisions and actions of managers. The specific environment of each organisation was unique and altered with conditions.

For task environment, its imperative constituents included customers, suppliers, competitors, and pressure group. In particular, to fit customers in this sense meant how organisation managed demand fulfilment for the customers and resolve their issue so that customers would be satisfied. Scott (2003) proclaimed that the evolution of organisations from the scientific management however gave rise to the development of newer concept of structure such as self-managed team that was believed to proffer a potential for increasing organisational effectiveness. Moreover, self-managed team operating in a global environment appeared to be effective to drive customer satisfaction (Tata & Prasad, 2004). Hence, it was rational to extrapolate that changing from the top-down management philosophy to a self-managed global team could improve customer satisfaction (Tata & Prasad, 2004). To put this new concept into practice however desperately required overarching leadership to ensure results (Tata & Prasad, 2004).

2.4 Organisation Performance and Effectiveness

Presumably, according to earlier discussion, organisations had to have a decent performance in order to resolve customer issue effectively. Notions of organisation performance generally varied upon the current environment in which organisation operated (Scott, 2003). Traditional notions of organisational performance underlined productivity, profit, growth, and stability under rational system. The emerging notions of organisational performance on the other hand concentrated on quality, durability, and customer satisfaction (Scott, 2003). Both notions were influenced by external environment (Scott, 2003).

As noted in many studies, there were various elements that affected effectiveness of organisation to some extent. Some scholars (i.e. Gillespie, Denison, Haaland, Smerek, Neale, 2007) explicated that organisational culture was seen as a key lever for driving long-term organisational effectiveness. Whilst others saw organisational control being conceptualised as an evaluation process based on the monitoring and evaluation of behaviour or of output (Ouchi, 1977). Most of those

studies apparently accounted for structural characteristics, as well as by a characteristic of the environment (Ouchi, 1977).

Yuchtman and Seashore (1967) indicated in the early stage that a relevant view of effectiveness elucidated the question of how well the organisation was doing for itself. Whilst Scott (2003) expanded that three paradigms of organisational perspectives, the rational, natural, and open systems, accounted for many of the variances in measures of effectiveness. He went even further by expounding that some sources of diversity for evaluating effectiveness associated with the varying sets of participants and constituents that interacted with organisations such as owners, employees, creditors, suppliers, customers, government regulators, and the host of the community (Scott, 2003).

Some scholars defined organisational effectiveness as the degree to which certain organisation was attaining all the purposes it was supposed to (Strasser, Eveland, & Deniston, 1981, p. 323). By this, organisation needed to obtain different effectiveness assessments based on diverse constituencies. Thus, its effectiveness encompassed its performance and other performance concept such as corporate environment or social performance, all of which relevant for practice and research (Manann, Schiemann, Bellora, & Guenther, 2013).

Effectiveness was typically measured in terms of the accomplishment of results. In rational system where specific goals were rudiments for generating effectiveness criteria, changes in the goals had a direct impact on performance, standards, and the measurement of effectiveness of those goals. In natural system, the changes not only affected the specified goals but also the institution's survival goals (Scott, 2003). In an open system where interdependency within the organisational environment played a significant role, the effect of changing goals on organisational effectiveness and performance were far more critical as minor changes in the environmental condition could impact how the organisation, its goals, strategy, structure, and even the task environment had to adapt (Scott, 2003). According to the study of Hong, Donald and Szurgyi (2006) organisation had to evolve from its traditional rational based organisational system approach to deal with the increasing challenges presented by its environment. Moreover, organisation needs to adapt not only to a changing market but also to the pressure of globalisation (Hong, Donald, &

Szurgyi, 2006). This study further suggested that organisation in this sense response through structural changes, operational effectiveness, cost containment, and divestiture of non-core competency units.

As some scholars noted, one must concede that ineffective organisational structure impeded customer issue resolution (Gibson & Cohen, 2003; Wiley, Brooks, & Lundby 2006). Moreover, disconnectedness views of customers could be rooted from disparities in an organisation created by system and organisational boundaries. This resulted in negative customer experiences and the loss of opportunities of the firm (Gibson & Cohen, 2003; Wiley et al, 2006). After all, those phenomena inferred that regardless of how far it was from perfect, structural contingency theory provided certain level of contribution to the study of organisational theory under a particular circumstance.

2.5 Importance of the Leadership – Performance Relationship

The rapid pace of change was widely known as a drastic challenge to organisation resulting in the need for more adaptive and flexible leadership (Bass, Avolio, Jung, & Berson 2003). It meant leaders worked more effectively in swiftly changing environment by helping make sense of the challenges confronted by both leaders and followers and responding to those challenges (Bass et al, 2003). Adaptive leaders, according to Bennis (2001), worked with their followers to generate creative solutions to complex problems which further developed their ability to handle a broader range of leadership responsibilities.

Apart from organisation structure as earlier discussed, leadership style also had an influence on organisational performance. The proven fact of this was tremendous interests in this topic being noticed during the past four decades amongst academics and practitioners in this area (Cannella & Rowe, 1995; Giambatista, 2004; Rowe, Cannella, Rankin, & Gorman, 2005). Many scholars had every reason to believe that leadership affected the performance of organisation (Rowe et al., 2005). Leadership style was considered imperative in achieving goals and improving performance amongst subordinates (Barling, Weber, & Kelloway 1996; Berson, Shamair, & Popper 2001; Zacharatos, Barling, & Kelloway 2000).

Theoretically, one could concede that organisational performance was influenced by a number of factors such as the employee's high satisfaction with their jobs, high commitment to their jobs, and strong intentions to work willingly and devotedly (Kim et al., 2005, p. 245). It was worth noting that those factors however were usually influenced by none other than the leaders (Peters & Waterman, 1982).

Interestingly, some scholars argued that leadership did not quite impact performance directly but acted as a catalyst for other factors that resulted in a positive organisational performance (Camilleri, 2007).

Mclean (2005) took the views in this regard that manager's role was seen as an appointment with formal authority in the hierarchy. In general, they planned, organised, directed, and controlled the activities towards achieving a set of object. Leaders, on the other hands, influenced the followers through conferred power. In doing so, they set high standards and goals for organisation to follow (Friedman & Langbert, 2000). Number of studies found that characteristics of the leaders led to a better performance of the organisation. For example, Tubbs and Schulz (2005) proposed the concept of seven meta-competencies of leadership. All of which included understanding the big picture, communication, innovation, creativity, leading changes, teamwork, and followership.

By this, leadership characteristics were seen as a key to understanding leadership behaviour in an effort to provide a categorisation of leadership from an environmental viewpoint (Tubbs & Schulz, 2005). A great deal of studies addressed different kind of leadership style based on different perspectives of the researchers. Situational leadership involved serving others and adjusting leadership style depending on the situation (Locander & Luechauer, 2006). Transactional leadership employed contingent rewards and the management-by-exception principles for organisational success (Harland, Harrison, Jones, & Reiter-Palmon, 2005) whilst transformational leadership harnessed influences to produce a desired organisational outcome (Boerner, Eisenbeiss, & Greisser, 2007). Collaborative leadership was described as a means for the entire team to be in control of an issue (Raelin, 2004). Thus, the emergence of contingency theory in leadership was rooted from the attempt to hypothesise situation that required different leadership styles which in turn made it necessary for a leader to adopt a variety tools and techniques (Cox & Sims, 2006).

Servant leadership, for instances, was far more complicated in that its attributes included initiative, listening, understanding, imagination, ability to withdraw, perception, ability to persuade, to conceptualise, healing and serving, and ability to build a community (Joseph & Winston, 2005; Tubbs & Schulz, 2005). Until very recently, global team leader was the one that effectively possessed distinctive characteristic including power, influence, inquisitiveness, perspective, and practical understanding (Black et al., 1999). However the leaders should or might look like, one thing they had in common was that they were known to be a systematic thinker who were able to understand the environments confronting the organisation and respond as needed without applying typical redundant methods (Marquardt & Berger, 2000, p. 24).

Numbers of studies in regards to various leadership styles tended to underline individual of each particular style as earlier mentioned. It was not impossible to say that leadership style was a topic that received rather fragmented treatment. Avery (2004) further fixed this flaw by proposing four paradigms that offered a broader basis for different forms of leadership that evolved at different times and in different places. The paradigms were adopted as a framework for measuring concepts of leadership as they embraced a broad range of leadership concepts and were described as following.

Classical leadership referred to dominance by a pre-eminent person or an “elite” group of people. Under this paradigm, leaders typically used an autocratic style for making decision, involving few to no followers at all in having their say in the decision making processes (Avery, 2004).

The second paradigm known as transactional leadership recognised subordinates’ needs and desires, and then clarified how those needs and desires could be met in exchange for subordinates’ works. By so doing, this sort of leaders were able to build confidence in subordinates to exert necessary effort to achieve expected levels of performance (Avery, 2004).

The third one was visionary (transformational, charismatic) leadership that received increasing attention along the last three decades (House, 1977; ; Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985; Conger & Kanungo, 1987). Leaders of this paradigm constituted an impression that he or she had a high competence and a vision to achieve success. Bass

(1985, 1998) later developed the theory of visionary or transformational leadership where the leaders inspired and provoked subordinates to perform beyond their typical expectation.

Organic leadership was the fourth and newly developed paradigm introduced by Drath (2001) and expanded by Avery (2004). This very paradigm admired reciprocal action where team members worked together in roles of authority and power they had, not based on position power (Rothschild & Whitt, 1986; Hirschorn, 1997; Raelin, 2003). Under this paradigm, there were no formal leaders and the interaction of all organisational members executed as a form of leadership. They are held together by a shared vision, values, and a supporting culture. As a result, this paradigm granted integrator role to actively link together the many parts of the organisation (Avery, 2004). By this, leadership was believed to establish vital link between organisational effectiveness and people's performance at an organisational level (Teece et al., 1997; Bass, 1998; Avolio, 1999; McGrath & MacMillan, 2000; Judge et al., 2002; Yukl, 2002; Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Purcell et al., 2004; Keller, 2006).

To a surprising extent, a large number of scholars debated the effectiveness of leadership styles but left many unanswered questions and gaps that further became a conundrum (Shamir et al., 1993; House & Aditya, 1997; Analoui, 1999; Kakabadse & Kakabadse, 1999; Shamir & Howell, 1999, Yukl, 1999; Drath, 2001; Avery, 2004). For example, numbers of previous researches on relationship between leadership and performance examined just a restricted numbers of leadership paradigms, most of which were visionary and transactional paradigm while ignoring other potential ones such as classical and organic paradigms (Jing & Avery, 2008).

Scholar like Bass (1985) was an example as such whose study provided only distinction between transformational and transactional leadership. This study had been widely criticised because there was no one best style of leadership and different kinds of leadership reflected different social and historical roots, depending on the context (Bryman, 1992; Shamir & Howell, 1999; Yukl, 1999; Drath, 2001; Avery, 2004). The implication from this was that different leadership paradigm could affect performance differently depending on the context. Inevitably, the context needed to be taken into

account under much scrutiny when researching the leadership-performance relationship (Jing & Avery, 2008).

In spite of the prevalence of recognition in the importance of leadership, this concept however seemed to lack on coherence and agreement. In particular, leadership literature confounded the definition by failing to make clear distinction for example between leaders and nonleaders, between effective and ineffective leaders as well as overlooking the definition of the level of leadership (House & Aditya, 1997; Bennis, 1998; Bergsteiner, 2005). Furthermore, there were few researches that particularly addressed the relationship between leadership behaviour and organisational performance (Jing & Avery, 2008). Hence, it was iniquitous to say that research into leadership-performance relationship was perfectly conclusive. Many scholars criticised and concluded that existing researches in this area contained plenty of difficulties and many unsolved problems.

Conclusion thus could hardly be drawn about the extent to which leadership behaviours and style facilitated the improvement of organisational performance. That was to say many problems and gaps in existing studies of the leadership-performance relationship were required to be perfectly scrutinised before clear picture of this relationship could be drawn (Jing & Avery, 2008).

2.6 Relationship between Leadership Styles And Organisational Structure

As earlier described, each leadership style contained its own unique attribute. Organisational structure was alike. Many scholars suggested many different forms of structure. Mintzberg (1979), for example, indicated that organisation encompassed six basic parts which included top management (strategic apex), middle management (middle line), technical core (operating core), technical support staffs (techno-structure), and administrative support staff (support staffs). By combining these six parts together, it constructed seven organisational structure configuration or a form of structure. All of them include entrepreneurial, machine, professional, diversified, innovative, missionary, and political organisation. Each structural configuration or form of structure contained its own attribute. According to the work of Chen (2006), attribute of the individual structure found correlated to leadership styles in terms of the strength of each styles of leadership.

Entrepreneurial organisation had a focal point on the leader owing to its small and simple structure (Daft, 1998). By this structure, the strength of charismatic leadership was strong whilst the strength of transactional and transformational leadership was medium. The strength of servant leaders however was weak (Chen, 2006). For machine organisation which involved rigid hierarchical and centralisation (Robbins, 1991), more attentions were paid to administrative support staff and technical support staff. Attribute of transactional leadership was strong in machine organisation. Charismatic leadership turned out to be medium. Transformational and servant leadership were weak. For diversified organisation, owing to high delegation of authority to divisional level, attribute of this kind of structure made strength of transactional and charismatic leadership medium whereas those of transformational and servant leadership were weak (Chen, 2006). For professional organisation, its attribute tended to facilitate the power of professional operators. By that, the strength of servant leadership was strong, charismatic and transformational leadership were medium, and transactional leadership was weak (Chen, 2006). For innovative organisation, in the light of its adhocracy that stemmed from organic and decentralised structure, authorities in this kind of organisation empowered to relevant operating core (Robbins, 1991). Thus, attribute of this structure appeared to support the strength of transformational leadership to be strong but that of transactional leader as weak. The strength of charismatic and servant leadership in innovative structure were medium (Chen, 2006). For missionary organisation, it controlled by embracing values tied to mission and leaders tend to inspire people to complete its mission. Therefore, the strength of charismatic leadership was so strong whilst that of transactional leadership was weak. The strength of transformational and servant leadership in missionary organisation appeared to be medium. Lastly, political organisation whose attribute was dominated by politics and conflicts. Organisation as such had no any form of order since way of doing things depended on the fluidity of informal power (Chen, 2006). The strength of leadership style of transactional, transformational, and charismatic leadership was medium whilst that of servant leadership was weak. Table 2.1 concluded the correlation between each individual leadership style and form of organisation structure in corporations with the level of strength of leadership style.

Table 2.1 Correlation between Leadership Style, Structure, and Strength of Leadership

Organisation Form	Leadership style			
	Transactional	Charismatic	Transformational	Servant
Entrepreneurial	Medium	Strong	Medium	Weak
Machine	Strong	Medium	Weak	Weak
Diversified	Medium	Medium	Weak	Weak
Professional	Weak	Medium	Medium	Strong
Innovative	Weak	Medium	Strong	Medium
Missionary	Weak	Strong	Medium	Medium
Political	Medium	Medium	Medium	Weak

Source: Chen, 2006.

2.7 Customer Issue Resolution

Customer satisfaction was widely known as a key component for any organisation that sought success and prosperity. It was rigorously linked to higher profit margin and greater employee satisfaction, customer retention and repeat purchase (Berry & Parasuraman, 1992; Jones & Sasser, 1995; Schneider & Bowen, 1995; Conrad et al., 1997; Appiah-Adu & Singh, 1999). Competitors amongst similar industries increasingly paid a great deal of attention to customer satisfaction to create competitive advantage (Koch-Laabs, 2001). It was therefore a must for organisations to consider customer satisfaction as a key leverage point to differentiate themselves from other organisations. A caveat made by Salierno (2006, p. 19) in this regard clearly stated that weakness in the area of client satisfaction most certainly pose a very significant risk to the organisation.

Typically, satisfaction of the customers could be created as long as their problems were resolved with appropriateness and in the extent to which such resolution attained their expectation. By appropriateness, particularly in the service field, Farahani and Torma (2010) noted that it meant the customers would like to

believe in expectations as “should” rather than “would”. Customers in this sense did not genuinely expect what service providers were capable to deliver to them but rather what they should deliver according to customer’s ideal standard (Farahani and Torma, 2010). Moreover, as indicated by several scholars, issue resolution for customers considerably increased their satisfaction. Added to that, complex organisational structure, as a result of globalisation, was empirically proven to influence issue resolution (Longman & Mullins, 2004; Chan, 2005; William, 2007).

These days, it was infrequent to find businesses that provided solution and support for different products or services to similar customers by embracing one company organisational structure (Colletti & Fiss, 2006, p. 126). To a surprising extent, some scholars however pointed out that complex organisational structure could be impediment to customer issue resolution and thus resulting in customer dissatisfaction (Longman & Mullins, 2004; Chan, 2005; William, 2007). In addition, it was worth noting that structure with less management layers such as self-managed team was proven to improve customer satisfaction providing that organisation had to have overarching leadership to implement this sort of structure successfully (Tata & Prasad, 2004).

Dissatisfied customers could become detrimental to organisation since negative experiences were most likely to share amongst customers and eventually could to a certain extent inhibit business growth because customer loyalty profoundly hinged on issue resolution (Lockwood & Deng, 2004). Organisation therefore was obliged to acquire significant characteristics such as management support of dispute resolution, understanding of issues facing the company, and specifically senior management support of nurturing customer relationship (Naimark, 2004). By this Naimark (2004) added that issue resolution found to be of great assistance in the development for stronger customer relationship and in return repeat business.

To bolster issue resolution, leaders played significant role by taking holistic approach to issue resolution (Locander & Luechauer, 2007). In doing so, leaders needed to explore under much scrutiny previous successes of the organisation regarding issue resolution. Previous successes were a crucial source for a leader to synthesise and exemplify particular elements that revealed the significant characteristics leading to the successful resolution (Locander & Luechauer, 2007).

Thus by inquiry and identification of past successes, a leader played crucial part for future organisational improvement by which improving customer issue resolution to some extent (Locander & Luechauer, 2007).

When resolving customer issues, more confident organisation rather performed in a positive manner (Kerfoot, 2004). By this, leader could play a large part in constituting a confident organisation by example and continuing support within the organisation (Kerfoot, 2004).

It was, according to Bowman (2008), a prerequisite to understand any given problems before recommending solution. Bowman strongly indicated that clear understanding of the root cause of the problem aided in defining an effective customer issue resolution. More importantly, organisation was supposed to put every possible endeavour to find common threads amongst customer issues since they were of great assistance to maximise effort toward resolution (Muzzy, 2008). Some scholar went further by articulating that any given company that compiled and disseminated knowledge related to specific customers was enabled to gain a better understanding of the customer needs and issues (Malter et al., 2005). After all, Table 2.2 illustrated summary of historical studies in relation to variables being attended in this current study.

Table 2.2 Summary of Historical Studies in Relation to the Current Study

Variables in the current study	Issues relevant to current study	References
Organisational structure	- Structure and environment	- Ashby (1954), Dill (1958), Burns and Stalker (1961), Katz and Kahn (1966), Lawrence and Lorch (1967), Mohr (1971), Galbraith (1977), Aldrich and Herker (1977), Mintzberg (1979), Drazin and Van de Van (1985), Alexander and Randolph (1985), Morgan (1997), Gresove (1989), Robbins (1991), Bailey (1993), Huselid (1995), Daft (1998), Jones (2001), Donaldson (2001), Jaffee (2001), Scott (2003), Longman and Mullins

Table 2.2 (Continued)

Variables in the current study	Issues relevant to current study	References
		(2004), Chan (2005), De Paolo and Scoppa (2006), Shivers -Blackwell (2006), Wiley et al. (2006),
	- Structure and customer issue resolution	- Gibson and Cohen (2003), William (2007)
	- Structure and political process	- Child (1972)
	- Structure and effectiveness	- Pennings (1975)
Organisational performance and effectiveness	- Performance and environment	- Scott (2003)
	- Performance and culture	- Hong, Donald, and Szurgyi (2006)
	- Effectiveness and control	- Gillespie, Denison, Haaland, Smerek, and Neale (2007)
	- Effectiveness and ability to acquire resources	- Ouchi (1977)
	- Effectiveness and purpose attainment	- Yuchtman and Seashore (1967)
	- Effectiveness and other performance concept	- Strasser, Eveland, and Deniston (1981)
Leadership	- Adaptive and flexible leadership	- Manann, Schiemann, Bellora, and Guenther (2013)
	- Leadership and Org. Performance	- Bennis (2001), Bass et al. (2003)
	- Leadership and employee satisfaction	- Cannella and Rowe (1995), Giambatista (2004), Rowe et al. (2005), Barling et al. (1996), Berson et al. (2001), Zacharatos et al. (2000), Camilleri (2007)
	- Leader style and authority	- Kim et al. (2005), Peters and Waterman (1982)
	- Leaders and its influence	- Mclean (2005)
	- Leadership characteristics	- Friedman and Langbert (2000)
		- Tubbs and Schulz (2005), Locander and Luechauer (2006), Harland et al. (2005), Boerner et al. (2007), Raelin (2004), Cox and Sims (2006), Joseph and Winston (2005), Black et al (1999), Marquardt & Berger (2000), Avery (2004), Bass (1985, 1998),

Table 2.2 (Continued)

Variables in the current study	Issues relevant to current study	References
		Burn (1978), Conger and Kanungo (1987), House (1977), Drath (2001)
	- Leadership and effectiveness	- Avolio (1999), Bass (1998), Judge et al (2002), Judge and Piccolo (2004), Keller (2006), McGrath and MacMilan (2000), Purcell et al. (2004), Teece et al. (1997), Yukl (1999, 2002), Analoui (1999), House and Aditya (1997), Kakabadse and Kakabadse (1999), Shamir et al (1993), Jing and Avery (2008)
	- Leadership style and organisational structure	- Chen (2006)
Customer issue resolution	- Customer satisfaction and profit margin	- Appiah-Adu & Singh (1999), Berry and Parasuraman (1992), Conrad et al. (1997), Jones & Sasser (1995), Schneider and Bowen (1995), Knch-Laabs (2001), Salierno (2006), Lockwood and Deng (2004)
	- Customer satisfaction and measurements	- Farahani and Torma (2010), Muzzy (2008), Malter, Ganesan and Webdstar (2005)
	- Satisfaction, issue resolution, relationship, and structure	- Chan (2005), Longman and Mullins (2004), William (2007), Colletti and Fiss (2006), Tata and Prasad (2004), Naimark (2004), Bowman (2008)

Source: By Author

2.8 Summary

Over the course of past decades, evolution of organisation from scientific management to the globalisation stream put immense forces organisation in all industries to adapt and alter in order to survive. In doing so, organisation was strongly

required to stay effective and advantageous in an ever changing environment these days. Only because and to the extent that organisational performance and effectiveness were so very crucial for purpose as such organisations therefore had to seek and muster key elements to do so successfully. There were many ways and factors that organisation chose to address in this regard however most of which undeniably was strategic restructuring.

Albeit many studies noted that leadership style influenced organisational performance, others had been strikingly criticised upon their findings owing to weaknesses and limitations in various dimensions. Literatures apparently unveiled that many works mainly addressed organisational structure aimed to seek the best solution to improve its performance at its best. Since the success of organisation could be addressed in various facets, one of those was to satisfy its customer with decent issue resolution. Only because and to the extent that weakness in the area of client satisfaction could pose a very significant risk to the organisation (Salierno, 2006, p. 19) and customer dissatisfaction inevitably led to loss of opportunities for the organisation and financial growth of the business (Longman & Mullins, 2004; Chan, 2005; William, 2007). By this, literatures too revealed that customer satisfaction valued the credit of issue resolution and complex organisational structure relatively influenced customer issue resolution.

Moreover, complex organisational structure could impede customer issue resolution and resulting in customer dissatisfaction. Even knowledgeable, skilled, and motivated employees never deployed their discretionary time and talent unless the organisational structure and job design offered latitude to act (Bailey, 1993; Huselid, 1995). Fewer organisational layers enabled the increase in the flow of communication across the entire organisation resulting in faster turnaround for opportunity (Schultz, 2006). This approach for the sake of betterment in organisational structure however required decent leadership style as catalyst to foster and seek for better performance and effectiveness. The more systematic thinker the leaders were, that was able to understand the root cause of the customer problem, the more opportunities to facilitate desired structure of the organisation that nourished effective customer issue resolution. Intriguingly, attribute of each leadership style found correlated to

configuration or form of organisational structure in terms of the degree of strength of leadership style (Chen, 2006).

Lastly, literatures also unfolded that there was a few study that explored the relationship between organisational structure and customer issue resolution. The current study was therefore developed upon suggestion from the previous study which put forward that replication of the study within different setting was recommended for deeper understanding of relationship as such.

It was not impossible to say that review of the literature yielded convincing power on this study to conceptualise the relationship between two variables. By this, organisational structure was seen as independent variable and customer issue resolution should be treated as dependent variable. Leadership style however appeared to play its part as a moderator in between these two variables.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current qualitative phenomenological study intended to answer its purpose that sought to explore and describe the live experiences of frontline division directors of Suvarnabhumi Airport, specifically to understand the influence of organisational structure on customer issue resolution. By this, a phenomenological explanation was merited because basically it attempts to disclose behavioural structure and unveil the lived experiences that constitute the relationship between people and how the world influences individual behaviour (Van Kaam, 1966). Chapter 2 presented and demonstrated the overview of organisational theories including related studies towards organisational structure, performance and effectiveness. Moreover, it described interrelationship amongst leadership styles, organisational performance, and organisational structure. It also covered how customer satisfaction in terms of customer issue resolution related to the structure, including leadership style. Chapter 3 introduces the methodology of the current research study by describing the design of the current study that employed a qualitative research approach. The current study was conducted from a qualitative approach and addressed the phenomenological study as its rudiments. This chapter too expounds the extent to which the phenomenological study was appropriate for the current study rather than otherwise. The detailing of the population and sampling of the study including confidentiality to protect the participants during the data collection process also appears in this chapter. The current qualitative phenomenological study applied three sorts of instruments with explanations of why and how they were employed. The chapter also delineates the data collection procedure and how information retrieved during the collection process was proven valid and reliable. The last part of the chapter is dedicated to detailing the data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

The current study was deliberately designed on the basis of qualitative methods and embraced phenomenological explanation as the researcher made an attempt to explore and describe a particular event with no intent of generalising results or testing theories and hypothesis. The purpose of the current qualitative, phenomenological study was to explore and describe the live experiences of frontline division directors of Suvarnabhumi Airport, specifically to understand the influence of organisational structure on customer issue resolution. To demonstrate the extent to which qualitative methods convinced the researcher of the current study, Morse (1994, p. 120) pointed out that characteristics of a qualitative research problem were (a) the concept was “immature” due to a conspicuous lack of theory and previous research; (b) a notion that the available theory might be inaccurate, inappropriate, incorrect, or biased; (c) a need existed to explore and describe the phenomena and to develop theory; or (d) the nature of the phenomenon might not be suited to quantitative measures.

Morse (1994) further explained that whenever the problem is identifying factors that influence an outcome, the utility of an intervention, or understanding the best predictors in outcomes, then a quantitative approach is best. Once a concept or phenomenon needs to be understood because little research had been done on it, then it merits a qualitative approach. This is because this very approach is exploratory and useful when the researcher does not know the important variables to examine. It could also be needed because the topic is rather new, the topic has never been addressed with a certain sample or group of people, or existing theories do not apply with the particular sample or group under study (Morse, 1994; Creswell, 2007a, 2007b).

One might concede that each particular research design contains both strengths and weakness. However, above all, it depends very much on the researchers and the answers to intended research question. To a large extent, quantitative research aims to test theories and hypotheses with the intent of generalising results (Simon, 2006, p. 152). It obtains numerical data and analyses collected data using mathematical procedures (Creswell, 2007a, 2007b). Contradictory, qualitative research, however, obtains data in the form of words and analyses the collected data using common

themes to describe events (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Creswell, 2007a, 2007b). A mixed method design goes further by using both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques and analysis describing the phenomenon under study (Creswell, 2007a, 2007b). Qualitative method, therefore, best merits the current study.

Many qualitative studies were conducted based on various approaches. Clandinin and Connelly (2000), for example, constructed a picture of what “narrative researchers do”. Moustakas (1994) discussed the philosophical tents and the procedure of the “phenomenological method” whilst Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998) explicated the procedures of grounded theory. Wolcott (1999) summarized ethnographic procedures, and Stake (1995) identified the processes of case study. Creswell (2007a, 2007b), however, drew strategies of inquiry from the previous studies and put forward his summary of five approaches. 1) Ethnographies is where the study focuses on an intact cultural group in a natural setting over a prolonged period of time by collecting primarily observational data (Creswell, 1998). The process is flexible and evolves continually in response to the lived realities encountered in the field setting (Lecompte, 1999). 2) Grounded theory is where the researcher attempts to derive a general, abstract theory of a process, action, or interaction grounded in the views of participants in a study. This process involves using multiple stages of data collection, and the refinement and interrelationship of categories of information (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998). Two characteristics of this design are the constant comparison of data with emerging categories and theoretical sampling of different groups to maximise the similarities and the differences of information. 3) Case study is where the goal is to explore in depth a programme, an event, an activity, a process, or one or more individuals. The cases are bounded by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time (Stake, 1995). 4) Phenomenological research aims to identify the “essence” of human experiences concerning a phenomenon, as described by participants in a study. Understanding the “lived experiences” marks phenomenology as a philosophy, as well as a method, and the procedure involves studying a small number of subjects through extensive and prolonged engagement to develop patterns and relationships of meaning (Moustakas, 1994). Researchers “bracket” his or her own experiences in order to understand those

of the participants in the study (Nieswiadomy, 1993). 5) Narrative research makes a focal point on studying the lives of individuals and asking one or more individuals to provide stories about their lives, then retell or restory by the researcher into a narrative chronology. In the end, the narrative combines views from the participant's life with those of the researchers' life in a collaborative narrative (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

3.2 Appropriateness of Qualitative Method to the Current Study

The current study neither intended to define relationships between variables, which appropriately describes a quantitative study, nor intended to explore phenomena for common themes and to test the themes for a rational purpose to understand the phenomena, which describes a mix method study. Rather, the current study merited a qualitative research design only because and to the extent that the goal of a qualitative study is to unfold the nature of multiple perspectives held by individuals in complex settings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Bradley & Devers, 2007). Moreover, phenomenological research is an appropriate and effective means for the purpose of the current study because phenomenological explanation, by its nature, endeavours to reveal behavioural structure and lived experiences that constitute the relationship of people and how the world influences individual behaviour (Husserl, 1981; Van Kaam, 1966). This feature demonstrates that phenomenological research design could, to a certain extent, contribute to the purpose of the current study.

The current study intended to explore and describe the lived experiences of frontline division directors in resolving customer issues at Suvarnabhumi Airport, specifically to understand the influence of organisational structure at the implementation level on customer issue resolution. There had been so far only the study conducted by Salas (2009) that addressed the dyadic relationship between organisational structure and customer issue resolution. This relationship, however, had never been explored towards airport employees who worked within the airport context. The use of either quantitative or mixed method was not appropriate for the current study

Moreover, appropriateness was claimed in that phenomenological design is suitable to understand the perception through the lived experience of frontline division directors of Suvarnabhumi Airport on how organisational structure influenced customer issue resolution. Moreover, the current phenomenological study was carried out and guided by the openness of the researcher which allowed the phenomenon to disclose itself (Van Kaam, 1966).

As earlier discussed, the current study was conducted using qualitative methods by which the phenomenological study was rudimentary. This study comprised of two phases, starting off with a pilot test, followed by the final interview process.

3.3 Instrumentation

The current study employed three sorts of instrumentation, all of which included the researcher per se, the use of structured interview protocol or interview script, and the use of a set of structured interview in-depth questions for all participants. The researcher here was the primary instrument for collecting descriptive data in the qualitative, phenomenological study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Creswell, 2007a, 2007b). The ability of the researcher played a crucial role to study participants in the participants' given location (Creswell, 2007a, 2007b). Moreover, by using structured interview protocol and using the same set of questions for each participant, perception was then set aside, ensuring that the feelings and perceptions of the participants were accurately uncovered (Husserl, 1981; Moustakas, 1994). The current phenomenological study employed structured in-depth personal interviews (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) incorporated with participatory observation.

Albeit all qualitative interviews contain the same basic elements such as discussion, detail, and description, they vary, however, with respect to the extent to which the interviewer has control over the participants' answers. The structure of the interview generally ranges from loose, where the interviewer has minimal control, to rigid, where the interviewer delivers a specific set of questions and the participant had so very little room to elaborate. The choice of structure, therefore, depends on the type of investigation being conducted and the purpose of the interview. By a similar

token, the different types of questions used depend on the type of interview structure and the level of control during the interview. Those different types, however, are in common in that they are all purposeful and systematic. By this, it means that the interviewer has objectives and plans for collecting targeted information.

There are a number of ways to classify interviews by type. Generally, there are five different types of interviews widely used including 1) structured interview 2) semi-structured interview 3) unstructured interview 4) informal interview and 5) focus group. This chapter, however, aims to address the distinction amongst the first three types that are mainly popular and to discuss them later in this chapter. It is worth noting that the researcher ought to recognise the different types of interviews since these distinctions are somewhat artificial, and there are crucial similarities and differences across these types.

Unstructured interview is advantageous for exploratory investigations of new topics and ideas or when the topic is not well known or understood. It entirely allows participants to express themselves freely with minimal control from the interviewer. This helps the researcher gain the most possible information. By its interactive nature, unstructured interview often depends on the ability and experience of the interviewer. Thus the interviewer with experience and skill in both interviewing and note taking is highly recommended.

On the contrary, semi-structured interview contains more control by the interviewer. In doing so, the interviewer works with a script of proscribed questions, or an “interview guide,” that allows a limited level of flexibility. This guide provides some room to follow new leads while also demonstrating that the interviewer is prepared and has control over the situation. The interviewer in this sense is needed to be able to skillfully switch between prescribed and unstructured question to clarify responses or to elaborate once a participant provides contradictory information. This type of interview is best for obtaining specific details about topics that have already been explored in unstructured interviews. In addition, it is useful for comparing answers amongst larger groups of participants and for participants who are time efficient such as busy managers or doctors.

Structured interview is a carefully developed and worded set of questions prior to the interview process which is conducted through various means such as telephone,

face-to-face or even intercept interview. By this type of interview, the interviewer delivers the same questions in the same way with the same probes. This facilitates a cross-comparison of answers over time and compensates for variability in skill across different interviewers. It also helps minimise errors that might occur from participant behavior, type of questionnaires or wording or even the flawed questioning technique (Fontana & Frey, 1994). This type of interview is best when a great deal of information about the topic is already recognised. Its weakness, however, is that it does not allow the interviewer to pursue unanticipated topics or issues. That is to say, it provides very little flexibility in questions and answers with a theoretical script to follow (Fontana & Frey, 1994). Moreover, structured interview also reduces the extent to which individual circumstances and differences are explored.

Since the current qualitative research study employed structured interview as one of its major instruments, to overcome the weakness of structured interview, the current study needed to include significant keywords (Moustakas, 1994) in the interview questions to ensure concise wording to be obtained and comments to be freely spoken during the interview process. The use of the word “how” helped participants respond with concise and clear wording, whilst the word “perceive” facilitated participants to provide individual perceptions about the question as it related to the individuals’ personal experiences (Moustakas, 1994). Added to that, the word “describe” encouraged participants to express details that related to the question and individual experiences in an open-ended format (Moustakas, 1994). Lastly, the word “experience” allowed participants to share the views and opinions of individual experiences which related to the posed research questions (Moustakas, 1994). The set of interview questions in the current study is listed as follows.

- 1) Describe the division you work with your roles as division director (DD).
- 2) Describe if your current responsibility relates to resolving customer issues. Explain how you resolve those issues.
- 3) What experiences are most relevant in resolving customer issues? Provide examples for further details.
- 4) Describe your authority being assigned as DD in resolving customer issues. Provide examples to support your claim.

5) Describe your perception to other division when resolving customer issues. Provide examples to support your claim.

6) What suggestions would you make to improve issue resolution?

7) To your perception, explain if organisational structure influences customer issue resolution. Provide examples to support your claim.

8) Base on your experiences, explain how organisational structure influences customer issue resolution. Provide examples you may have.

9) What changes to the organisational structure would you suggest to improve customer issue resolution? Provide examples to support your claim.

10) Base on your experience what does the recommended organisational structure look like to you to improve customer issue resolution? Provide examples of any certain cases.

11) (For pilot testing experts only). What additional interview questions would you suggest to improve the proposed research study?

Demographic Question

12) How many years have you been working as division director?

13) What is your highest level of education attained?

14) What is your age range?

Questions 1 to 3 intended to capture the lived experiences of division directors that was appropriate to support the guiding research question including sub question 1.

Question 4 allowed participants to reveal their experiences within specific divisions and their interactions.

Question 5 reflected how the organisational structure affected their way of resolving customer issues through their authority. These two questions helped develop a deeper understanding of customer issue resolution in relation to organisational structure. Either positive or negative experiences answered to these two questions were instructive to prepare participants to answer the remaining interview questions.

Questions 4 to 6 supported sub question 2 by mustering factors that affected how division directors resolve customer issues.

Questions 7 to 8 supported sub question 3 by demonstrating how the organisation structure at the implementation level influenced customer issue resolution.

Questions 9 to 10 answered sub question 4 that sought a recommended organisational structure from the employees' perspectives at the implementation level. As a result, it helped participants provide constructive input for the leader (the President of AOT, in this case) to consider when designing an organisation responsible for customer issue resolution. In addition, demographic questions contributed to demonstrating how broad the perspective was, based on the demographic results.

3.4 Data Collection

At the earlier stage, the researcher sent a letter to the President of AOT for approval in principle. The approved letter later was disseminated to notify relevant units in advance. By then, the researcher solicited via intranet, letter, or phone call to request for voluntary participation (Appendix B). All participants were well notified about the study and the purpose of the interview. Prior to the interview, the researcher presented informed consent letters (Appendix A) to participate and to allow for audio recording during the interview process. Since the interview was conducted in Thai, the researcher needed to use a translator. Transcriber service was also required to transform audio recordings to textual structure. The researcher then applied coding and thematic schemes to categorise obtained information. To ensure the anonymity of participant, the transcriber needed to sign for transcriber confidentiality agreement (Appendix C). Figure 3.1 illustrates the steps in preparation prior to conducting an interview.

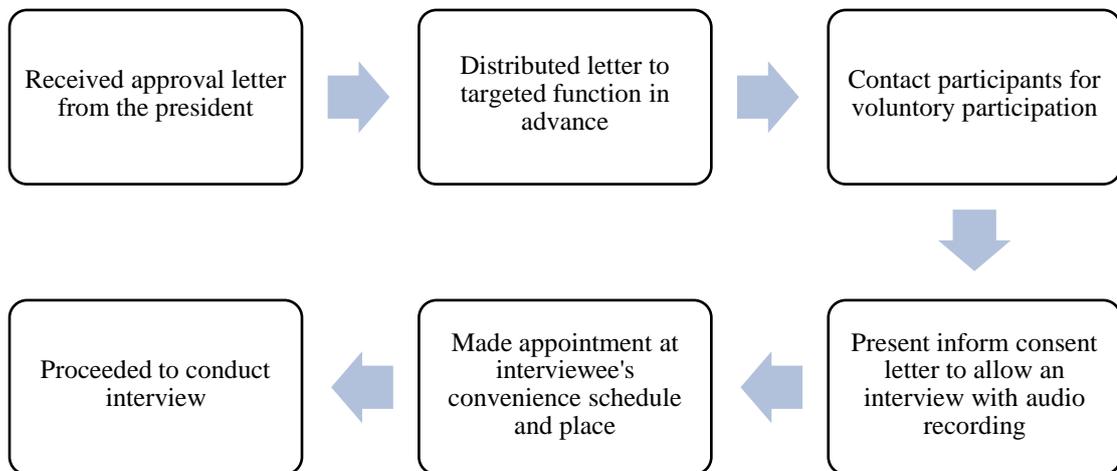


Figure 3.1 Preparation Steps Prior to Conducting an Interview

Source: By Author

The first phase of the interview was a pilot test. The purpose of this test was neither for ensuring that the survey or questionnaire was used properly nor for ensuring that the obtained information was consistent. Rather, this pilot test was to assure the researcher that the questions were decent to such an extent that the participants responded with true experience and perception without further clarification required. The researcher of the current study used two experts who were previous frontline division directors of Suvarnabhumi Airport to conduct pilot tests on the interview questions (Appendix D). The second phase was the final interview that the researcher further applied on the rest of the participants.

3.5 Pilot Test Results

As earlier described, the pilot test was an attempt to clarify the final interview questions to ensure an answer to the current research questions. More specifically, it also helped final interview questions make sense to the participants. The pilot interview commenced after receiving an approval from the president of AOT and the letter of approval was disseminated to the relevant units. The participants of the pilot

interview were two experts whose previous position was the division directors of Suvarnabumi Airport and currently posited in the executive level. Owing to their tight schedule, the second pilot interview was almost two weeks far behind the first one. The first interview was scheduled and conducted on September 11, 2014 and the second interview was on September 30, 2014. By this, researcher applied the interview protocol (Appendix E) to both pilot test participants so as to standardise the data collection method. The researcher started off by elucidating the purpose of the current study for the participants to entirely comprehend the extent to which the pilot test interview was imperative to the study. By so doing, the pilot test participants were perfectly aware of how they would be able to refine the interview questions (Appendix D). The researcher conducted the pilot test interview in accordance with the interview protocol (Appendix E). The first pilot test was conducted at the participant own office to assimilate the social context. The overall interview process took 56.47 minutes and demonstrated instructive information that considerably contributed to a greater level of smoothness for further interviews. By then, it brought about a better clarification of interview questions. By applying the revised interview questions from the first pilot test interview, the second pilot test interview which was conducted in a meeting room, took only 31.30 minutes. The participant in the second pilot test clarified and recommended two additional questions to the series of questions. After all, the researcher reviewed the final interview questions thoroughly and presented them to the pilot test experts for final verification. By then, the two experts asserted that the revised final interview questions (Appendix F) were entirely decent to divulge the information on the lived experience of division directors in resolving issues and to understand the influence of organisational structure on customer issue resolution.

3.6 Data Collection Process

The data collection process of the current research study was organised into two phases. The pilot test was the first phase with an attempt to ensure the clarification of the interview questions. By this, the participants in the pilot test played a significant role in assisting to validate the interview questions (Appendix D) to

guarantee that the interview questions precisely and thoroughly addressed the overarching research question. The second phase was the final interview where data retrieved was essential for analysis. By exploiting results from the pilot test in the first phase, the researcher reviewed and further developed the set of interview questions to apply to nineteen deliberately selected participants in the final interview (Appendix F). Added to that, the researcher also embraced structural interview protocol or interview script in the same manner for each and every participant (Appendix E). By so doing, the data collection process became systematic to promise repeatability and reliability. During the interview process, those participants provided informative data through their lived experiences that to a certain extent responded to the purpose of the current study. The interview questions appear to have divulged textual data that was supportive to the current study.

In order to conserve time, during the process of the pilot test interview, the researcher simultaneously approached nineteen purposefully selected participants who were qualified for the final interview via phone calls, e-mails, in-person. All of them were delighted to participate and support the current study. Each and every participant received further details of the schedule and location for the individual interviews. Several participants requested for rearrangement of the schedule and location at their convenience. Some of them declined the meeting instantly and requested for other arrangement. Once the revised schedule fit their everyday work, final interviews commenced. The first interview began on September 19, 2014 and the last one was conducted on December 25, 2014. All interviews were conducted in accordance with the interview protocol in Appendix E. The researcher started off by providing a description of the current research study to ensure that the participant perfectly apprehended the purpose the study. The researcher proffered informed consent with full explanation to the participant and assured their right to withdraw at their convenience and their anonymities. Once everything was agreed on, audio recording began and each participant answered interview questions as shown in Appendix F. Since the researcher conducted almost all interviews in privacy, such as in the participants' office or private meeting room, and made appointments well in advance, the participants were enabled to speak freely at their most convenience and available time. As a result, the participants provided exhaustively detailed responses constructive to the study.

The second phase was the final interview whose process was guided by the prepared interview protocol (Appendix E). At this stage, the researcher thoroughly obtained the intended information during the final interview process which took place in the participants' social context, in other words, their work place. By so doing, the participants being influenced by that context were likely to express true feelings and emotions (Fontana & Frey, 1994). The researcher conducted in-depth interviews in person in association with participatory observation. Moreover, the researcher also employed note taking to guarantee accurate documentation. In doing so, the researcher carried on taking note and analysing regularly. Everything that emerged during the interview process was heard, mustered, and included in note taking by all means no matter to what extent, on the basis of "polyphonic interviewing". The interview was navigated by the openness of the researcher which allowed the phenomenon to reveal itself (Van Kaam, 1966). As a result, the participants were allowed for more room to freely share and comment. The researcher delivered the same set of questions (Appendix F) to all participants. This session lasted 30 – 60 minutes each, approximately. Owing to schedule constraints, the pilot test took two weeks, whilst the final interview spent three to four months.

The sample of the study consisted of nineteen participants who were all division directors (DD) of Suvarnabhumi Airport. This number conforms to the sample size of a phenomenological study suggested by Creswell (2007a, 2007b) and Morse (1994). These participants regularly were either the primary or secondary contact for customers of the airport. By this, Creswell (2007a, 2007b) also explained that intentionally selected participants described purposeful sampling that is used to comprehend the central phenomenon. Since the individuals involved in the study were typical, purposeful sampling was appropriate in that it was typical sampling when the study employed a typical person or site unfamiliar to outsiders in the participant situation (Creswell, 2007a, 2007b).

In harness of confidentiality, an alphanumeric code combination, DD01 and DD02 for example, was assigned to each participant. This was to ensure that the identity of the participants were anonymous. Moreover, all electronic data and paper data obtained from the interviews were treated in the strictest confidence; they had been kept in a secured place. Files were protected with secured passwords, and to be terminated by shredding within three years after the completion of the study.

3.7 Validity

Validity, according to Creswell (2007a, 2007b), refers to a researcher's ability to depict appropriate inference and conclusion from the data. Theoretically, there are several strategies to support validity. Some of them include extensive field study, negative case analysis, thick description, expert feedback, and participant validation. According to Moustakas (1994), participant validation, however, is paramount in the validity of data. By this, it means the researcher manages to share individual textural-structural description with each participant. In doing so, each and every participant is requested for any necessary additions or corrections to confirm the findings precisely portraying the participants' experiences of the given phenomenon. Since in phenomenological study the researcher plays both roles of questioner and interpreter, he or she influences the data of the study to a certain extent. To overcome the issue of bias, this study thus incorporated objective methods with subjective methods. By objective methods, the researcher attached to stringent, systematic steps of data collection and analysis. Whilst subjective methods included selecting a research topic associated to the researcher's interest, addressing the researcher as the interviewer, and interpreting the data to describe the core structure of the meaning to experience the phenomenon. In addition, the researcher also recognised and was perfectly conscious that it was pivotal to embrace the following questions to validate data as advised by Polkinghorne (1989). Once all questions were satisfactorily answered, the researcher was released from dubieties on the validity of the findings from the current phenomenological study.

1) Does the interviewer influence the contents of the subjects' descriptions in such a way that the descriptions do not truly reflect the subjects' actual experience?

2) Is the transcription accurate, and does it convey the meaning of the oral presentation in the interview?

3) In the analysis of the transcriptions, are there conclusions other than those offered by the researcher that could have been derived? Have the researcher identified these alternatives and demonstrated why they are less probable than the one decided on?

4) Is it possible to go from the general structural description to the transcriptions and to account for the specific contents and connections in the original examples of the experiences?

5) Is the structural description situation-specific, or does it hold in general for the experience in other situations? (Polkinghorne (1989)

In the current study, the researcher took it seriously to perfectly fulfill the above questions. First, by designing with appropriate words and sequences, the final interview questions allowed the participants to respond from general subjects to specifically the intended research question. The first three questions intended to capture the lived experiences of division directors in general that was appropriate to support the guiding research question. Questions 4 to 6 helped to gather factors that affected how division directors resolved customer issues. Questions 7 to 8 demonstrated how the organisational structure at the implementation level influenced customer issue resolution. Lastly, questions 9 to 10 provided instructive information in terms of recommended a organisational structure from the employees' perspective at the implementation level.

Second, since the researcher of the this study had been working for AOT with 10 years experience from both operational and administrative fields, the technical terms or jargon which emerged during the interview process was, therefore, perfectly comprehensible to the researcher as the interviewer. More specifically, regardless of using a transcriber and translator, each and every interview description was transcribed and translated repeatedly by the researcher to ensure accuracy.

Third, the researcher intended to be most meticulous and overly thoughtful either in the data analysis or description of the findings to avert drawing conclusions that did not directly merit the participants' statements. For example, in many cases, the participant claimed that motivation was the other case that influenced issue resolution. Having said that, they addressed motivation in different perspectives, but only motivation in terms of career path that was associated with organizational structure was expanded and thus clarified for the current study.

Fourth, as seen in Chapter 4, which is dedicated to the findings, there is a description delineating the link between themes and invariant constituents to a specific set of participants' statements.

Fifth, this study was developed from previously similar research studies, yet in a different setting and a different nature of participants with an attempt to corroborate a certain level of generalisability of the findings. As earlier described, the setting of the current research study was Suvarnabhumi Airport, one of the six airports under the administration of AOT. According to its design, the findings of the current study could possibly be applicable to the remaining five airports of AOT.

3.8 Triangulation of the Findings

The researcher even went further to seek validation of the obtained information by applying triangulation. Triangulation was conducted in an attempt to assure the validity of the data received during the interview process. In doing so, the researcher captured different dimensions of the influence of organisational structure on customer issue resolution by discussing the topic of the current study with other employees, both at lower and higher levels of the intended participants, and yet still focusing on the similar departments. As a result, various perspectives from different sources of data were captured comparatively. Added to that, the researcher triangulated the data being received against available documents of AOT such as annual reports, report of overall restructuring of AOT, and the interview description of AOT administrators from various occasions. By so doing, the researcher made sure of the validity of the data being received during the interview process.

3.9 Reliability

Once the validity of the current study was proven, reliability was addressed accordingly. Reliability, according to Creswell (2007a, 2007b), is defined as the repeatability of the research instruments. In the current qualitative phenomenological study, the researcher deliberately delivered the same set of interview questions to all participants. Added to that, the structural interview protocol or interview script was also applied in the same manner. By so doing, the research instrument promised repeatability and reliability.

3.10 Data Analysis

To analyse the data obtained from the collection process, the researcher of the current study employed seven steps of the modified van Kaam method by Moustakas (1994). Details of those steps are proffered as the following.

3.10.1 Step 1 Listing and Preliminary Grouping

Data was listing and grouped data into primary categories and listing every relevant experience (Moustakas, 1994). In doing so, the researcher meticulously listed every single expression associated with the experiences in issue resolution (the process known as “horizontalization”). Those expressions could be seen in many forms including statements, short phrases, or even noun clauses.

3.10.2 Step 2 Reduction and Elimination

Participants' experiences were reduced and eliminated to determine invariant constituents by testing whether each expression attained two requirements (Moustakas, 1994):

- 1) whether experience contained a moment of experience that was a necessary and sufficient constituent for understanding the phenomenon; and
 - 2) whether it was possible to abstract and label this statement.
- Expressions not meeting these two requirements were eliminated. Also overlapping, repetitive, and vague expressions were eliminated or presented in exact descriptive terms (Moustakas, 1994, p. 121).

In this step, the remaining list of expressions constructed sets of invariant constituents of each participant.

3.10.3 Step 3 Clustering and Thematizing the Invariant Constituents

The remaining invariant constituents of the experience from step 3 that were relevant were then clustered into thematic labels. Put simply, they were put into categories and those categories were seen as themes. The clustered and labeled constituents described the core themes of the experiences (Moustakas, 1994).

3.10.4 Step 4 Final Identification of the Invariant Constituents and Themes by Application

The invariant constituents and their accompanying themes were compared against the full transcript of for each participant so as to check for validity as follows. (Moustakas, 1994)

- 1) Were the invariant constituents and themes expressed explicitly in the full transcripts?
- 2) Once they were not explicitly expressed, were they compatible representation?
- 3) Once they were neither explicit nor compatible with the full transcripts, they were not relevant to the participant's experience and the description of the phenomenon and were deleted.

In doing so, it required every participants' transcript be re-read to ensure for accuracy of each invariant constituent. This very step was seen as a modification or re-categorising of invariant constituents.

3.10.5 Step 5 Individual Textural Description

Used the relevant, validated invariant constituents and themes to develop an individual textural description for each participant on the experience relating the influence of organisational structure on customer issue resolution. This step included verbatim examples from the transcripts (i.e. what DDs experienced in resolving issues) (Moustakas, 1994). Textural description aimed to describe any certain events that the participants came across, or what and how the participant did.

3.10.6 Step 6 Individual Structural Description

Individual structural descriptions were constructed to explain the participants' experiences (i.e. how DDs experienced issue resolution) by using the individual textural descriptions and imaginative variation. By imaginative variation, Moustakas meant the process of describing how one experienced the phenomenon, attempting to find possible meanings by varying frames of reference and distinctive perspective of vantage points (Moustakas, 1994, p. 121).

3.10.7 Step 7 Individual Textural-Structural Description

Textural-structural explanations (description) were constructed for each participant by using the individual textural description and the individual structural description. The textural-structural description demonstrated synthesis of the invariant constituents, the meanings, and themes that provided an integrated description of the essences of the experience of each participant (Moustakas, 1994).

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The purpose of the current qualitative phenomenological study was to explore and describe the lived experiences of division directors (DD) of Suvarnabhumi Airport in resolving customer issues, and in particular, to understand the influence of organisational structure on customer issue resolution. The current study employed a modified Van Kaam method by Moustakas (1994) with structured recorded interviews incorporated with field note taking and observation techniques to provide the intended data. Samples for the current qualitative, phenomenological study were comprised of nineteen employees conforming to sample size of phenomenological studies both suggested by Creswell's (2007a, 2007b) and Morse (1994). Those samples were purposeful, and by this participants were deliberately chosen to comprehend the central phenomenon (Cresswell, 2007a). All participants were currently directorial employees whose titles rested at the implementation level of management at Suvarnabhumi Airport. To that extent, all of them provided services or support one way or another in coordinating manners to resolve customer issues. Practically, their authorities to resolve customer issue were rigorously constrained and granted only within the scope that the organisational structure at the implementation level allowed.

The overarching research question that navigated the current study was "What are lived experiences of frontline division directors in resolving customer issues specifically to understand the influence of organisational structure at implementation level on customer issue resolution?" By this, the current study addressed the phenomenological explanation in an attempt to disclose behavioural structure and reveal the lived experiences that constitute the relationship of people and how the world influences individual behaviour (Van Kaam, 1966; Husserl, 1981). Customer dissatisfaction could possibly stem from ineffective customer issue resolution which appeared to be a common problem of the customer support unit (Fox & Codes, 2004). A point worth noting was that the complex organisational structure was seen as an

impediment to customer issue resolution and thus resulted in customer dissatisfaction (Longman & Mullins, 2004; Chan, 2005; William, 2007). The intent of the current study, however, was to provide leader literature with a more thorough perspective regarding the influence of organisational structure at the implementation level on customer issue resolution from the perspective of the frontline division directors. Presumably, the data was believed to divulge information for leaders to consider under more scrutiny when structuring an organisation that bolsters customer issue resolution.

Chapter 3 delineated the research methodology including research design and its appropriateness that validated the current research method. It also identified the population and sample, central instrumentation of the study, and how data was mustered and analysed. In doing so, sets of interview questions were derived from the overarching research question. The validity and reliability of the obtained information were too elaborated. Consecutively, Chapter 4 expounds the results of the final interview. It also describes the analysis of data obtained during the interview and demonstrates how supportive the results are to the overarching question. Intriguingly, the outcome of the analysis proffers surprising data being fruitful for the leader of AOT to recognise once restructuring is required to improve customer issue resolution.

4.1 Demographic Findings

By using demographic questions, the researcher obtained personal data of each participant, all of whom were division directors (DD) of Suvarnabhumi Airport. Those data were insightful to the current research study. Figure 4.1 to Figure 4.2 illustrates four different categories of demographic data. Figure 4.1 demonstrates the age range of the DD. Out of all interviewed DDs, six of them were 40 to 45 years old. Three of them were 46 to 50 years old. Out of the last ten, five of them were 51 to 55 years old, whilst another five were 56 to 60. Figure 3 exhibits ranges of experience level of DDs. Eight of all had experience as DD between one to three years. Six of the DDs had more experiences which were four to six years. The last group of five DDs had experiences between seven to nine years. None of them had experience as DD for more than ten years. As shown in Figure 4 educational level of all DDs was rather

typical. Eleven of them held a Bachelor's degree, but only one out of eleven held two Bachelor's degrees from different fields. Another eight DDs held a Master's degree. None of them had either vocational school diploma or Doctoral degree. Figure 5 is the last demographic data. It illustrates gender of all interviewed DDs. By this, fifteen of them were male, while five were female.

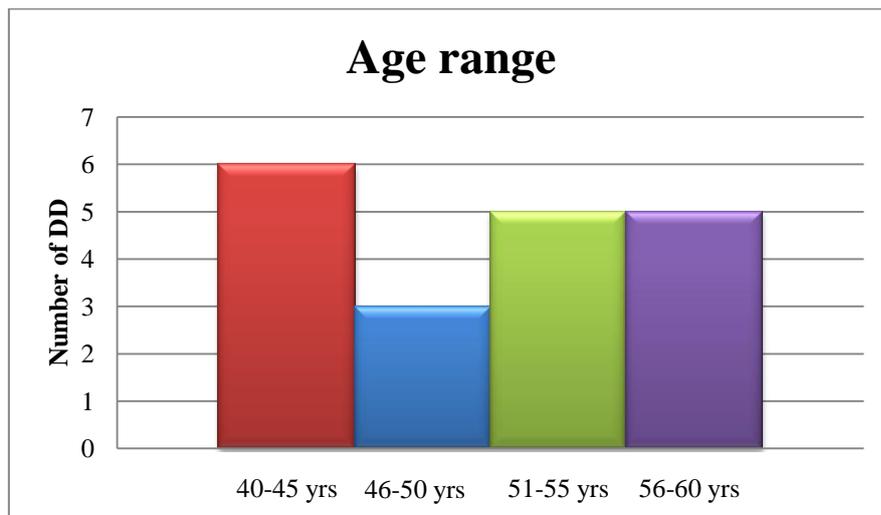


Figure 4.1 Age Range of the DDs

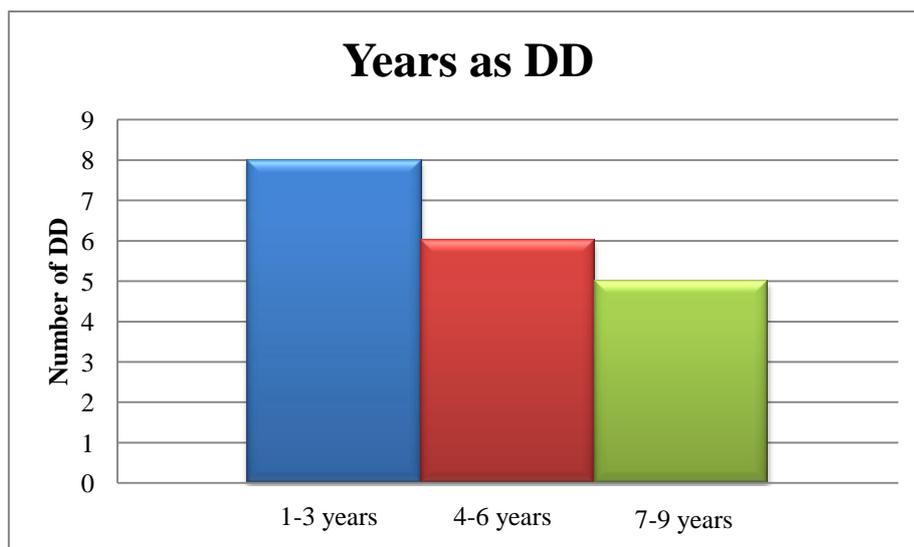


Figure 4.2 Years of Experiences as DD

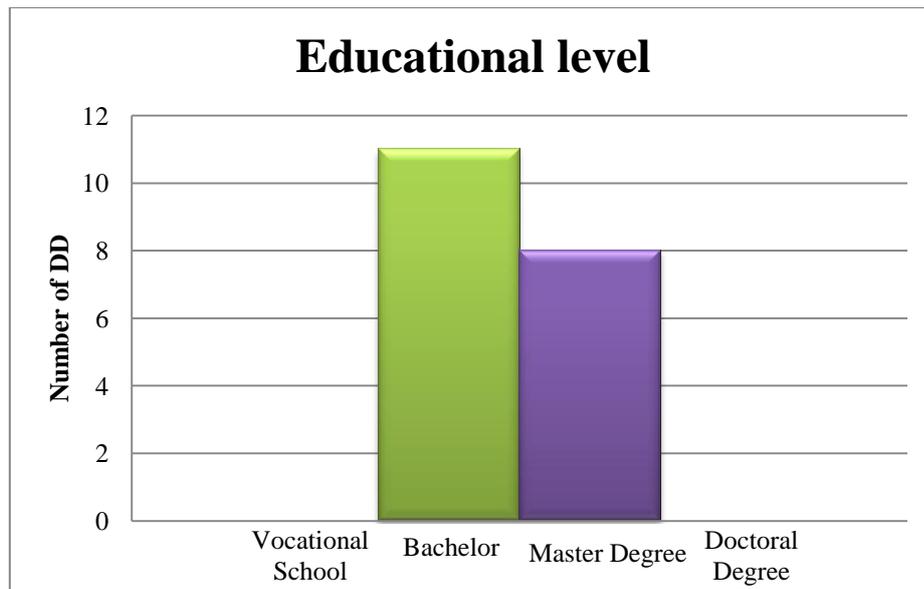


Figure 4.3 Educational Levels of the DDs

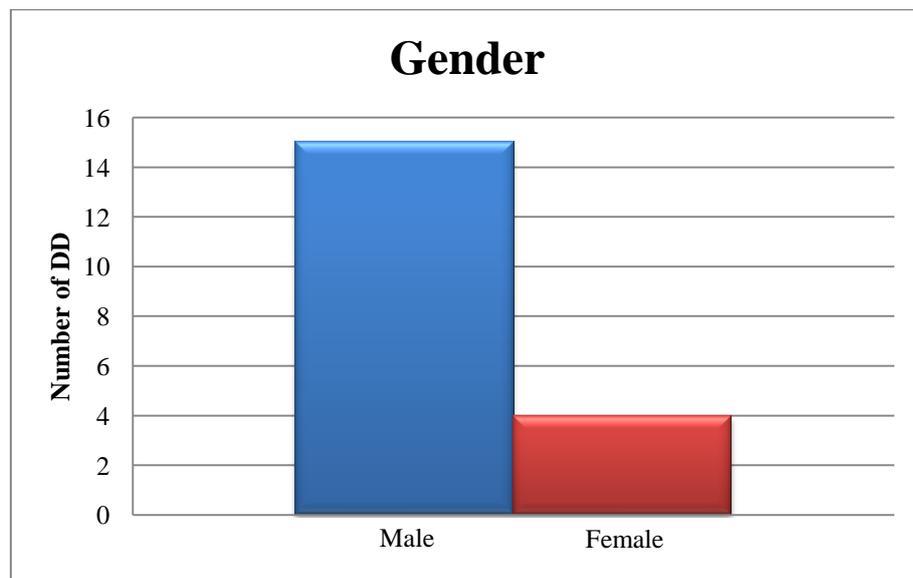


Figure 4.4 Genders of the DDs.

Demographic questions provided basic and constructive data to the current research study. The data, in terms of age range, demonstrates that the interviewed DDs had a rather wide range of age. Interestingly, this range rests beyond the age of forty which implies that their expressions were reflected through maturity and should

not easily be influenced by emotional context. Likewise, the data of experiences level betokened that the interviewed DDs had a rather expansive range of experience. The current study made no attempt to define the extent to which the experience level should be. Either highly experienced or inexperienced DDs was not the case. The demographic data of educational level indicated a typical range of the DDs. The point to be noted was that the number of the DDs from two groups was not far different. Lastly, the demographic data signified that obtained information from the interview process was rather impartial as male and female participated in the interview. All in all, the demographic questions clearly corroborated that all information being mustered during the interview process was provided by the DDs whose perspectives were various and expansive.

4.2 Data Analysis Process

As described in chapter 3, to analyse the data obtained from the collection process, the researcher of the current study employed the seven steps modified van Kaam method by Moustakas (1994). The first step started off by listing and grouping each and every textural data to develop primary categories. Step 2 determined invariant constituents by reducing and eliminating via testing each datum against two requirements. Only those expressions that contained constituents for understanding the intended phenomenon and those whose abstract or label was definable remained. Expressions that did not attain these two requirements, and those that were overlapping, repetitive, or vague, were to be eliminated or presented in exact descriptive terms. Step 3 involved clustering the invariant constituents of the experiences into thematic labels. The clustered and labeled invariant constituents described the core themes of the experiences which were data collected from the interview process. Step 4 was to validate the final identification of the invariant constituents and themes by application. The invariant constituents and their accompanying themes were to be checked against the full transcripts for each participant to ensure completion of the data. Step 5 included developing an individual textural description by using the validated and relevant themes, and invariant constituents. The individual textural descriptions were seen as the experiences

associated with the influence of organisational structure on customer issue resolution. Verbatim data from the interview transcripts were included in this step. Step 6 used the individual textural descriptions and imaginative variation to construct an individual structural description to explain the participants' experiences. The last step was to construct a textural-structural explanation (description) for each participant by using the individual textural descriptions from step 5 and the individual structural descriptions from step 6. The textural-structural description demonstrated synthesis of the invariant constituents, the meanings, and themes that provided an integrated description of the essences of the experiences of each participant.

By taking these seven steps, the analysis of collected data from interview process revealed constructive results. Common threads emerged during the listing and grouping incorporated with the field notes and interview transcripts (Moustakas, 1994). Moreover, interviewed data being clustered apparently divulged the core themes (Moustakas, 1994). The final validated themes that represented the lived experiences of each participant were identified by using the field notes and interview transcripts (Moustakas, 1994). Using those validated themes in corporation with the field notes and interview transcripts, textural descriptions were constructed (Moustakas, 1994). By then, textural descriptions, field notes, and interview transcriptions were being used to develop structural descriptions consistent to the experiences of each participant (Moustakas, 1994). The final step which constructed a textural and structural description helped develop the meanings and themes that provided an integrated description of the essences of the experiences of each participant associated to the influence of organisational structure on customer issue resolution.

4.3 Interview Findings

By examining each statement of the participants during data analysis and reduction, the researcher ensured it was essential for understanding the influence of organisational structure on customer issue resolution, and it was accurately labeled. As a result, this process extracted and reduced horizontalized statements to 329. Table

4.1 illustrates examples of some horizontalized statements from some DDs who were the participants of the current study.

Table 4.1 Examples of Horizontalized Relevant Statements

Horizontalized	Relevant Statements
	<p>- Anything found as issues must be resolved as quickly as possible ... Whenever passengers came across any problems we cannot ignore but need to resolve ... this department cannot resolve issue alone, they require full cooperation from many others.</p>
	<p>- To improve or resolve issues, everything in our services must be addressed. All of them included facilities and clear information ...</p>
	<p>- Organisational structure certainly influenced ... it involves many aspects.</p>
	<p>- I don't know how but I only wish to see structure with not too many internal parts. Why don't we make it simple? The functions with similar duty are supposed to be together. ... Too many parts make it too slow and clumsy to response.</p>
	<p>- Our structure responds to routine work that is only one third of the day, what about the rest of the day. To my experiences, most of the problems in our airport occur beyond office hours.</p>
	<p>- Owing to the rather complicated infra-structure of the terminal, without our staff to guide, passengers might get lost or miss their flights.</p>
	<p>- Current structure is too unfavourable especially for urgent cases. Some issue can't be kept waiting for so long.</p>

Table 4.1 (Continued)

Horizontalized	Relevant Statements
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When designing structure, another point I think we must strongly take into account is how to put the right man on the right job too. -To satisfy our customers we monitor, follow up, and coordinate. - Changing of the structure unfortunately causes more workloads since supporting function disappears. The core function therefore inevitably has to shoulder admin works.

Those invariant constituents were clustered and put into categories and considered as themes of the intended phenomenon of the current study that was the influence of organisational structure on customer issue resolution. In doing so, the researcher used his own method to label and organise the data. By this, the core textural themes that represented experiences of the DDs pertinent to customer issue resolution emerged. Table 4.2 provides some examples of textural themes in association with their relevant statements. To corroborate the textural themes were explicitly expressed and compatible to each participant's experience, the researcher compared the invariant constituents and textural themes against full transcriptions. By preliminary listing and grouping, seven themes were derived from the categorizing of invariant constituents described by the participants. Each theme was comprised of invariant constituents that emerged from relevant statements of the DDs as the participants of the current study. Those seven themes included 1) issue types associated to internal functions, 2) customer concerns, 3) form of resolution, 4) internal departments related to issue resolution, 5) factors that affected issue resolution, 6) perception to current structure and 7) recommended structure. Table 4.3 illustrates the major themes and the invariant constituents that constructed each theme. In addition, Table 4.4 demonstrates the invariant constituents in association with the participants to whose expressions were relevant.

Table 4.2 Examples of Textural Themes and Relevant Statements

Textural Themes	Relevant Statements
Cooperation to resolve issues	- Nature of the job directly involved issue resolution, providing that we are not resolver but coordinator to make it happen.
HR is the case	- We must recognise if the people we propose are qualified for the job.
Baffling and disparity from structure	- We change structure only to make it bigger but you know we become more and more confused ourselves not to mention the conflicts and disparities amongst internal functions.
Slow response caused by structure	- Scalar chain and lines of command appeared to be way too long according to the structure.
Simplify structure by combining it too similar functions So far too confuse loads of customers when they contact us even more so to ourselves.	- Whatever you do, just don't make many and yet make it simple. many functions
Structure does not suit service time	- Current structure I see it rather acceptable. The only problem is that it cannot resolve the problem of service time of the airport which is 24/7.

Table 4.3 Themes (Bold Major Subjects) and Its Invariant Constituents

Themes	Invariant Constituents
1. Types of issues associated to internal functions.	
1.1 Facilities	It covered the operation of the passenger and freight terminals, including air bridges, and runways, taxiways and apron including ramp equipment, buses and other airport vehicles, and automobile parking. This issue usually had a large number of staff for the various operating, cleaning, guarding and other functions involved, with certain services often provided through subcontractors.
1.2 Safety	The state in which risks associated with aviation activities, related to or direct support of the operation of aircraft, are reduced and controlled to an acceptable level.
1.3 Security	Safeguarding civil aviation against acts of unlawful interference. It was a combination of measures and human and material resources.
1.4 Airport operation	Services related to the safety and efficiency of aircraft operations and those which related to such matters as the administration of airport finances and servicing of passengers.
1.5 Finance/commerce.	
1.6 Information	
2. Customer concerns.	
2.1 Convenience.	
2.1.1 One stop service.	
2.1.2 24/7 Responsiveness.	
2.1.3 Thoroughness of information	

Table 4.3 (Continued)

Themes	Invariant Constituents
2.2 Speed/promptness.	
2.3 Issue resolution.	
2.4 Service mind.	
2.5 Safety.	
2.6 Security.	
3. Form of resolution.	
3.1 Monitoring/overseeing.	
3.2 Alleviation.	
3.3 Interconnectedness.	
3.4 Communication.	
3.5 Liaison.	
3.6 Supporting.	
3.7 Negotiating.	
3.8 Training/educating.	
3.9 Improving/updating.	
4. Internal departments related to issue resolution.	
4.1 Airport operations.	
4.2 Maintenance and Facilities.	
4.4 Finance/commerce.	
4.5 Public relation/customer services.	
4.5 Safety.	
4.6 Security.	
5. Factors that affected issue resolution.	
5.1 Organisational structure.	
5.1.1 Team base.	
5.1.2 Interconnectedness.	
5.1.3 Design.	

Table 4.3 (Continued)

Themes	Invariant Constituents
5.1.4 Promote quick response.	
5.1.5 Accommodate 24/7 service.	
5.1.6 Existence of supportive functions.	
5.2 Personal relationship.	
5.3 Human resource management.	
5.3.1 Appropriate skill of employee.	
5.3.2 Motivation.	
5.3.3 Recruitment/selection.	
5.3.4 Right man, right job.	
5.4 Merit/Patronage system.	
5.5 Leadership.	
5.6 Authority at implementation level.	
5.7 Management pattern (i.e. outsource, concession).	
5.8 Culture.	
5.9 Clear goal/mission.	
5.10 The use of I.T.	
6. Perception to current structure.	
6.1 impinge decision making.	
6.2 Rigid hierarchy.	
6.3 Misleading in structural design.	

Table 4.3 (Continued)

Themes	Invariant Constituents
6.4 Too many broken internal structures.	
6.5 Maladroit responsiveness.	
6.5.1 Not accommodate communication flow.	
6.5.2 Not accommodate work process.	
6.5.3 Not accommodate service time.	
6.6 Cause interdepartmental disparity/conflict.	
6.7 Not support mission/purpose.	
6.8 Not support career path.	
6.9 Difficulty at implementation level.	
6.10 Cause more workloads.	
6.11 Affect competency/productivity.	
6.12 Strong sense of bureaucracy.	
6.13 Management pattern does not help overcome structural problem.	
7. Recommended structure.	
7.1 One single unit to resolve issues.	
7.2 Simplified structure.	

Table 4.4 (Continued)

Invariant constituents by themes	DD01	DD02	DD03	DD04	DD05	DD06	DD07	DD08	DD09	DD10	DD11	DD12	DD13	DD14	DD15	DD16	DD17	DD18	DD19
7.3 Similar functions to put together	X																		
7.4 Bolster adequate authorities at implementation level	X																		
7.5 Lines and staff to be separated											X	X		X					
7.6 Clear structure				X								X		X				X	
7.7 In line with missions				X	X							X		X					X
7.8 Promote quick responsiveness and interconnectedness				X				X	X										X
7.9 Accommodate 24/7 services				X		X						X							
7.10 Self-administrated							X				X								
7.11 Designed on the basis of top-down and bottom-up approach																		X	X

Table 4.5 to Table 4.11 details the number of DDs who provided expressions representing each invariant constituent and the number of times each invariant constituent was expressed. The first theme (Table 4.5) was issue types associated to internal functions. This theme was developed from six relevant invariant constituents which were 1) facilities, 2) safety, 3) security, 4) airport operation, 5) finance/commercial, and 6) information.

Table 4.5 Issue Type Associated to Internal Function

Issue type	Number of DD	Number of Time being expressed
Facilities	7	7
Safety	4	5
Security	2	3
Airport operation	3	4
Finance/Commerce	2	2
Information	3	3

Out of fifteen DDs, seven of them described that facilities were crucial issues resting on their responsibilities. DD01, for example, describe that “to improve services or issue resolution to satisfy our customer, every aspect must be well prepared including all facilities”. Four DDs pointed out that safety was the main issue according to their responsibilities. DD03 explained that “in case of emergency to the aircraft, our responsibility is to get to the site as fast as possible to stop or at least alleviate damage for the sake of safety”. DD08 expanded that “We will need to bring in safety device to prevent accident and resolve safety issue in accordance with safety standard”. Whilst two DDs stated that security was another issue to which attention must be paid. DD13 described that “As we provide public services, security is very important not only for airport user but also even more to VIP”. Airport operation, as suggested by three DDs, was seen as a critical issue to airport users, particularly the airline operators. Finance/commerce was one of those issues addressed by two DDs. And information was the last issue that three DDs narrated in regard to their experiences. By this, DD10 stated that “without information we provided, the airlines operator will be unable to locate the lost baggage since all information was stored in our server”.

Table 4.6 Customer Concerns

Customer concerns expressed	Number of DD	Number of Time being
Convenience*	8	11
Speed	5	5
Issue resolution	5	7
Service mind	3	3
Safety	4	6
Security	2	3

The second theme (Table 4.6) was customer concerns comprising of six invariant constituents. All of them included 1) convenience, 2) speed, 3) issue resolution, 4) service mind, 5) safety, 6) security. Out of nineteen, eight DDs explained that convenience was what customers concerned about the most. DD05

explained that “All in all, we have to take good care our customers to ensure that they’ve got the most convenience”. By convenience*, DDs expressed it in terms of “one stop service”, “24/7 responsiveness”, and “thoroughness of information”. Five DDs, however, noted that speed was what customers always wanted. DD05 explained that “Airport services by its nature require speed, convenience, and accuracy”. Interestingly, five DDs confirmed that issue resolution appeared to be the main aspect that customers were generally concerned about. By this, DD09 described that “It will be too unfavourable if you received any services and yet confronted problem. You’ll be obviously satisfied once your problem is resolved instantly”. In addition three DDs highlighted service mind as imperative to customers. Four DDs stated that safety, in their point of view, was a concern for airport users; two DDs, on the other hand, described that security was the case.

Table 4.7 Forms of Resolution

Customer concerns expressed	Number of DD	Number of Time being
Monitoring/Overseeing	9	9
Alleviation	3	3
Cooperation	14	16
Communication	8	10
Supporting	3	4
Negotiating	1	1
Training/Educating	1	1
Improving/Updating	1	1

The third theme (Table 4.7) was the form of issue resolution that developed from eight invariant constituents. All of them were comprised of 1) monitoring and overseeing, 2) alleviation, 3) cooperation pertaining to interconnectedness, 4) communication, 5) supporting, 6) negotiating, 7) training or educating and 8) improving or updating. By this, nine DDs out of nineteen explained that monitoring and overseeing were major parts of their duties in order to resolve issues of customers. For this, DD03 stated that “We have watch room to keep on monitoring

around the clock for aircrafts that are taking off or landing in case of any irregularity”. Whilst DD06 expounded that “Our staff will need to keep on monitoring and inspection all the times through all means of communication including e mail, phone call via our call centre to ensure any problems being reported are promptly noticed”. Three DDs, however, pointed out that the need to alleviate troubles that came in many forms was how issue were resolved. Whilst eight DDs reported that communication was the main area for issue resolution via their responsibilities. DD12 exemplified that “At least we need to communicate to express our sincerity and inform them how we will resolve their issue as complained”. Other form of resolution was supporting that raised by three DDs. Negotiating, training and updating were other forms of resolution, each of which claimed by different individual DD.

Table 4.8 Internal Functions

Internal function expressed	Number of DD	Number of Time being
Airport operation	6	6
Maintenance/Facilities	4	4
Commerce/Finance	2	2
Public relation/Customer service	3	3
Safety	2	2
Security	2	2

The forth theme (Table 4.8) revealed internal functions related to issue resolution. Six internal functions were found associated to issue resolution. Their main duties involved 1) airport operations, 2) maintenance and facilities, 3) commerce and finance, 4) public relation and customer services, 5) safety and 6) security. Airport operations were described by six DDs whose jobs related to airport operations such as flight operation, baggage services, passenger terminal services, and ground transport services. Four DDs were working in relation to maintenance and facilities including airfield pavement, maintenance and repair, and power supply. Two DDs resolved issues as they were working for the commercial and finance department and three DDs took responsibilities related to the public relations and customer services

departments. The last two departments involved safety that was claimed by two DDs, and security which was reported by two DDs from its department.

Table 4.9 Factors Affected Issue Resolution

Factors affected issue resolution	Number of DD	Number of Time being expressed
Organisational structure	19	26
Team base	2	4
Interconnectedness	15	22
Design	13	18
Promote quick response	6	7
Accommodate 24/7 service	6	7
Supportive function	1	1
Hierarchy	3	4
Personal relationship	8	11
Human resources	6	12
Appropriate skill	7	8
Motivation	7	8
Recruitment/selection	6	6
Right man, right job	5	5
Merit/Patronage system	8	13
Leadership	13	30
Authority at implementation level	11	12
Management pattern	4	4
Culture	5	12
Clear goal/mission	4	5
The use of IT	3	3

The fifth theme (Table 4.9) was factors that affected issue resolution. Intriguingly, every DD paid great heeds to this themes by providing far more details than others. This very theme was developed from ten invariant constituents. Ten of them included 1) organisational structure, 2) personal relationship, 3) human

resources, 4) merit system and patronage system, 5) leadership, 6) authority at implementation level, 7) management pattern, 8) culture, 9) clear goal and mission and (10) the use of IT.

All nineteen DDs admitted that organisational structure genuinely affected issue resolution. More specifically towards structure, two DDs emphasised on team base structure. DD01 stated that “Working as a team I repeat is very important especially during crisis or in urgent case. Only one person is definitely unable to handle under circumstance as such. That’s why everyone really needs to work as team.” Fifteen DDs stated that structure that promoted interconnectedness played a significant role in issue resolution. DD19 pointed out that “There are many internal functions thus when we work it is essential to cooperate with those functions as in many cases we cannot work alone. You can see that there is always interdepartmental interaction”.

Thirteen DDs were even more thoughtful by describing that the design of the structure must be done properly so as to resolve issues. DD14, for example, emphasised that “At least the designed is supposed to focus on the demand of airport users. Once we can make it perfectly settle at one place then everyone gets happy”

Six DDs found that an appropriate structure could promote a quick response to resolve issues. Another six DDs pointed out that a good structure made it easier to resolve issues around the clock. DD12 described that “our current structure dose not accommodate the way airport provide its services. Particularly, for operation side, working around the clock is a must but we cannot response effectively”. Only one DD, however, explained that a structure that contained supportive functions could facilitate better issue resolution. Interestingly, three DDs insisted that a structure with hierarchy would be supportive to issue resolution.

For other invariant constituents, eight DDs explained that personal relationship was imperative to issue resolution. DD05 explained that “Once director has not enough relationship, it could cause lots of trouble when interdepartmental cooperation required in resolving issue. If the director is qualified is this sense, instead of using written paper , simply making a phone call is more than enough”. Another six DDs claimed that human resources were crucial to issue resolution. DD19 reported that “Instead, I believe problem is our basic resource which is human. On the contrary to

other private sector, we have unlimited budget but so very poor and low performance employees”. By this, seven DDs focused on appropriate skill of the employees, whilst another seven DDs emphasised motivation. Six DDs mentioned recruitment and selection. And five DDs explained more about putting the right man on the right job.

Surprisingly, eight DDs described how the merit system and patronage system affected issue resolution. DD01 described that “Regardless of structure, to promote anyone to the higher position, it is necessary not to ignore background and experiences. Do not take personal relationship or partisan assumption as rudiments otherwise the most damages will go to the one who promote people as such”. Thirteen out of nineteen DDs obviously stated that leadership truly affected issue resolution. DD012 expanded that “In reality, directors can do nothing but comply the boss who imposes the policy. We may be able to propose some ideas but it truly depends on the boss, whether he will help to push or not”. DD16 expressed that “Finally, it appears that structure is nothing since everyone turn back to ask for permission from the boss though the structure has already authorised you”. DD15 exemplified that “The general manger don’t recognised an increasing workloads that cause by structural change so she does not allow for more manpower”.

Eleven DDs explained that the authority at the implementation level, to some extent, affected issue resolution. Four DDs exemplified that a decent management pattern could help resolve issues. Five DDs mentioned that culture could indirectly affect issue resolution, whilst four DDs explained that only clear goals and missions could make issue resolution successful. DD8 stated that “When coordinate with other unit, once they clearly understand the goal and mission of airport that would be easy to resolve any issue. You do not need to make any request since they are well aware what they have to do”. The last three DDs saw the use of IT as important for resolving issues effectively. Figure 4.4 illustrates factors affecting customer issue resolution.

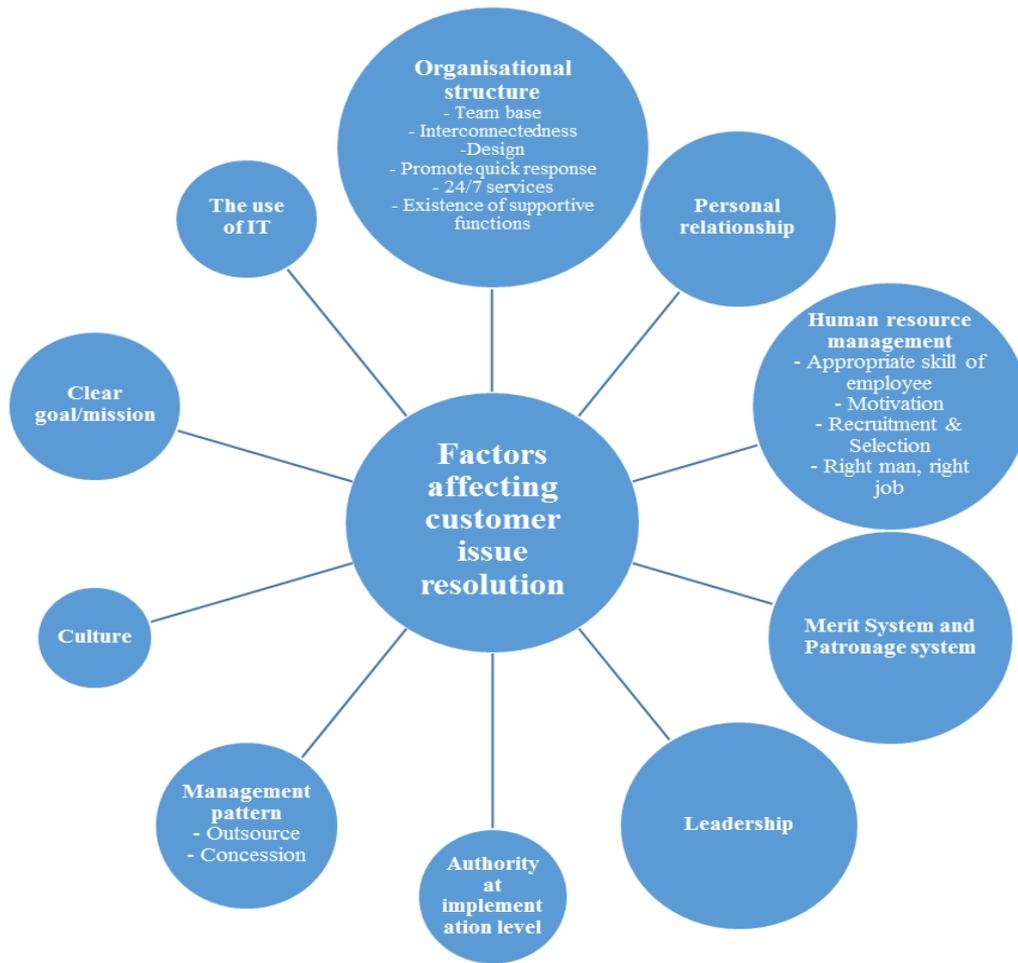


Figure 4.5 Factors Affecting Customer Issue Resolution

Source: By Author

Table 4.10 Perception to Current Structure

Perception to current structure	Number of DD	Number of Time being expressed
Impinged decision making	1	1
Rigid hierarchy	2	2
Misleading of structural design	7	11
Too many broken internal structures	7	9
Maladroit responsiveness	8	10
Not accommodate communication flow	2	5

Table 4.10 (Continued)

Perception to current structure	Number of DD	Number of Time being expressed
Not accommodate work process	5	5
Not accommodate service time	3	3
Interdepartmental disparity/conflict	7	9
Not support mission/purpose	9	9
Not support career path	5	5
Difficulty at implementation level	2	3
Caused more workloads	5	5
Affected competency/productivity	3	3
Strong sense of bureaucracy	4	4
Management pattern did not help to overcome structural problem	3	3

The sixth theme (Table 4.10) was the perception of all DDs to the current structure. This very theme developed from thirteen invariant constituents which were 1) impinged decision making, 2) rigid hierarchy, 3) misleading of structural design, 4) too many broken internal structure, 5) maladroit responsiveness, 6) interdepartmental disparity and conflict, 7) not support mission and purpose, 8) not support career path, 9) difficulty at implementation level, 10) caused more workloads, 11) affected competency and productivity, 12) strong sense of bureaucracy and 13) management pattern did not help to overcome structural problem.

Only one DD saw structure as an impediment to decision making, whilst two DDs claimed that the current structure had too rigid hierarchy. In terms of structural design, seven DDs pointed out that the current structure was misleading. DD16 noted that “I don’t see how this structure response to our mission, it utterly needs to be reviewed. I find it make us response even more slowly”. DD11 elaborated that “Our structure has never been designed in an academic way. Rather it was designed just to

satisfy some group of people”. Seven DDs noted that the current structure contained too many broken internal structures. DD10 described that “I think we expanded into too many parts, if we put it together I believe it would be easier”. DD01 also explained in this sense that “If we found missions are similar then there is no reason to separate. So far there are too many internal functions that make it too baffling”.

Eight DDs described that the current structure caused maladroit responsiveness. To demonstrate the result of this, two of them explained that the structure did not accommodate communication flow, five of them stated that it did not accommodate work process, and three of them saw that the structure did not accommodate service time of the airport. Seven DDs pointed out that the current structure led to interdepartmental disparity and conflict. DD04 described that “Owing to redundancy and overlapping, it is therefore unclear whose responsibility it should be”. DD08 added that “Once structure is divided, it makes people feel that they are different. Those are yours and these are mine. Cooperation is never worse, conflict and disparity are ubiquitous”. The current structure was seen by nine DDs as not supporting the mission and purpose of the organisation.

DD03 stated that “Our structure, as I found, is not in line with mission of the airport. There are some units that is not appropriate or too many parts. I think there is no efficiency at all”. DD08 elaborated that “These days our structure was enlarged to support individual not for the sake of organisation”. Five DDs expressed that the current structure did not support career path which truly affected the quality of issue resolution. DD06 explained that “Our structure dose not clearly guide that where you will go for further step. It is the shortcoming of the structure that does not promote worker within its department”. However, two DDs described that difficulty at the implementation level stemmed from the current structure. DD19 explained that “These days, never director participate at all, centralisation from Head Quarter overruled everything not knowing what exactly is going on at front line. Thus there appear to be loads of difficulties when implement at work”. The current structure also caused more workloads as reported by five DDs. DD18 obviously expressed that “After restructuring, it appears that our man power decrease to a certain extent. This structure is genuinely unbalanced. I must say that the structure is severely not appropriate to our workloads”.

Three DDs even stated that the current structure undermined competency and productivity of the organisation. Four DDs typically confirmed that the current structure demonstrated a strong sense of bureaucracy, and thus red tape was ubiquitous. By this, DD16 explained that “With the bureaucratic style of the current structure, by its nature, the disadvantage is slow responsiveness whilst its advantage is to guarantee the transparency with many steps that support checks and accountability”. The last aspect was described by three DDs in that the management pattern, such as outsourcing and concessions, did not help to overcome the structural problem.

Table 4.11 Recommended Structure

Recommended structure	Number of DD	Number of Time being expressed
One single unit to resolve issue	3	5
Simplified structure	2	2
Put together similar function	1	1
Bolster adequate authority at implementation level	1	1
Line/Staff to be separated	3	4
Clear structure	4	5
In line with mission	5	6
Promote quick responsiveness/ interconnectedness	4	7
Self-administrated structure	2	4
Designed on the basis of both top-down and bottom-up approach	2	2

The last theme (Table 4.11) was the recommended structure that the DDs, as participants in this current structure, described. Nineteen DDs put forward ten characteristics of a recommended structure which were 1) one single unit to resolve issue, 2) simplified structure, 3) put together similar functions, 4) bolster adequate

authority at implementation level, 5) line and staff function to be separated, 6) clear structure, 7) in line with mission, 8) promote quick responsiveness and interconnectedness, 9) self-administrated structure and 10) designed on the basis of both top-down and bottom-up approach.

By this, three DDs explained that the structure with one single unit to resolve issues was far preferred. DD01 stated that “Service unit should be single in order for quick response and to avoid disparity and conflict”. DD08 added that “Once your structure is too large you won’t be able to control. But one unique and single structure will enable you to compete in the business”. Two DDs expounded that a simplified structure was what they would recommend. DD04 describe that “There should be fewer internal parts. Maintenance for example contains too many sub divisions. Each of them works without harmony. They do not share and integrate their responsibility at all”. One DD pointed out that similar functions should be put together, whilst another one DD stated that he recommended that the structure bolster adequate authority at the implementation level. Three DDs strongly recommended that line function and staff function be separated. DD11 proposed that “Structure to be in my opinion should be clearly divided between line and staff. That is to say back office akin to those who work for head office, and line function which I presumed operation part of each individual airport”. Four DDs simply explained that a clear structure was what they recommended. DD17 emphasised that “Our organisation is growing, Suvarnabhumi for example, there supposed to be clear internal functions being separated and work as specialisation for better clarity”. Five DDs reported they recommend that the structure be in line with the mission of the organisation. DD11 explained that “To construct structure we need to stick to our mission. Mission will orchestrate the demand both in terms of division and manpower including qualification”. Four DDs made the focal point in that they would prefer a structure that promoted quick responsiveness and interconnectedness which was associated to issue resolution. DD09 describe that “Men at work best know that current process is too unfavourable. It is too complicated with too many steps and resulted in severely slow responsiveness”. DD08 added that “Only one unit will be alright. There will be no need to go across department and procedure will also be shortened. By so doing, cooperation will be less required”. Two DDs expressed that they would prefer and

recommend a self-administrated structure. The last two DDs pointed there finger to the design by expounding that they recommended a structure that was designed on the basis of both a bottom-up and a top-down approach.

4.4 Validity and Reliability of Interview Findings

Validity, as defined by Creswell (2007a, 2007b), is the researcher's ability to depict appropriate inferences and conclusions from the data. For the current phenomenological research study, the researcher took various steps to confirm the validity of the findings. First, the researcher applied participant validation, as suggested by Moustakas (1994), by managing to share individual textural-structural descriptions with each and every DD as the participants of the current study and requested for any necessary additions or corrections. By so doing, the researcher made an attempt to confirm that the findings precisely represented the participants' experiences of the influence of organisational structure on customer issue resolution. Second, since the researcher in this study played both roles of questioner and interpreter, to avert influences and biases incurred by the researcher to the findings, objective and subjective methods were incorporated to the current study. Objective methods included stringent and systematic steps of data collection and analysis, whilst subjective methods was demonstrated by selecting a research topic associated to the interest of the researcher, addressing the researcher as interviewer, and interpreting the data to delineate the core structure of the meaning to experience certain phenomenon. Third, by successfully answering the five questions suggested by Polkinghorne (1989) earlier expounded in Chapter 3, skepticisms of the findings from the current phenomenological study was believed to be removed. Those five questions included the following.

- 1) Does the interviewer influence the contents of the subjects' descriptions in such a way that the descriptions do not truly reflect the subjects' actual experience?
- 2) Is the transcription accurate, and does it convey the meaning of the oral presentation in the interview?

3) In the analysis of the transcriptions, are there conclusions other than those offered by the researcher that could have been derived? Have the researcher identified these alternatives and demonstrated why they are less probable than the one decided on?

4) Is it possible to go from the general structural description to the transcriptions and to account for the specific contents and connections in the original examples of the experiences?

5) Is the structural description situation-specific, or does it hold in general for the experience in other situations? (Polkinghorne, 1989, p. 57)

Lastly, the researcher applied triangulation of the obtained data against relevant documents of AOT and against other employees at different levels to ascertain the validity of the findings.

Reliability was addressed in such a way that it demonstrated the repeatability of the research instruments (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Creswell, 2007a, 2007b). During the interview process of the current qualitative phenomenological study, the researcher deliberately delivered the same set of interview questions to all participants. Added to that, the structural interview protocol or interview script was also used in the same manner. By so doing, the research instrument promised repeatability and reliability.

4.5 Summary

The findings delineated in Chapter 4 divulged the result of the current study which intended to explore and describe the lived experiences of frontline division directors (DDs) of Suvarnabhumi Airport in resolving customer issues, and in particular to understand the influence of organisational structure on customer issue resolution. By embracing the seven step method of Van Kaam (1966) modified by Moustakas (1994), the researcher was able to synthesise data mustered along the interview process of nineteen DDs. This very method produced thematic clusters that eventually helped develop the core meanings and themes of the intended phenomenon. Further analysis proceeded after the emergence of extraneous information, and data not ascribed with a high number of DD were obliterated.

Chapter 5 is dedicated to the discussion of the result from the current phenomenological research study. Five core themes emerged from the analysis and interpretation of the data obtained during the interview process are proffered and discussed in this chapter. Lastly, this chapter elucidates implications, limitations, and contributions of the study. Recommendations for future research appears in the last part of the chapter.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSIONS

The current qualitative phenomenological study made an attempt, as described in its purpose, to explore and describe the lived experiences of division directors (DDs) of Suvarnabhumi Airport in resolving customer issues. More importantly, it aimed to understand the influence of organisational structure on customer issue resolution. By employing a modified van Kaam method by Moustakas (1994) with structured interviews and interview protocol in association with field note taking and observation techniques, the researcher obtained the intended data. In doing so, the researcher managed to use samples comprised of nineteen participants. This number appeared to conform to the sample size of phenomenological studies as suggested by Creswell's (2007a, 2007b) and Morse (1994). The researcher deliberately chose those purposeful samples to comprehend the central phenomenon (Cresswell, 2007a). More specifically, all participants were currently employees at the directorial level whose titles rested at the implementation level in Suvarnabhumi Airport. To that extent, the researcher intentionally selected participants from the relevant departments to demonstrate that they provided a certain level of services or support in coordinating manners to resolve customer issues. Practically, their authorities to resolve customer issues were rigorously restrictive and limited only within the scope that the organisational structure at the implementation level allowed.

The researcher conducted the current study in response to its overarching research question that sought "What are lived experiences of frontline division directors in resolving customer issues specifically to understand the influence of organisational structure at implementation level on customer issue resolution?" By this, it was worth noting that a complex organisational structure was seen as an impediment to customer issue resolution and thus resulting in customer dissatisfaction (Chan, 2005; Longman & Mullins, 2004; William, 2007). Furthermore, the current study addressed a phenomenological explanation to disclose behavioural structure and

reveal the lived experiences that constituted the relationship of people and how the world influenced individual behaviour (Van Kaam, 1966; Husserl, 1981). After all, the results of the current study appeared to divulge constructive information for airport leaders to scrutinise when structuring an organisation specifically to accommodate customer issue resolution.

Chapter 5 is dedicated to several crucial aspects of the study. All of them includes interpretation, analysis, implication, and discussion of the data of the current qualitative phenomenological study that took a focal point on exploring and describing the lived experiences of nineteen frontline division directors (DDs) of Suvarnabhumi Airport in customer issue resolution. In doing so, the researcher derived four sub questions from the overarching question of the current research study that was “What are the life experiences of frontline division directors in resolving customer issues specifically to understand the influence of organisational structure at implementation level on customer issue resolution?” As a further result, the researcher was able to develop ten final interview questions (Appendix F). This series of interview questions eventually unfolded five core themes to be proffered and discussed in this chapter. This chapter also put forward an interpretation and discussion of the data analysis described in Chapter 4.

5.1 Emergent Themes and Discussions

To analyse data obtained from the collection process, the researcher of the current study employed the seven step modified van Kaam method by Moustakas (1994). In doing so, the researcher started by listing and grouping each and every textural datum to develop primary categories. To determine invariant constituents, the researcher reduced and eliminated including tested each data against two requirements. Only those expressions that contained constituents for understanding the intended phenomenon, and those whose abstract or label was definable persisted. Expressions that did not merit the two requirements as such, and those that were overlapping, repetitive, or vague, were eliminated or presented in exact descriptive terms. By then, the researcher clustered the invariant constituents of the experiences of all DDs into thematic labels. The clustered and labeled invariant constituents

indicated the core themes of the experiences that stemmed from data collected from the interview process. In the next step, the researcher validated the final identification of the invariant constituents and themes by application. In doing so, the researcher had to check the invariant constituents and their accompanying themes against the full transcripts of each participant to ensure completion of the data. To develop an individual textural description, the researcher used the validated and relevant themes, and invariant constituents in combination form. The researcher addressed the experiences of the DDs associated to the influence of organisational structure on customer issue resolution as the individual textural description. At this step, verbatim data from the interview transcripts were too illustrated. By then, the researcher employed the individual textural descriptions and imaginative variation to construct individual structural descriptions to explain the participants' experiences. The final step was to construct a textural-structural explanation (description) for each participant by using the individual textural descriptions from step 5 and the individual structural descriptions from step 6. The textural-structural descriptions demonstrated synthesis of the invariant constituents, the meanings, and themes that provided an integrated description of the essences of the experiences from each participant. Figure 5.1 depicts the analysis that revealed five core themes.

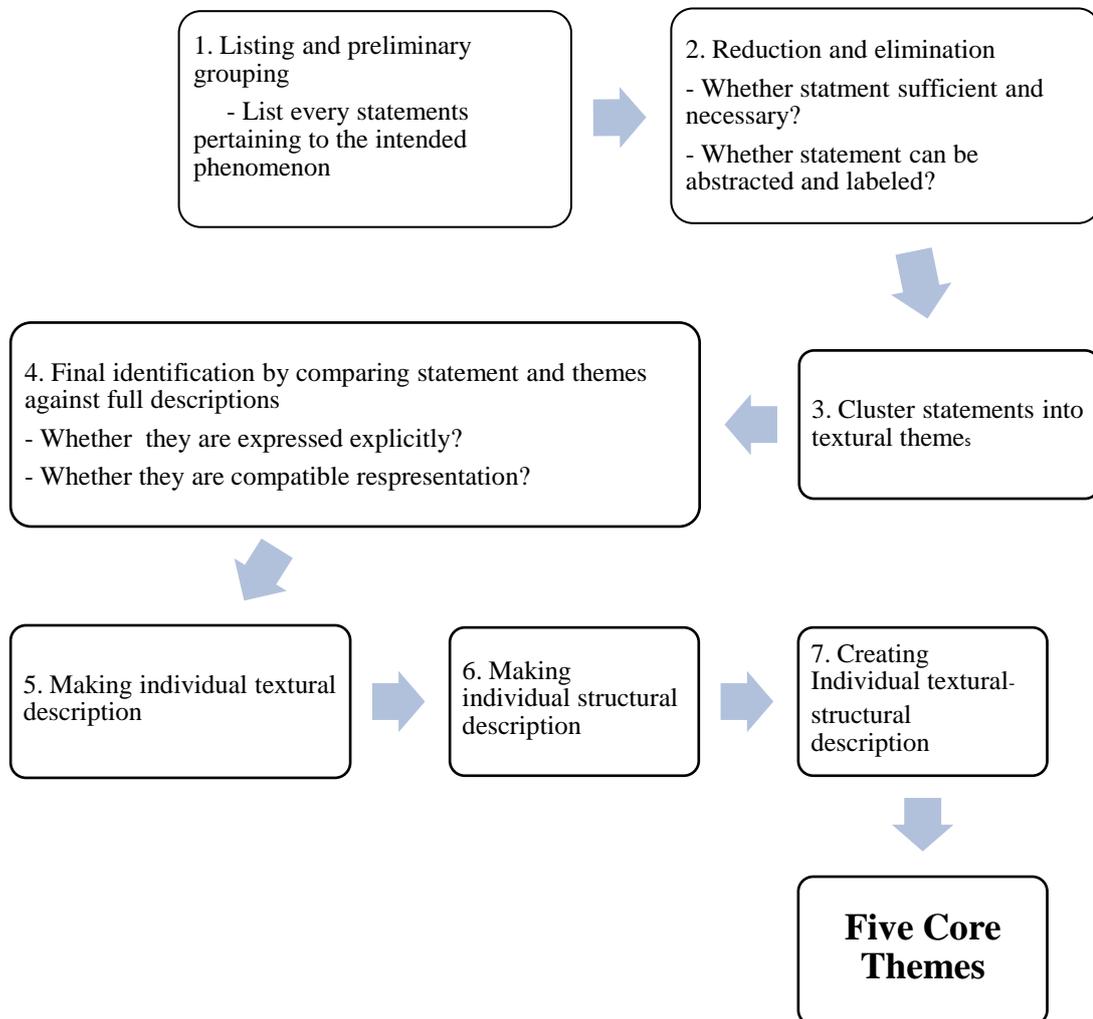


Figure 5.1 Analysis Process Revealed Five Core Themes.

Source: By Author

The analysis on the result of the current study indicated that there appeared to be five core themes which emerged during the interpretation of the data obtained from the interview process. The first core theme revealed that once airport employees were well aware of and profoundly understood “customer’s expectation” it brought about an increasing level of customer’s satisfaction. The second core theme delineated that “decent structure” of the organisation could promote better issue resolution. The third

core theme suggested that “leadership” plays its part by influencing issue resolution in certain areas. The fourth core theme illustrated that embracing “human resource management” in effective ways was found to contribute to issue resolution. The fifth core theme disclosed a surprise finding in that “merit system and patronage system” were issues that interestingly affected issue resolution.

5.1.1 Theme 1 Customer’s Expectation

Several DDs coincidentally agreed that being aware of and understanding customer expectations in each specific area of services and response appropriately was imperative to issue resolution. Most DDs also pointed out, based on their experiences, that once they could provide services in an effective way to complete customers’ expectations, their satisfaction obviously increased. Having said that, it was not just to meet the expectation of the customers, but it was how also the expectations could be met. The researcher found that the expectations of the customers of the airport came in many different forms according to each DD's descriptions. Some DDs explained airport customer satisfaction in terms of convenience comprised of various aspects. By convenience, several DDs described it through words and phrases such as “one stop services”, “24/7 responsiveness, and “thoroughness of information”. It was worth noting that to provide convenience to airport customers, DDs could not succeed it on their own. They always needed to cooperate amongst other DDs from other different departments. By that, to fulfil airport customer satisfaction, interconnectedness between each individual department was necessary.

Some DDs, however, indicated that according to the nature of airport service, speed or how fast they could respond was another aspect that airport customers were concerned about the most. In the event of issue resolution, speed became even more and more crucial. For general irregularity, it was typical that the issue being resolved speedily tended to satisfy customers. For emergency cases or in critical situations, such as during short connecting times between flights, and even more so in the case of aircraft accidents or incidents, some DDs pointed out that resolution with full speed was tremendously necessary. This was to ensure that passengers would never miss their next flights. Moreover, speedily responses could also insure the safety or at least

alleviation of damages, both for life and property in case of accident or incident of the aircraft. In addition, as expressed by some DDs, issue resolution that related to either safety or security was other aspect to which airport customers always paid heed. By that, it was not too difficult for the researcher to define that to the customer's expectations, the cosier, the faster, and the safer, the better.

Lastly, DDs entirely accepted that how effective they were in resolving issues explicitly brought about satisfaction of airport customers. As a result of the aforementioned, the researcher was able to define that being aware of and understanding customers' expectations was necessary for the DDs at the implementation level. To that extent, it demonstrated that the DDs were to provide services and resolve issues on a customer centric approach. As a result, customer satisfaction could be expected.

5.1.2 Theme 2 Decent Structure

According to the analysis of the data obtained from the interview process, the result indicated that organisational structure of the airport truly affected customer issue resolution. This could obviously be comprehensible through the description of each and every DD. Intriguingly, this theme represented expressions described exhaustively by a high number of the DDs with loads of details, and a high number of times being expressed. In the extent to which the organisational structure of the airport influenced issue resolution, it emerged in both positive and negative ways. DDs expressed and described details as such during the interview questions regarding factors that affected issue resolution, and the questions seeking perception to the current structure.

As described by several DDs, poor structure turned out to be an obvious impediment to issue resolution in various dimensions. By poor structure, it meant a structure that contained too many layers and too many separated departments. It could cause, for example, more workloads, confusion, maladroit responsiveness, interdepartmental disparity and confliction and so on. More specifically, by maladroit responsiveness, as expanded by some DDs, it demonstrated unfavourable results stemming from poor structure in terms of interrupting work process including increasing unnecessary communication between relevant departments. All of this

inhibited promptness in issue resolution that unfortunately appeared to be one of the most crucial aspects amongst customer expectations. By this, it indicated that these negative effects of poor structure explicitly impinged resolution for airport customer issues (See box 1).

On the contrary, a structure that decently accommodated interconnectedness amongst internal departments appeared to be the most preferable to resolve issues for airport customers. As described by several DDs, they obviously saw interconnectedness as a key success factor that helped provide utterly better issue resolution. Apart from the structure itself, how to design the structure was not less crucial. Many DDs far preferred a structure that was designed decently. By decent design, it meant, for example, the structure must be clear, simple without too many layers and separated departments, and customer centric. In particular, several DDs pointed out that the structure must be supportive for interdepartmental cooperation. As to provide service to airport customers, each DD was inevitably unable to achieve this without cooperation as such. Furthermore, the organisational structure of the airport should promote empowerment and career path of the relevant employees. Intriguingly, attributes of the structure influenced the quality of customer issue resolution by playing another part as motivation factors pertaining to customer issue resolution. As some DDs indicated, the structure that exhibited a lucid and solid career path appeared to be an impetus for employees to resolve issues in a more effective way as the expected future rewards in terms of promotion. This was only to the extent that their future career paths were obviously defined and guaranteed where demonstrated through a clear structure. As a result, employees tended to dedicate more to resolve customer issues.

Added to that, some DDs suggested that the structure that bolstered twenty-four hour services be another crucial feature as it would truly serve the unique characteristics of airport services. Almost all of the DDs pointed out that the structure described above would be supportive to resolve customer issues in a more favourable way. The researcher thus defined that organisational structure of Suvarnabhumi airport influenced resolving issues for airport customers.

Box 1**Theme two (Structure)**

- An aircraft slipped out of runway during landing due to technical problem and ended up stuck beside runway. Unfortunately, on board passenger were hold on aircraft for too long to rescue owing to lack of prompt interconnectedness amongst relevant functions. Internal communication was stagnant to such an extent that instead of six hours, it took almost fifty six hours to remove aircraft out of the way. During the time that runway was blocked by disable aircraft, one of the two runway was partially closed and only one runway left available caused several flights delayed. Condition as such costed more fuel for aircraft to hold in the air owing to ground traffic congestion. Airport lost opportunity to gain revenue it was supposed to during such crisis. Images and reputation of the airport was seriously defiled. Loads of complaints were filed to airport management regarding slow response of concerned units.

- Installation of warning system for passenger to use automatic people mover (APM) in main terminal building was unnecessarily delayed owing to lack of interconnectedness between facility department and services department. Several passengers got minor injured during the use of APM since there was no signal warning in advance.

- Front line employees required more vehicles to serve customers in airfield. In doing so, the supply process was to flow through at least three departments as airport structure was unnecessarily expanded. Slowness as such brought about loads of continuous complaints as inadequate vehicles made it impossible to serve customers in the airfield with the size of two million square meters.

- Customer Service Department was later established with rather similar function to Public Relation Department. Reason to do so was unclaimed. Ambiguity as such became too baffling to customer to deal with in case of issues to be resolved as there was not clear which department was responsible.

5.1.3 Theme 3 Leadership

The third theme was leadership. Since this theme was rather sensitive amongst the AOT culture, most DDs seemed far too concerned to speak out directly. However, their expressions regarding this theme were explicit. As pointed out by several DDs, the researcher found out that leadership could typically affect issue resolution for airport customers, both directly and indirectly, and both in a positive and negative way. On the one hand, according to their authorities and position powers, leadership of the airport administrator played significant roles to facilitate how and when to restructure in order to improve issue resolution once it was so required. In doing so, airport leaders could be satisfactorily successful providing that they gained adequate and accurate information regarding the structural design including other necessary requirements. By this, leaders were able to determine the consequences in terms of the performance of the current structure such as a series of reports on complaints, customer satisfaction surveys, lower ranking in world class arena, and others. More importantly, they were obliged to recognise genuinely and sincerely the interrelationship between the goals and missions of the airport as an organisation and its structure. The descriptions of several DDs pointed out that this could be achieved only because and to the extent that the airport leader had to be open-minded and of course to have a strong intent to improve issue resolution. Added to that, DDs also elucidated that a leader whose attention was paid to greater empowerment tended to delegate relevant decision making to the DDs at the implementation level. This demonstrated the results in terms of faster and more effective issue resolution since an unnecessary line of command was shortened or even obliterated.

On the other hand, the leadership of airport administrators could become an unwanted problem for issue resolution in several different forms. To that extent, an unfavourable designed of the structure that could considerably impinge issue resolution might be emergent by the approval of the leader who unfortunately did not entirely recognise the influence of organisational structure on customer issue resolution. Unthinkably, as described by several DDs, a leader whose focal point is to reward a particular group of employees, in terms of career promotion by making use of structure, appeared to inhibit issue resolution relatively. By this, the airport structure is unnecessarily expanded. The aim is simply to provide more room for new

positions to suit some certain groups of employees rather than to improve performance of the organisation. Consequently, the more structure being expanded and broken into too many parts, the more unnecessary communication and longer work processes resulting in red-tape and maladroit response. The outcome of the phenomenon as such brought about poor issue resolution. That is to say, the leadership style could somehow taint and exacerbate the quality of the designed organisational structure. On the contrary, in the event of decent structure, the leader could possibly assign or promote the wrong persons on the basis of partisanship to the right structure, again resulting in a low quality of issue resolution. Furthermore, authorities of the employees at the implementation level, including a proper line of command that is appropriately allowed by the existing decent structure, could be distorted and, in some cases, utterly dictated by the leader whose attribute is overly self-centric. By this, it means that the advantages of empowerment, self-administrated team, and team base, provided by a decent structure could be interfered with or even inhibited. As a result, instead of promptly resolving customer issues, the DDs were unlikely to be at liberty to work, but rather unnecessarily obliged to get back to leaders for further decision making. This unfortunately resulted in unfavourable slowness in customer issue resolution. By this, the researcher came to realise that that leadership of the airport administrator affected how airport employees resolved issues of airport customers (See box 2).

5.1.4 Theme 4 Human Resource Management

The fourth emerged theme was human resources management. It was conceivable according to the data analysis and interpretation that the professional level of human resource management affected the quality of issue resolution to a certain extent. By this, several DDs implied that human resource management played a significant part through the competency and the willingness to work of the employees who resolved customer issues. It was widely known that the roles of human resource management typically included recruitment and selection to ensure the right employees joined the organisation. The more professional human resources management towards those functions, the more qualified employees the organisation was likely to gain. Consequently, most DDs indicated that the more qualified

employees the organisation stood to gain, the better issue resolution. Added to that, it was not less essential to develop employees with proper training programmes and educating schemes, for instance, to fulfil qualifications that might be further required for an intended job assignment. This process normally attempted to prepare employees with appropriately additional skills and knowledge for both current positions and possible future promotions. Then again, this function was usually in the area of the responsibility of human resources management. Employees with appropriate skills considered as highly competent, as described by the several DDs, appeared to resolve customer issues satisfactorily. To retain those well-trained employees within the organisation, however, was even more crucial and again fell into the responsibility of human resources management. By this, career path, as suggested by most DDs, was a significant motivation factor. To that extent, it was necessary for human resources management to provide adequate and accurate information of the right employees to leaders in the event of career promotion with the sense of transparency. By so doing, leaders would be able to meticulously and thoroughly consider and thus promote the qualified person to the right position in relation to their competency. Several DDs indicated that this very process would strikingly motivated employees to a higher willingness and dedication resulting in the betterment of customer issue resolution. Failure of this process tended to demonstrate the reverse result (See box 2)

5.1.5 Theme 5 Merit System and Patronage System

Astonishingly, the fifth core theme was merit system and patronage system. A rather high number of DDs explicitly expressed the impact of both merit system and patronage system to issue resolution. The point to be noted here was that, albeit there were several factors found in the current study affecting issue resolution at different degrees, merit system and patronage system were frequently referred to in association with other factors. According to the analysis of the data, many DDs insinuated that merit system was what they preferably expected everywhere in the workplace. Whenever this system was genuinely functional, not only were employees likely to be happily working, their willingness and dedication to work also increased. As a result, customer issue resolution tended to be more satisfactory. However most DDs expressed that merit system seemed too far from their expectation in their context.

To a surprising extent, along the description about issue resolution, most DDs referred to patronage system far more frequently and explicitly than merit system. For patronage system, some DDs used the term “unexplained system” and described that it was iniquitous and yet ubiquitous system in their workplace. By this, the researcher noticed that most DDs seemed overly frustrated owing to this very system. All DDs implied patronage system in this case, specifically in terms of partisanship. It made much of the fact that most DDs strongly agreed that each and every position of the DDs relevant to customer issue resolution stringently required specific skills and experiences to complete their duties. Nevertheless, in many cases, DDs described that regardless of the required expertise and experiences, employees whose skills and experiences were too inappropriate were disappointingly assigned or even promoted to the position pertaining to issue resolution only because of partisanship. Consequently, the quality of issue resolution stemmed from this case was found frequently dissatisfactory. Several DDs referred to this case in terms of various complaints from airport users caused by poor issue resolution. Moreover, in the light of patronage system, the structure of the airport as indicated by many DDs was unnecessarily expanded to create more positions just to reward certain employees with those newly expanded structure. This phenomenon unfortunately caused longer work processes and unnecessary communication across internal departments. In some cases, it even brought about more workloads and resources dispersal. These consequences of patronage system caused defect in customer issue resolution to a certain extent. By this, the researcher was able to define that merit system and patronage system affected customer issue resolution (See box 2).

Box 2**Theme 2/3/4 (Leadership/HRM/Merit system and patronage system)**

- Position on Head of Operation line was divided into two with no reason. Originally, only one position represented single line of command for all operation both in airside and landside. This made it convenience for customers to deal with only one contact person and facilitated quick response to resolve issues of the customers. Surprisingly, employee with no airport operational experience and expertise was promoted to take this crucial position. Airport customers were frustrated when operation issues were to be resolved as unnecessary communication was inevitable resulting in slow response. Several issues had not yet been resolved appropriately, passenger flow and airline requirements, for example, not to mention being unaware of customer's expectation owing to non-competent employee.
- Rather than medical service unit, a professional nurse was disappointedly promoted to be the head of airport customer service unit. Owing to the lack of skill and competence in airport operation, customer satisfaction was not fulfilled demonstrated by scores remaining low in airport ranking.
- Frequently wrong persons was promoted to the wrong position only because and to the extent of partisanship. Employee who lacked of knowledge in aviation safety was promoted to be the head of safety standard unit to oversee safety issues which was the most important for airport business. Employees in safety functions was frustrated as no professional guidance imposed to follow the safety rules and regulation.
- Employee whose back ground and experience was genuine public relation was astonishingly promoted to be the second head chief of aviation safety standard. Likewise, similar employee was also promoted to be the second head of operation line. Another employee with no knowledge in cargo operation but engineering background was assigned to lead air cargo management unit.

Interestingly, amongst theme two (decent structure), theme three (leadership), theme four (human resource management), and theme five (merit system and patronage system), there seemed to be an implicit interrelationship when customer issue resolution was addressed. This interrelationship demonstrated the result in that whenever DDs described each of the four themes, they frequently expressed them in relation to or referred to the rest of the others. This interrelationship appeared along with a high number of DDs and times of referring. Figure 5.1 illustrates the summary of five core themes that found to influence customer issue resolution and the interrelationship in between.

The evidence described in Box 1-2 even demonstrated circumstances consistent to the results of the study. Moreover, this evidence too depicted the implicit interrelationship amongst those four core themes. Box 1 portrayed examples of situations where customer issues were resolved ineffectively owing to poor structure of the airport. Structure, as such, did not facilitate, rather impeded, interconnectedness between internal departments resulting in unsatisfactory performance to resolve customer issues. By that, it indicated the influence of organisational structure on customer issue resolution. Likewise, Box 2 delineated real events, which illustrated that leadership, human resource management, merit system and patronage system affected customer issue resolution to a certain extent. Unskilled or incompetent employees could never be promoted unless approved by leaders. By that, leaders had every reason not to do so unless patronage system came into play. Nevertheless, in the event that the leader genuinely intended and recognised the extent to promote the right person to the right position, unfavourable cases as described in Box 2 should never take place, but only if human resource management functioned appropriately and of course with transparency.

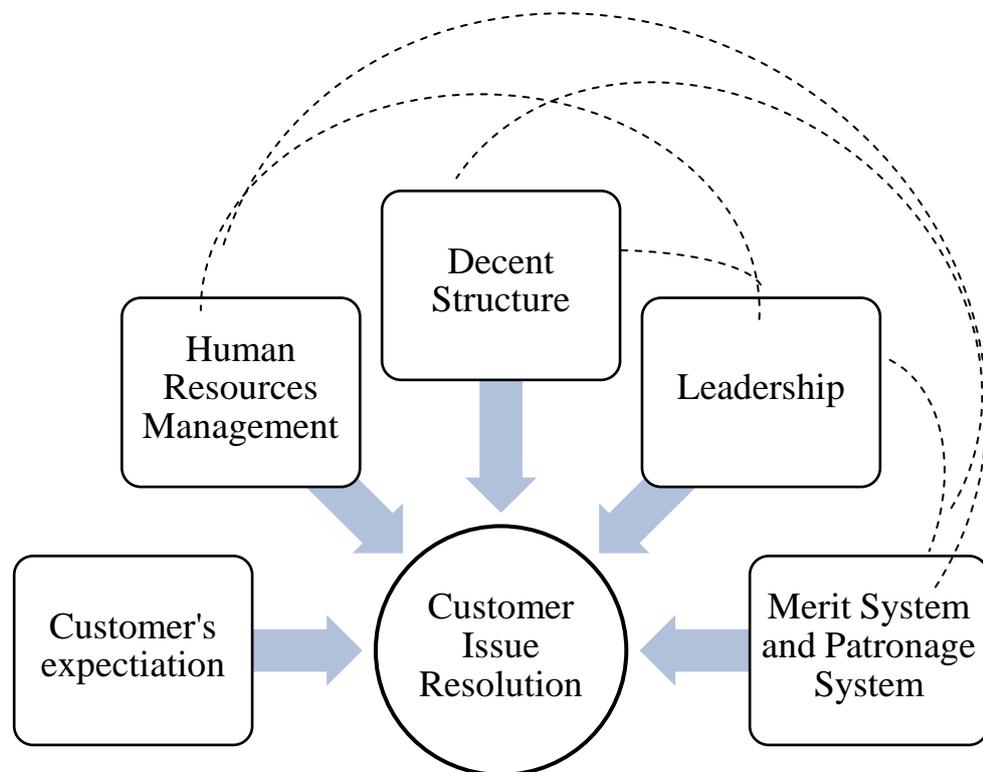


Figure 5.2 Five Core Themes Emerged.

Source: By Author

As earlier mentioned, rarely has there been any qualitative studies on the interrelationship between organisational structure and its performance or effectiveness. Salas (2009), however, conducted a phenomenological qualitative study with the same focal point but a different setting to the current study. Comparatively, the results of the current study are not entirely consistent with the previous study. On the one hand, the current study divulged three core themes coincidentally in line with the previous work of Salas (2009). Three of them emerged and portrayed in terms of organisational structure, leadership, and issues pertaining to customers such as expectations, satisfaction, and relationship to the customers. The Similarities, as such, convincingly indicated that, structure, leadership, and customer's issue were factors that influenced customer issue resolution regardless of different settings.

Intriguingly, the current study, on the other hand, revealed that the other two core themes were not emergent in the previous study. All of them included human resource management and the merit and patronage system. Albeit the settings of both studies were two different kinds of corporations, their functions were similar in the sense of service provisions, yet in different areas of expertise. Another point to be noted was that the setting of the current study affected a far wider range of customers according to the nature of airport services that are spontaneously public, whilst those of previous study aimed to serve a rather specific group of customers. More specifically, bureaucratic culture appeared to be strongly dominant in the setting of the current study. According to its establishment, AOT was primarily initiated, operated, and fully subsidised by the Ministry of Defense. Along its pivotal years, almost all of the employees and the leaders of AOT were military with a solid sense of bureaucracy. For decades, bureaucratic culture had been governing AOT and persisted regardless of its privatisation. There seemed to be no such thing in the setting of the previous study as it was obviously a private organisation. The differences in the results as abovementioned indicated that those two core themes, human resource management and the merit and patronage system that found affecting customer issue resolution emerged in relation to the different details of setting. It appears to guide the extent of the direction for further studies.

The purpose of the current study was to explore and describe the lived experiences of frontline division directors in resolving customer issues at Suvarnabhumi Airport. In particular, it aimed to understand the influences of organisational structure at the implementation level on customer issue resolution. The results of the study could be understandable and explained by applying the Structural Contingency Theory. In the light of this theory, it elucidated that organisational structure could to a certain extent be influencing organisational performance (Morgan, 1997). More specifically, the fit between structure and contingency affects organisational performance, thus structural change is required to move from misfit to fit (Donaldson, 2001). Consequently, organisations whose internal features best match the demands of the environment would achieve the best performance (Galbraith, 1977). Added to that, in term of effectiveness, organisation could be seen effective by attaining all the purposes it was supposed to (Strasser, Eveland, & Deniston, 1981, p. 323). The

results of the current study indicate that the betterment of issue resolution to satisfy airport customers could be successful providing that the internal structure of the airport was decently designed on a customer centric basis. By this, it means that the airport as an organisation is to change from misfit to fit its environment, in this case seen as the demand of the airport customers. By so doing, the airport is able to attain its goal aimed at a greater satisfaction of the airport customers. By that, it is not too difficult to state that airport could be seen effective according to the degree of goal achievement (Price, 1968). The presupposition of Structural Contingency Theory thus helps make a deeper understanding of the results of the current study as it has revealed that theme two (decent structure) is found to influence airport customer issue resolution.

For theme three which was leadership, regardless of abundant arguments during the review of the literature, the researcher found that leadership, according to the results of the current study, played its parts on organisational performance in various dimensions. Since it was imperative for leaders to work more effectively in a swiftly changing environment, they had to help make sense of the challenges confronted by both leaders and followers and respond to those challenges (Bass et al., 2003). By making sense of the challenges, the result of the current study portrayed that a leader could, to a certain extent, be supportive in restructuring decently to facilitate the improvement of customer issue resolution. The signals of the need to change the airport structure, which became more challenging to airport leaders, included a series of reports of incessant complaints, decreasing level ranking in global competition, and even more so, to accidents or incidents of the aircraft. In relation to the airport employees at the implementation level whose duties were to resolve issues of airport customers, the leader was supposed to work with their followers to generate creative solutions for complex problems, whilst developing them for future careers and promotions to handle a broader range of leadership responsibilities (Bennis, 2001). By this, the result of the study revealed that the leader was obliged to bolster development on skills and expertise of relevant employees to resolve customer issues more effectively. As pointed out by Kerfoot (2004), when resolving customer issues, the leader could play a large part in constituting a confident organisation by example and continuing support within the organisation. In addition, leaders whose attention

has been paid far more to empowerment were likely to broaden responsibilities of the employees at the implementation level when issues were to be resolved. As a result, to attain customer satisfaction, as one of the outcomes of organisational performance, was not impossible to guarantee. In the light of the results of the current study, it is not too difficult to state that leadership, to a certain extent, influenced issue resolution. The influences, as such, were found in several different forms including the development, empowerment and promotion of the right employees, the support to restructure when it was so required, and others. The results of the current study, however, were found consistent to what Camilleri (2007) proposed in that leadership, per se, did not quite directly impact performance, but acted as a catalyst for other factors that resulted in a particular organisational performance outcome.

Customer satisfaction is seen as a key component for organisations as it is rigorously linked to a higher profit margin and greater employee satisfaction (Berry & Parasuraman, 1992; Jones & Sasser, 1995; Schneider & Bowen, 1995; Conrad et al., 1997; Appian-Adu & Singh 1999). The success of an organisation could be addressed in various facets, one of those was to satisfy its customers by attaining their expectations. By this, the satisfaction of the customers could be established in so far as their problems were resolved with appropriateness and in the extent to which resolution, as such, attained their expectations. Organisations had every reason to do so only because and to the extent that weakness in the area of client satisfaction could pose a significant risk to the organisation (Salierno, 2006, p. 19). More importantly, customer dissatisfaction could considerably bring about the loss of opportunities for the organisation and financial growth of the business (Longman & Mullins, 2004; Chan, 2005; William, 2007). According to the results of the study, there seemed to be a sequential relationship amongst factors pertaining to customer perceptions. All of them included customer issues, customer expectations, and customer satisfaction. The results of the study depicted that whenever issues became the cases, airport customers far expected a resolution from the airport employees. Their expectations were common and yet crucial to such an extent that resolution should meet their level of expectation, not level of capacity to provide services. By this, it meant that resolution must be timely and effective regardless of constraints that airport employees were confronting. When expectations were met as a result of resolving issues, airport

customers appeared to be satisfied. Apparently, customer factors occurred from customers' issues, expectations, and satisfaction respectively. Airport customers, however, perceived only the end result of resolution, not knowing what brought about either satisfaction or dissatisfaction. On the contrary, division directors of Suvarnabhumi airport, whose duties lied at the implementation level to provide resolution to issues of airport customers, were far perfectly aware and well recognised what exactly were the root causes of those results. That is why the division directors were appropriate for purposeful sampling. The results of the study fortunately indicate that satisfaction of the customers could be established providing that their expectations were attained in the extent to how effective service employees resolved their issues.

Typically, the goal of a qualitative studies is to unfold the nature of multiple perspectives held by individuals in complex settings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Bradley & Devers, 2007). More specifically, a phenomenological explanation, by its nature, endeavours to reveal behavioural structures and lived experiences that constitute the relationship of people and how the world influences individual behaviour (Husserl, 1981; Van Kaam, 1966). By that, all of these contributed to the purpose of the current qualitative, phenomenological study that made an attempt to explore and describe the lived experiences of frontline division directors in resolving customer issues at Suvarnabhumi Airport. In particular, it aimed to understand the influence of organisational structure at the implementation level on customer issue resolution. The results of the current study appear to support the purpose of the study since the lived experiences of nineteen DDs in resolving customer issue were thoroughly explored and described. According to its results, theme two which emerged from the current study indicated that a decent structure could explicitly improve customer issue resolution, whilst a poor structure could inhibit the effectiveness of airport employees in resolving customer issue. In other words, organisational structure apparently influences customer issue resolution. This theme demonstrates the result that is found consistent to several scholars who put forward that ineffective organisational structure impedes customer issue resolution (Gibson & Cohen, 2003; Wiley et al., 2006).

The result of the current study provide constructive information for airport leaders to scrutinise when restructuring the organisation which is essential to improve customer issue resolution. Intriguingly, it is worth noting that amongst theme two (decent structure), theme three (leadership), theme four (human resource management), and theme five (merit system and patronage system), there seemed to be an implicit interrelationship when customer issue resolution was addressed. By this, airport leaders needed to be far more meticulous and thoughtful when attempting to improve customer issue resolution. Interestingly, theme five (merit system and patronage system) was a surprise finding because in previously similar studies, this theme never emerged. Moreover, neither merit system nor patronage system had been attended to in similar studies. Another point to be noted is that the social contexts of the previous studies was genuinely private organisations, whereas the current study was conducted on an organisation whose culture is governed and orchestrated by a strong bureaucratic sense. Merit system and patronage system is typically found far more dominant in the context as such. This makes it more of a challenge for further study on a similar topic.

The outcome of the current study is even more significant to the services of the airport in several levels. In the light of ineffective issue resolution of Suvarnabhumi Airport, one might concede that it is significant in many ways. At the national level, this very airport was one of the key players of the Thai cabinet long-term strategy, including urgent plans that attempt to develop competitiveness of the country via the competency of transportation. As the key channel of air transport, Suvarnabhumi Airport could be inhibiting economic growth with its ineffectiveness. By that, the level of effectiveness of Suvarnabhumi airport could somehow represent the success or failure of the cabinet's plan to a certain extent. Apart from that, since the services of airport are genuinely public, they inevitably affect a wide range of people in society, both domestically and internationally. Furthermore, ineffective issue resolution of the airport could utterly lead to serious accidents or incidents of aircraft operation that might put lives and property in peril. Most importantly, the images and reputation of the nation as a whole could be defiled owing to the ineffectiveness of issue resolution of the airport. The results of the current study thus provide literature to the leader of AOT to improve customer issue resolution and to avoid unfavourably aforementioned issues.

5.2 Limitation of the Study

Several limitations transpired in this current study. Since the current qualitative phenomenological research study was designed to conduct structured interviews incorporated with observations with nineteen division directors (DDS) at the implementation level of Suvarnabhumi Airport, and no other employees at other levels were included, by all means, Generalisability and Representativeness of the population were a limitation of the study. Added to that, by the very nature of purposive sampling and small sample size, the applicability of the current study to other settings was rather limited. According to Creswell (2007a, 2007b), the Generalisability of the findings tend to decrease when the researcher employs a purposive sampling strategy. In consistency to many scholars, the sample size of nineteen participants in this current study, however, was adequate and acceptable for a qualitative phenomenological research study (Morse, 1994; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Creswell, 2007a, 2007b).

In providing information during the interview process, the candour of the participants was usually erratic. The length of time available to conduct the interviews for the study was inevitably uncontrolled and sometime discontinuous since most participants were time efficient employees. Those aspects appeared to be further limitations to a certain extent. Moreover, the validity of the current study is limited to the reliability of the instrument used. For the current qualitative phenomenological study, the researcher, per se, was the paramount instrument; the ability of researcher to study participants at the intended location and to interpret the data analysis, therefore, is considered as a limitation to some extent. After all, there was no guarantee to gain permission to access and interview all participants, and therefore, the limitation manifested itself.

5.3 Contribution of the Study

Weaknesses in the area of client satisfaction, as pointed out by Salierno (2006), could put an organisation at a significant risk. As expounded in theme one, effective issue resolution could bring about customer satisfaction providing that it

meets customers' expectations. If not, customer dissatisfaction could lead to the loss of opportunities for the organisation and financial growth of the business (Longman & Mullins, 2004; Chan, 2005; William, 2007). More importantly, customer issue resolution of an airport, as a public service provider, appears to contribute tremendous effects, either negative or positive, to such an extent that covers a broad range of people in society, both domestically and internationally. By this, it inevitably reflects the reputation of the nation as a whole. Moreover, according to the current cabinet development strategy, Suvarnbhumi Airport is one of the key players in promoting the economic growth and the stability of the country. The effectiveness of the airport obviously became one of several indicators that represented success of the cabinet strategy. Most importantly, there had been, thus far, no previous research studies on an airport context pertaining to the influence of organisational structure on customer issue resolution. More specifically, there are very few qualitative studies on a similar topic. Therefore, it is not too difficult to state that the outcome of the current qualitative phenomenological study appears to be not only a theoretical contribution, but also beneficial to practitioners.

By theoretical contribution, the results of the current study become comprehensible by applying the Structural Contingency Theory, regardless of its shortcomings argued by many scholars. The results of the current study indicate that satisfying airport customers with effective issue resolution could be successful provided that the internal structure of the airport be designed on a customer centric basis. By applying this very theory, it elucidates that it is inevitable for the airport as an organisation to change its internal structure to fit its dynamic environment in order to survive, and even more so to become more competitive. That is to say, the airport has to fulfil the ever changing demands of its customers. By so doing, the airport becomes competent to achieve its goals which are aimed at a greater satisfaction of its customers. At this stage, the airport is seen effective according to the degree of goal achievement (Price, 1968). The presupposition of Structural Contingency Theory makes the results of the current study become more insightful and comprehensible when it reveals theme two (decent structure) which found it to influence airport customer issue resolution. By this, it demonstrates the contribution of the Structural Contingency Theory in spite of its known shortcomings.

Added to that, the current study provides a theoretical contribution by attending to two variables, which are organisational structure and customer issue resolution, including the relationship between them. This current study, however, was developed from suggestions made by previous studies to the extent that those two variables should be studied under different settings for a deeper understanding of the influence of organisational structure on customer issue resolution. Comparatively, the results of the current study reveals two different core themes including human resource management and the patronage and merit system. These two themes did not emerge in the similarly previous study. More intriguingly, the results of the current study indicate an interrelationship amongst four out of five emergent themes including theme two (decent structure), theme three (leadership), theme four (human resource management), and theme five (merit system and patronage system), whilst two out of the five themes were found interrelated in the previous study. Furthermore, it is worth noting that previous studies whose focal points were organisational structure and its performance or the like mainly use quantitative methods; the current study, on the contrary, employed qualitative methods, particularly with a phenomenological approach which seems rather rare on this topic. It makes much of the fact that phenomenological research aims to identify the “essence” of human experiences concerning a phenomenon as described by participants in a study (Moustakas, 1994). The purpose of the current study was to explore and describe the lived experiences of frontline division directors in resolving customer issues at Suvarnabhumi Airport, and specifically to understand the influence of organisational structure at the implementation level on customer issue resolution. Understanding the “lived experiences,” as such, mark phenomenology as a philosophy, as well as a method involved in studying a small number of subjects through an extensive and prolonged engagement to develop patterns and relationships of meaning (Moustakas, 1994). More specifically, most studies pertaining to services and satisfaction found emphasise on the customer’s perspective, whilst this current study took the service provider’s perspective as the focal point. The study of the aforementioned phenomenon became an even more challenge when conducted in an airport context, a setting that had never been attended to in similarly previous studies.

By being beneficial to practitioners, the current study provides constructive literature beneficial to the airport leader to consider under more scrutiny when restructuring an organisation to overcome organisational structure barriers in an attempt to resolve customer issues. To some extent, this literature is likely to be applicable to other airports under the administration of Airport of Thailand owing to a similar setting. Moreover, the outcome of the current study provides suggestion in that the AOT leader who seeks the betterment of customer issue resolution needs to be far more prudent since, apart from organisational structure, several factors are involved and interrelated. All of these require further studies for a deeper understanding.

5.4 Suggestion for Future Study

The current qualitative phenomenological study took the focal point on division directors (DDs), the participants whose titles rested at the implementation level of Suvarnabhumi Airport. Obviously, the participants and the setting of the current study were rather specific. Replicating the study designated at other airports in other parts of the country under the administration of AOT would, therefore, provide a deeper understanding on the influence of organizational structure on customer issue resolution in an airport context. Apart from the implementation level, similar studies with different levels of participants should be attended to to provide a deeper understanding in order for improving customer issue resolution in an airport context. More importantly, repeating the studies by addressing other public service units is recommended as it is likely to further clarify the influence as such in a bureaucratic context. By so doing, the results of the recommended studies should contribute to improving issue resolution from the governmental sector that could be far more beneficial to the public. Intriguingly, further studies in a similar social context by addressing two themes found different from the previous study - human resource management, and merit system and patronage system - are too suggested. By so doing, it should help provide more comprehensive information when seeking the betterment of customer issue resolution. Lastly, the interrelationship amongst four out of five themes from the current study in relation to customer issue resolution is another facet recommended for further study.

5.5 Summary

The current qualitative phenomenological research study made an attempt, according to its purpose, to explore and describe the lived experiences of division directors (DDs) of Suvarnabhumi Airport in resolving customer issues. More specifically, it aimed to understand the influence of organisational structure on customer issue resolution. In doing so, the researcher attended to samples comprised of nineteen participants. This number is in line with the sample size of phenomenological studies suggested by Creswell's (2007a, 2007b) and Morse (1994). Those purposeful samples were deliberately taken so as to comprehend the central phenomenon (Cresswell, 2007a). Added to that, all participants were currently directorial employees whose titles rested at the implementation level at Suvarnabhumi Airport. To that extent, participants were intentionally selected from the relevant departments to demonstrate that they provided a certain level of services or support in coordinating manners to resolve customer issues. Practically, their authority to resolve customer issues were rigorously restrictive and granted only within the scope that the organisational structure at the implementation level allowed. By incorporating structured interviews and interview protocol in association with field note taking and observation techniques, the interview process provided the intended data for the current study.

During the analysis of the data, the researcher employed a modified van Kaam method by Moustakas (1994). In doing so, the researcher started by listing and grouping the data of every relevant experience. Irrelevant data was reduced and eliminated to determine invariant constituents. By this, constituents of the experiences of the participants were clustered into thematic data labels. The researcher validated the final identification of the themes by applying them against the full descriptions. The next step was to use validated and relevant themes and invariant constituents to develop the individual textural descriptions as the experiences relating the influence of organisational structure on customer issue resolution. By then, the researcher constructed an individual structural explanation of participant experiences. The last step was to construct a textural-structural explanation describing the meaning and essence of the experiences. There were five core themes which emerged during the

analysis and interpretation of the data. The first core theme revealed that understanding and awareness of “customer’s expectation” could bring about customer satisfaction. The second core theme delineated that “decent structure” of the organisation considerably promoted greater issue resolution. The third core theme suggested that “leadership” played its part by acting as either catalyst or inhibitor through various factors affecting issue resolution to a certain extent. The fourth core theme illustrated that effective “human resource management” contributed to better issue resolution. Lastly, the fifth core theme disclosed a surprise finding in that “merit system and patronage system” were issues that interestingly affected issue resolution.

The outcome of the current study supports the purpose of the study. The lived experiences of nineteen division directors in resolving customer issue were explored and described exhaustively. Theme two emerged from the results of the study indicating that a decent structure would improve customer issue resolution. This theme was found consistent with several scholars who indicated that an ineffective organisational structure impeded customer issue resolution (Gibson & Cohen, 2003; Wiley et al., 2006).

The results of the current qualitative phenomenological study helps to provide the AOT leader instructive information for when restructuring the organisation necessary to improve customer issue resolution. Another point to be noted is that amongst theme two (decent structure), theme three (leadership), theme four (human resource management), and theme five (merit system and patronage system), there seemed to be an implicit interrelationship when customer issue resolution was addressed. By this, leaders needed to be far more meticulous and thoughtful when attempting to improve customer issue resolution.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of the current qualitative phenomenological study was to explore and describe the lived experiences of division directors (DDs) of Suvarnabhumi Airport in resolving customer issues. More specifically, it aimed to understand the influence of organisational structure on customer issue resolution. By employing a modified van Kaam method by Moustakas (1994) with structured interview and interview protocol in association with field note taking and observation technique, researcher obtained intended data. In doing so, researcher managed to use samples comprised of nineteen participants. This number appeared to conform sample size of phenomenological studies suggested by Creswell's (2007a, 2007b) and Morse (1994). Researcher applied purposive sampling by deliberately choosing samples to comprehend the central phenomenon (Cresswell, 2007a, 2007b). More specifically, all participants were currently employees at directorial level whose titles rested at implementation level in Suvarnabhumi Airport. To that extent, researcher intentionally selected participants from the relevant departments to demonstrate that they provided certain level of services or supports in coordinating manners to resolve customer issues. Practically, their authorities to resolve customer issues were rigorously restrictive and limited only within the scope that organisational structure at implementation level allowed.

Researcher conducted the current study in response to its overarching research question, which was "What are lived experiences of frontline division directors in resolving customer issues specifically to understand the influence of organisational structure at implementation level on customer issue resolution?" Reasonably, researcher employed qualitative method for the current study since the goal of a qualitative study was to unfold the nature of multiple perspectives held by individuals in complex setting (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Bradley & Devers, 2007). More specifically, the current study addressed phenomenological

approach only because and to the extent that its explanation helped disclose behavioural structure and reveal the lived experience that constituted the relationship of people and how the world influenced individual behaviour (Van Kaam, 1966; Husserl, 1981). Theoretically, phenomenological research aimed to identify the “essence” of human experiences concerning a phenomenon, as described by participants in a study (Moustakas, 1994). The focal point of the current study was exploring and describing the lived experience of nineteen frontline division directors (DDs) of Suvarnabhumi Airport in resolving customer issue. The “lived experiences” as such marked phenomenological as a philosophy as well as a method involved in studying a small number of subjects through extensive and prolonged engagement to develop patterns and relationships of meaning (Moustakas, 1994). By that, all of these were contributing to the purpose of the current qualitative, phenomenological study that made an attempt to explore and describe the lived experiences of frontline division directors in resolving customer issues at Suvarnabhumi Airport. In particular, it aimed to understand the influence of organisational structure at implementation level on customer issue resolution.

In doing so, researcher derived four sub questions from the overarching question of the current research study that was “What are the life experiences of frontline division directors in resolving customer issues specifically to understand the influence of organisational structure at implementation level on customer issue resolution?” As a further result, researcher was able to develop ten final interview questions (Appendix F). This series of interview questions eventually revealed five core themes in relation to customer issue resolution.

Results of the current study appeared to support the purpose of the study. By that, the lived experiences of nineteen DDs in resolving customer issue were explored and described thoroughly. More specifically, according to its results, theme two from the current study indicated that decent structure could bring about the improvement of customer issue resolution. This result implied that organisational structure influenced customer issue resolution. For deeper understanding result of the study in relation to its purpose, researcher applied Structural Contingency Theory. By this, it elucidated that airport as an organisation was inevitably to change internal structure to fit its dynamic environment in order to survive, even more so to become more competitive.

The presupposition of structural contingency theory made the result of the current study become more insightful and comprehensible when it revealed theme two (decent structure) that found influencing airport customer issue resolution. Result of the current study found consistent to several scholars who pointed out that ineffective organisational structure impeded customer issue resolution (Gibson & Cohen, 2003; Wiley et al., 2006).

Consequently, results of the current study provided constructive information for leaders of Suvarnabhumi Airport to scrutinise in the event that structure of the airport was required to improve customer issue resolution. Intriguingly, it was worth noting that amongst four out five emergent theme including theme two (decent structure), theme three (leadership), theme four (human resource management), and theme five (merit system and patronage system), there seemed to be implicit interrelationship whenever customer issue resolution was addressed. By this, airport leaders needed to be far more meticulous and thoughtful when attempting to improve customer issue resolution. In particular, theme five (merit system and patronage system) was seen as a surprise finding to the researcher since in the previously similar studies, this theme never emerged. Moreover, neither merit system nor patronage system had been attended in previously similar studies. The point to be noted was that bureaucratic culture in current setting was dominant but not in previous study. It was therefore recommended that further studies on this topic should be done.

Outcome of the current study was even more significant to the services of the airport in several different ways. Since services of Suvarnabhumi Airport were genuinely public, they inevitably affected a wide range of people in society both domestically and internationally. By this, ineffective issue resolution could utterly lead to poor service quality of the airport. More seriously, ineffectiveness as such tended to demonstrate the possibility of risk in terms of accident or incident of aircraft operation that might put lives and properties in peril. Most importantly, Suvarnabhumi Airport in relation to Thailand cabinet development plan, could to certain extent be inhibiting economic growth with its ineffectiveness. After all, the images and reputation of the nation as a whole could be defiled owing to the ineffective issue resolution of this primary airport of the country. The result of the current study was contributing in provision of literatures to leader of AOT to improve customer issue resolution to avoid unfavourably aforementioned issues.

Another contributing point was the implicit interrelationship amongst theme two (decent structure), theme three (leadership), theme four (human resource management), and theme five (merit system and patronage system). By this, leaders needed to be far more meticulous and thoughtful when attempting to improve customer issue resolution as interrelationship as such demonstrated that resolving issues of airport customers required more than one way of thoughts. Further studies in this regarded topic should be conducted for deeper understanding. Interrelationship amongst those four core themes were strongly recommended both with quantitative and qualitative approach. Further result should help improve customer issue resolution.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPANTS

Dear Researcher,

My name is _____. I am now working as _____ for Suvarnabhumi Airport. By this letter, I shall willingly participate in the research study by allowing my lived experience with customer issue resolution to be revealed. I am perfectly aware that my participation in this study will be treated at strictest confidence to guarantee my anonymity. The researcher of this study made it clear to me in that I am able to withdraw or decline at will and any time without repercussions. All data from interview process and the like shall be kept utterly confidential. Since I understand that this study is for nothing but academic purpose, the results may to a certain extent be used for publication. In addition, researcher has exhaustively declared the purpose of the study and clearly explained questions and concerns I have attended. Moreover, any further questions I may have in the future are welcomed at my earliest convenience.

I am also well aware that there will be no risk to me participation in this study other than risk associate with my daily living.

By signing this form, I have voluntarily agreed to participate in this study and acknowledged the nature of the study, the guarantee of my anonymity, and my permission to the researcher of the current study for further action on information be retrieved from my interview.

Signature of the interviewee _____ Date _____

Signature of the researcher _____ Date _____

APPENDIX B

REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION

Dear Participant,

My name is _____ I am currently a doctoral candidate at National Institute of Development Administration working on a Doctorate of Development Management. I have received permission from the President to make this request. I am conducting a research study that involves interviewing employees regarding your lived experiences concerning customer issue resolution. The purpose of the study is to provide the president literature with a more thorough perspective, from an employee view, on customer issue resolution.

Your experience as a Division Director responsible for resolving customer issues genuinely qualifies you to participate in the research study. Your contribution involves participating in a recorded interview describing your experiences with customer issue. The interview will last approximately 2-3 hours. Your participation in this study is definitely voluntary. This research study attempts to capture your experiences at Suvarnabhumi Airport. This research study will absolutely promise you anonymity. I certainly recognise you are time efficient person however I would appreciate your participation in this research study. Should you have any questions, please let me know. I shall explain the study and answer any questions you may have before your voluntary participation in the research study. You can absolutely choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at your convenience if you desire so.

I guarantee you no predictable risks to share your lived experiences resolving customer issues. For academic purpose, the outcome of the research study is to be published nonetheless your anonymity will be treated in a strictest confidence. You access to the final dissertation will be available to at all time.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and support

Sincerely,

(Researcher Entity)

APPENDIX C

TRANSCRIBER (TRASLATER) CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

My name is _____ (name of transcriber) I declare that the audio-recorded data and paper and/or electronic files of the research study entitled “The influence of organisational structure on customer issue resolution will maintain confidential. “A phenomenological study on Suvarnabhumi Airport” will be kept in a safe and locked location during my possessions. I agree that information I transcribe (translate) regarded this study will be shared with none other than the researcher. On the completing of the transcription, never information of any parts will remain under my possession at anywhere of device or the like.

Signature _____

Date _____

Title _____

APPENDIX D

PILOT TEST INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Questions

- 1) Describe the division you work with your roles as division director (DD).
- 2) Describe if your current responsibility relates to resolving customer issues.

Explain how you resolve those issues.

3) What experiences are most relevant in resolving customer issues? Provide examples for further details.

4) Describe your authority being assigned as DD in resolving customer issues. Provide examples to support your claim.

5) Describe your perception to other division when resolving customer issues. Provide example to support your claim.

6) What suggestions would you make to improve customer services?

7) To your perception, explain if organisational structure influences customer issue resolution. Provide example to support your claim.

8) Base on your experiences, explain how organisational structure influences customer issue resolution. Provide example you may have.

9) What changes to the organisational structure would you suggest to improve customer issue resolution? Provide example to support your claim.

10) Base on your experience what does the recommended organisational structure look like to you to improve customer issue resolution? Provide example of any certain cases.

11) (For pilot testing experts only). What additional interview questions would you suggest to improve the proposed research study?

Demographic Question

- 1) How many years have you worked as division director?
- 2) What is the highest level of education attained?
- 3) What is your age range?

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW SCRIPT/PROTOCOL

Pre – Interview

- 1) Make arrangement on interview location.
- 2) Deliver notice to participant to confirm schedule and location via email/phone call/contact in person.

During Interview Process

- 3) Describe the purpose and nature of the study and answer all questions there might be to the participants.
- 4) Proffer informed consent to participant to consider and sign.
- 5) Commence audio recording and prepare for field notes taking.
- 6) Describe the way study being conducted to participant.
- 7) Deliver interview questions orderly as designed.
- 8) End interview with gratitude and inform participant to expect further following up if any.

Post – Interview

- 9) Store data in safe and secured location when not in use.
- 10) Translate/Transcribe data obtained from the interview.
- 11) Return processed data to participant for correction/addition if any.
- 12) Request clarifying comments if necessary.
- 13) Include comments in transcribed data if necessary.

APPENDIX F

FINAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Questions

- 1) Describe the division you work with your roles as division director (DD).
- 2) Describe if your current responsibility relates to resolving customer issues.

Explain how you resolve those issues.

3) What experiences are most relevant in resolving customer issues? Provide examples for further details.

4) Describe your authority being assigned as DD in resolving customer issues. Provide examples to support your claim.

5) Describe your perception to other division when resolving customer issues. Provide example to support your claim.

6) What suggestions would you make to improve customer services?

7) To your perception, explain if organisational structure influences customer issue resolution. Provide example to support your claim.

8) Base on your experiences, explain how organisational structure influences customer issue resolution. Provide example you may have.

9) What changes to the organisational structure would you suggest to improve customer issue resolution? Provide example to support your claim.

10) Base on your experience what does the recommended organisational structure look like to you to improve customer issue resolution? Provide example of any certain cases.

Demographic Question

- 1) How many years have you worked as division director?
- 2) What is the highest level of education attained?
- 3) What is your age range?

BIOGRAPHY

NAME

Mr. Akaparp Borisuth

ACADEMIC BACKGROUND

Bachelor's Degree in Sanitary Science,
Faculty of Public Health,
Mahidol University, 1985.

Master's Degree in Public and Private
Management,
The School of Public Administration, National
Institute of Public Administration, 2004.

PRESENT POSITION

Vice President of Airside Operation Department,
Suvarnabhumi Airport, Airports of Thailand,
Plc.