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Analyzing the Effect of Delighting Services on the Loyalty of Public Library Users: A Case Study

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Abstract

Purpose: This study seeks to investigate the effect of delighting services on the loyalty of public library users.

Methodology: This is a survey study, and its statistical population consists of the users of public libraries in Mashhad. The integrated model is used in this study and the structural equations related to the indicators in the research model are investigated. The goodness of research model fitting suggests the special place of the delighting service and its effect on the components of trust, commitment, satisfaction and loyalty of users.

Findings: Furthermore, the finding's show that the delighting services affect commitment, satisfaction and, consequently, the loyalty of user. If library services are delighting, then the trust of users will be gained and the users will feel committed to the library; therefore, their satisfaction will ultimately result in their loyalty to the library.

Keywords: Delighting Services, Loyalty, Trust, Commitment, Satisfaction, Public Library.

Introduction

Public libraries are now undergoing fundamental changes in terms of communication technologies more than ever. The demographic conformation of the library communities and the diversity of the required information are examples of the challenges facing modern libraries. Today, information is considered a good rather than a source. The library services should be such that result in gaining the users' trust in addition to their satisfaction. One of the major reasons for libraries inefficiency is the lack of loyalty and ongoing communication between users and the library (Olu Adeyoyin, 2005).

Over the past decades, the global economy has shifted from being product-oriented to being service-oriented, which is considered to be the most important long-term orientation in today's economy (Laroche, Bindl, Ueltschy, & Eggert, 2007). Service-oriented economy depends on users' loyalty and their frequent visits. The issue of loyalty is being considered by the for-profit organizations to increase their financial gain. However, in non-for-profit organizations, this notion is meant to increase the customer return rate and the number of users, and is used to justify the allocation of budget and accountability to the parent organization. The library, as a non-for-profit organization, always relies on the reports on the provided services and user satisfaction for receiving budget from the parent organization.

Customer satisfaction is a fundamental concept in marketing and an important objective for business(Lassar & Mittal, 1998; Levitt & Levitt, 1986). In general, customer satisfaction is a prerequisite for customer loyalty. Satisfied customer is more likely to remain with business(Abdinnour-Helm, Chaparro, & Farmer, 2005; Reichheld & Sasser, 1990). Pearson (1996) claims the satisfaction to be the reason for customer loyalty; moreover, he defines loyalty as a positive mentality and desirable attitude of those users towards the library, who are committed to reuse the library and recommend its services to others. Nonetheless, some researchers argue that a satisfied customer is not necessarily a loyal customer(Oliver, 1999). Rust & Zahorik, (1993) stated that satisfaction does not always imply loyalty. They have provided two reasons for this theory: first, the customer looks for other alternatives with the hope of receiving better services; and second, a new customer may be a better alternative for the previous one. Therefore, along with providing customers with better services to gain their satisfaction and loyalty, businesses should also seek to attract new customers and develop their service. However, some researchers, like (Al-Hawari, 2011; Joseph & Stone, 2003) believed that the cost of attracting new customer is much higher than that of keeping the current customer.

Today, factors such as easy and adequate access to information and the expectation of communicating with information providers affect the satisfaction of library users, and consequently, libraries are in a tough competition with modern communication technologies. Therefore, there are other variables to be considered in addition to customer satisfaction, which may affect the development of customer loyalty (S.-C. Chen, 2012; Xu & Du, 2018).

The results of a study by Heradio, Fernández-Amorós, Cabrerizo, & Herrera-Viedma, (2012) show that using search engines to access information, rather than using libraries, is preferred by users (Ross & Sennyey, 2008). Libraries should therefore think of strategies to maintain their users' loyalty(Xu & Du, 2018).

Literature and Theoretical Basis of Research

Loyalty: Loyalty is important in for-profit organizations to increase revenue and is measured in terms of profits, while non-for-profit organizations such as libraries, consider the increase in the user return rate and the increase in the number of users to be adequate to justify the budget and accountability to the parent organization (Kiran & Diljit, 2017).

Loyalty to the library can be defined as a behavioral reaction such as re-visiting the library due to various decisions regarding the reuse of a library services among other libraries. The issue of customer loyalty and factors affecting the concept in libraries has been investigated in many researches(Nadjla Hariri & Somayyeh Rowshan, 2015; Haruna, Madu, & Adamu, 2017; Ghaffari, 2016; Haruna et al., 2017; Kiran & Diljit, 2017; M. Keshvari & M. Abdollahi, 2013; T.-S. Chen, Chen, & Chang, 2004; Martensen & Grønholdt, 2003; Oh, 2003). The results of the studies show that there is a direct positive relationship among the quality of service, satisfaction and loyalty of library users. Moreover, the quality of service, mediated by satisfaction, indirectly affects user loyalty.

Delight: Customer delight and its effect on customer loyalty is one of the factors being emphasized in the field of marketing over the last two decades (Chitturi, Raghunathan, & Mahajan, 2008; Hsin Chang & Wang, 2011a; Kim, 2011; Lee & Shea, 2015). The concept of customer delight is one of the issues with a short life-time in marketing. Oliver et al. were among the first researchers to study customer delight(Al-Hawari, 2011). Al-Hawari, (2011) believes that delight is a positive and pleasant feeling felt by the customers when they are provided by services beyond their expectation. Accordingly, (Xu & Du, 2018)define satisfaction as an attitude and delight as a feeling, and believe that the customer delight requires going beyond being satisfied with the service provided.

In fact, customer satisfaction is the result of providing services as expected by the customer, while customer delight is providing services beyond the customer's expectations. Many studies have investigated the relationship between customer's delight and loyalty and have concluded that loyalty is one of the most important results of delighting experiences (Chitturi et al., 2008; Hsin Chang & Wang, 2011b; Kim, 2011; Lee & Shea, 2015).

The consumer behavior studies have shown that loyal customer behavior, such as re-use action and recommend action, is affected by the variable of behavioural intention called as "customer loyalty" (Sancharan, 2011; Clemes, Gan, Kao, & Choong, 2008; Dowling & Uncles, 1997; Fornell, 1992; Lai & Chen, 2011; Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1996). In other side, service quality and customer satisfaction, which are a form of attitude, may affect customer loyalty and may also not affect customer loyalty(Kiran & Diljit, 2017; Sumaedi, Bakti, & Yarmen, 2012). Hence, the research on library user perception is important to involve not only service quality and customer satisfaction but also customer loyalty.

Research Objectives

The main objective of this research is to determine the effect of delighting services on user loyalty in public libraries. The minor objectives are:

1. Determination of the effect of delighting services on gaining user trust

2. Determination of the effect of delighting services on user satisfaction

3. Determination of the effect of user trust on user satisfaction

4. Determination of the effect of user satisfaction on user loyalty

Research Hypotheses

1. There is a significant relationship between delighting services and user trust in public libraries.

2. There is a significant relationship between delighting services and user commitment in public libraries.

3. There is a significant relationship between the user trust and user commitment in public libraries.

4. There is a significant relationship between user commitment and user satisfaction in public libraries.

5. There is a significant relationship between user satisfaction and user loyalty in public libraries.

Conceptual Model of Research

The conceptual model in this research is a combination of the models suggested by (Al-Hawari, 2011; Hsin Chang & Wang, 2011a; Mysen, Svensson, & Payan, 2011). In this model, user loyalty is affected by user satisfaction and user commitment. These components are affected by factors of trust and delighting services.
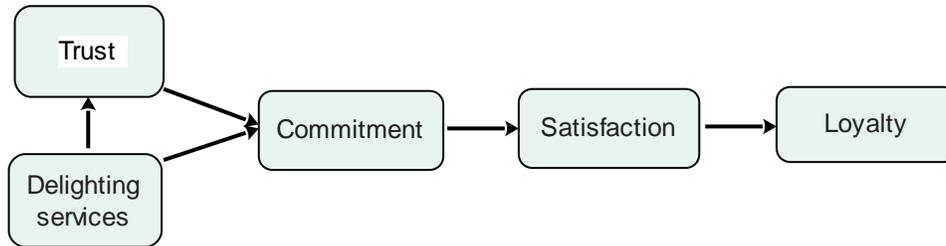

Figure1. Conceptual Model of research (Chang & Wang 2011, Al-Hawari 2011, Mysen et al, 2011).

Research Methodology

This is a descriptive applied research. The data are collected using a questionnaire. Cronbach's alpha coefficient is used to measure the reliability of the questionnaire. The statistical population consists of the users of public libraries in Mashhad, n=42829 at the time of the study. The simple random sampling method is used to select the sample. The minimum sample size is determined by the Morgan formula to be 396 participants. In this research, the structural equation method is used to make inferences regarding the research hypotheses.

Analysis of the Findings
- **Calculation of Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient for the Questionnaire**

A 15-member sample was used for the pre-test. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was obtained to be 0.96 for questions in the questionnaire. Table 1 summarizes the obtained Cronbach's alpha coefficients.

Table1: Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient for the Questionnaire.

Component	Cronbach's alpha
Delighting services	0.857
Commitment	0.884
Trust	0.845
Satisfaction	0.869
Loyalty	0.892

In addition, based on the results presented in Table 1, the obtained values of Cronbach's alpha coefficient suggest that the questions in the questionnaire are good and appropriate for measuring the research variables and its application in examination of research hypotheses.

- **Structural Equations Modeling**

Structural equation modeling is a statistical method for investigation of the linear relationships between the latent (unobserved) variables and the manifest (observed) variables.

The following figure illustrates the conceptual model of research based on theoretical arguments. This model includes 45 indicators (Clauses of the research tool) and 5 components (delighting services, trust, commitment, satisfaction and loyalty).

Figure1: Research Measurement Model
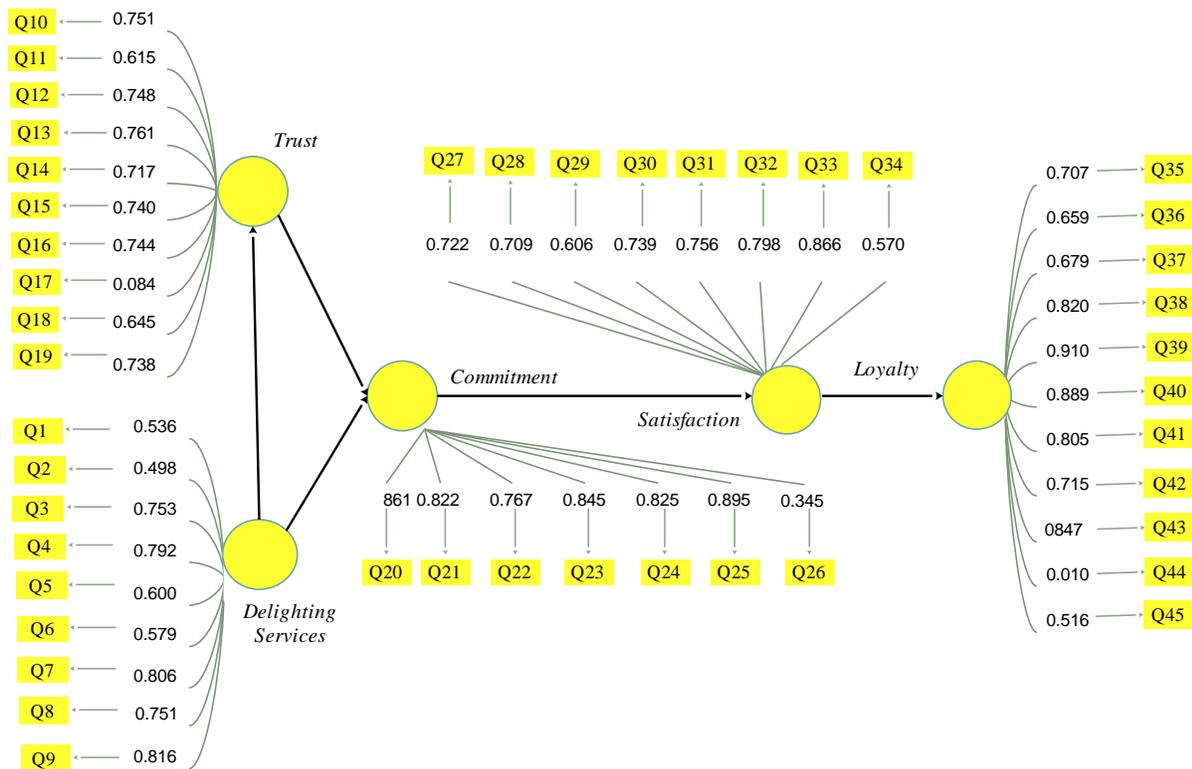
Analysis of the Measurement Model

A structural equations model, consisting of a set of latent variables, is observed and the relational links between them determine the direction of the relationship between and the effect of research variables on each other. In general, a structural equations model consists of two measurement and structural models. Measurement model investigates

weights and loads of the latent variables, and the structural model investigates path coefficients between the latent variables.

- **Evaluation of the Measurement Model Using Confirmative Factor Analysis**

The general fitting of the measurement model is determined by the confirmative factor analysis. In this method, once the variables and related indicators are selected based on the initial conceptual model, it is investigated whether the variables and indicators are loaded on the predicted conceptual model factors as expected, or their conformation is changed and they are loaded on another factor? (Habibpour and Safari, 2009).

Accordingly, based on the conceptual model, it is necessary in this step and before fitting its structural model to investigate if the 45 observed indicators (clauses of the questionnaire) reflect the latent variables (delighting services, trust, commitment, satisfaction and loyalty). Figure 1 shows the research measurement model.

The confirmative factor analysis of the research variables is determined by the factor load of each indicator in the PLS model. According to the Falk & Miller (1992) criteria, the value of each factor load of the clauses of the related variable should be greater than or equal to 0.5 (Hair, Hollingsworth, Randolph, & Chong, 2017). However, for more accuracy, the test statistic and its corresponding significance are used to come to a conclusion. The following table shows the factor load for research clauses or indicators.

Table2. The Results of Confirmative Factor Analysis.

Component	index	Standardized path coefficient	standard deviation	T-value	P-value
Delighting services	1	0.536	0.072	7.403	0.000
	2	0.498	0.053	9.331	0.000
	3	0.753	0.029	26.371	0.000
	4	0.792	0.027	29.109	0.000
	5	0.600	0.049	12.363	0.000
	6	0.579	0.044	13.186	0.000
	7	0.806	0.023	34.635	0.000
	8	0.751	0.027	28.141	0.000
	9	0.816	0.025	33.086	0.000
Trust	10	0.751	0.023	32.593	0.000
	11	0.615	0.051	12.158	0.000
	12	0.748	0.041	18.091	0.000
	13	0.761	0.030	25.781	0.000
	14	0.717	0.029	24.494	0.000
	15	0.740	0.029	25.353	0.000
	16	0.744	0.030	24.561	0.000
	17	0	0.076	1.100	0.272
	18	0.645	0.040	16.221	0.000
	19	0.738	0.039	19.010	0.000

	20	0.861	0.017	50.239	0.000
	21	0.822	0.023	36.014	0.000
	22	0.767	0.032	23.628	0.000
Commitment	23	0.845	0.023	37.423	0.000
	24	0.825	0.029	28.046	0.000
	25	0.895	0.015	58.129	0.000
	26	0.345	0.076	4.557	0.000
	27	0.722	0.037	19.635	0.000
	28	0.709	0.034	20.667	0.000
	29	0.606	0.052	11.696	0.000
Satisfaction	30	0.739	0.040	18.603	0.000
	31	0.756	0.022	33.970	0.000
	32	0.798	0.032	25.262	0.000
	33	0.866	0.014	60.266	0.000
	34	0.570	0.055	10.298	0.000
	35	0.707	0.036	19.486	0.000
	36	0.659	0.053	12.350	0.000
	37	0.679	0.045	15.143	0.000
	38	0.820	0.025	32.561	0.000
	39	0.910	0.011	80.689	0.000
Loyalty	40	0.889	0.014	64.867	0.000
	41	0.805	0.024	34.180	0.000
	42	0.715	0.039	18.518	0.000
	43	0.847	0.015	57.291	0.000
	44	0.010	0.065	0.160	0.873
	45	0.516	0.044	11.822	0.000

The table above presents the standardized factors of the measurement model (the standard factors are the same as the normal factors of the model that are transferred to the interval [-1, 1]), the standard deviation, the test statistic value and its corresponding significance. Considering the obtained T-value and P-value, it can be determined if indicators of each component play a significant role in explanation of the component. By a closer investigation it can be stated that, based on the P-value presented in Table 2, among the indicators of the research components or variables, the 17th indicator related to the component of trust and the 44th indicator related to the component of loyalty should be removed from the model due to being insignificant in explanation of the component. Because the general rule of decision-making in significance-based measurement models holds that if significance of an indicator is greater than 0.05, then that indicator has no effect in explanation of the corresponding component; in addition, if the value of the calculated test statistic for each indicator is out of the interval (-1.96, 1.96), then the factor is significant at 95% confidence level. Since the values of the test statistic for the 17th and the 44th indicators are within the interval (-1.96, 1.96), the significance of these two indicators cannot be verified. Additionally, the values of the standardized path coefficient of measures related to these indicators are less than 0.5; therefore, these two

indicators or clauses of research tools should be removed from the final analysis or the research model due to the low factor load. Consequently, the model needs to be re-fitted.

Other indicators related to the research components are generally significant in explanation of the components due to their high factor load, values of test statistic out of the interval (-1.96, 1.96), and significance lower than 5%.

Following the evaluation of the research measurement model and explanation of the components, it is necessary to verify internal consistency and validity of the model. In this regard, based on the PLS technique in structural equations modeling, the construct reliability and explained (extracted) variance are respectively used to examine the internal consistency and validity of the model.

- **Investigation of Internal Consistency of the Model**

Internal consistency or construct reliability enables investigation of internal consistency of indicators that measure a concept. In other words, the construct reliability determines how accurately the observed (manifest) variables measure the unobserved (latent) variables. Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability indicators are used to measure internal consistency in the PLS model. The Cronbach alpha and the composite reliability should be greater than or equal to 0.6 (Hair et al., 2017). The table below reports the value of the construct reliability or internal consistency for each of the latent (unobserved) variables of the research model.

Table3. The internal consistency of the model based on Cronbach's alpha and the combined reliability of the current variables

Component	Cronbach's alpha	Combined reliability
Delighting services	0.845	0.884
Commitment	0.884	0.915
Trust	0.857	0.889
Satisfaction	0.869	0.898
Royalty	0.892	0.917

As it can be seen, the values of the Cronbach's alpha coefficient and composite reliability are higher than 0.6 for all components. Hence, the measurement model has good construct reliability, and the internal consistency of the model is verified.

- **Investigation of the Validity of the Model**

The validity of the measurement model is measured by two convergent validity and divergent validity criteria. These two criteria are investigated for the research model below. Through verification of these two types of validity, the validity of the conceptual model will be confirmed and the research structural model will be fitted based on the modified measurement model and confirmed internal consistency of the model.

Convergent Validity: The convergent validity of the measurement model is analyzed by the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) in the PLS model. This criterion determines the variance that a construct (the latent variable) receives from its markers (observed variables). (Magner, Welker, & Campbell, 1996) proposed values greater than 0.4 for this criterion because this value ensures that at least 40% of the variance of a construct is defined by its markers (Hair et al., 2017).

Divergent Validity: The divergent validity or discriminant validity is an indicator of the strongest internal relation of the constructs of each variable in the model compared to other variables of the model (Hair et al., 2017). There are different methods for measuring divergent validity. One of the most prominent criteria in this regard was presented by Fornel and Larcker in 1981. In recent years, given the remarkable progress of structural models, another criterion called Heterotrait- Monotrait, or HTMT in brief, has been presented by(Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015), which, being tested and evaluated by Monte Carlo simulation methods using advanced statistical methods, it was proven to be more effective compared to previous criteria in discriminating divergent validity(Henseler et al., 2015). Although there is no standard value for divergent validity, the results less than 0.85 indicate that divergent validity is likely to exist between variables. The results greater than 0.85 suggest that the model variables extremely overlap each other and probably measure the same thing(Henseler et al., 2015)

Table4. Validity of the model based on convergent validity of AVE and divergent validity of HTMT

Variables of the present research		
Component	**AVE**	**HTMT**
Delighting services	0.466	0.690
Commitment	0.617	0.710
Trust	0.479	0.676
Satisfaction	0.528	0.680
Royalty	0.530	0.728

As shown in Table4, all the values of the average variance extracted are greater than 0.4, and therefore the measurement model has a suitable convergent validity. Additionally, all the Heterotrait- Monotrait values for all components are less than 0.85; then, the measurement model has a suitable divergent validity. Validity of the research model is confirmed based on the results of convergent validity and divergent validity.

- **Structural Model Analysis**

The measurement model was analyzed in the previous three sections; here, the structural model will be analyzed to obtain the final research model and also to investigate the research hypotheses. To do so, the significance of the effects of delighting services on trust, delighting services on commitment, trust on commitment, commitment

on satisfaction and satisfaction on loyalty are statistically analyzed using the test statistic and its related significance level. The following table shows the results of the analysis of the research structural model.

Table5. Confirmatory Factor Results

index	Standardized path coefficient	standard deviation	T-value	P-value
Delighting services —>trust	0.714	0.027	26.063	0.000
Delighting services —> commitment	0.591	0.048	12.281	0.000
Trust —>commitment	0.288	0.054	5.302	0.000
Commitment—>satisfaction	0.792	0.017	45.805	0.000
Satisfaction —> loyalty	0.836	0.021	40.692	0.000

Data presented in Table 5 suggest that the effects of delighting services on trust, delighting services on commitment, trust on commitment, commitment on satisfaction and satisfaction on loyalty are significant according to the values of their corresponding T-value and P-value. In other words, the effects of delighting services on trust, delighting services on commitment, trust on commitment, commitment on satisfaction and satisfaction on loyalty are confirmed.
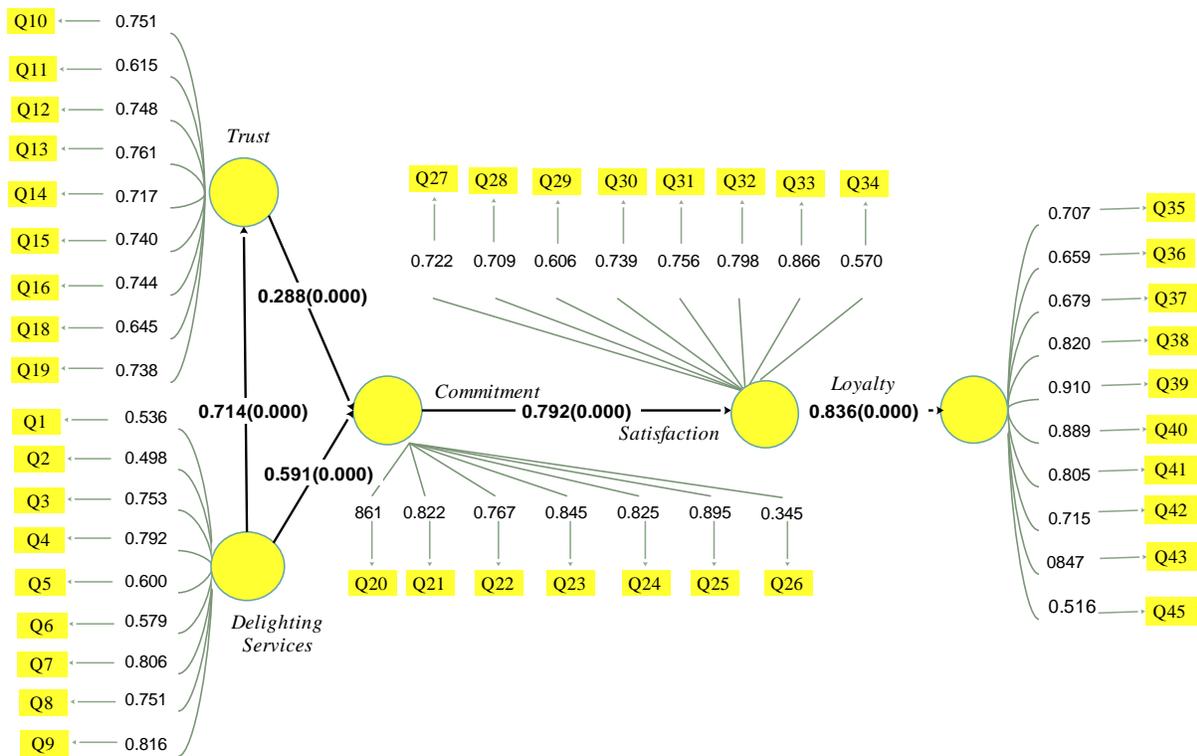

Figure3. The Research Structural Model Estimating Standard Factors and Their Corresponding Significance

The standardized path coefficients or beta coefficient (β) are determined in Figure3. Emphasizing the importance of this coefficient, Professor Hair (a worldwide prominent figure in the structural equations modeling) states that this indicator should be compared considering the three values of 0.19 (poor), 0.33 (moderate) and 0.62 (strong), according to the Chen criteria. If this value is less than 0.19 for a study, then that study will not be academically valid, and its analysis section is just a bunch of tables and figures.

Based on the values of the standardized path coefficients, the delighting services effect on trust is equal to 0.714 or about 71%. The coefficient of the standard path between delighting services and commitment is 0.591, which shows a moderate to strong effect. The coefficient of the standard path between trust and commitment is 0.288, which shows a moderate effect. The effect of the commitment on satisfaction is 0.792, which shows a strong effect. Moreover, the effect of satisfaction on loyalty is reported to be 0.836, which shows a strong effect. The following figure illustrates the value of the variance explained by the exogenous latent variables of the model (that is, a latent variable that is assumed to be explained by one or more other latent variables) as complementary results of the model. The value of the explained variance indicates the variance of the latent variable that is explained by the effective latent variables. The explained variance is, in fact, the most important indicator in the research using the structural equation modeling, because the researcher essentially carries out the study for this purpose, but sometimes the researcher is too involved with minor issues that forgets to perform the analysis of the most important aspect of the research.

As it can be seen in Figure 3, the value of the explained variance of the exogenous latent variables of the model for the variables of trust, commitment, satisfaction and loyalty are obtained to be 0.510, 0.676, 0.627 and 0.698, respectively. Therefore, the academic value of this research structural model is strongly confirmed for explanation of the latent variables.

Conclusion

This research sought to determine the effect of providing delighting services in public libraries on gaining user trust, commitment, satisfaction, and ultimately, loyalty. The results of the research confirm the research hypotheses. Confirmation of the first, second and third hypotheses suggests that those members who are more delighted with library services will also have more trust in the library; in addition, providing delighting services to library members which result in gaining their trust, will also make the members committed to the library. Confirmation of the fourth and fifth hypotheses also implies that the commitment of users will lead to their satisfaction and, as a result, their

loyalty to the library. On this basis, delighting services have a positive and direct effect on the trust of library users; as a result of gaining trust of the users, they will be more committed to the library, and committed users will be more satisfied with the library, which eventually leads to their more loyalty to the library.

The results of this study confirmed the effect of user satisfaction on their loyalty to the library, which was also verified in other studies, including (Chuang & Cheng, 2010; Haruna et al., 2017; Kiran & Diljit, 2017; M. Keshvari & M. Abdollahi, 2013; Martensen & Grønholdt, 2003; Mazloom, Soltani, & SoltaniNejad, 2017).

Given the role of delighting service and its effect on trust, commitment, satisfaction and, consequently, loyalty of library members, which was approved in this study, it is necessary to specifically pay attention to this concept and define services beyond the expectations of users in the work policies of the libraries. Because, based on the results, providing library users with delighting services increases their satisfaction, and consequently results in increased likelihood of users returning to the library and reusing the services.

Considering the effect of delighting services on user trust, commitment, satisfaction and loyalty, providing delighting services will reduce the delayed resources due to the commitment and loyalty of the users to the library; furthermore, the number of users will increase because of trust, satisfaction and loyalty of users which encourage them as loyal members to recommend using the library to their friends. In fact, having loyal users is one of the most effective advertising means for a library.

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