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Model of Customer Loyalty on Professional Services: Empirical Study on Independent Surveyor Service Industry In Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

The advanced development of global economic competition in accordance with the ongoing openness of domestic markets, one of which is independent surveyor service, in Indonesia has been evident by the growing amount of foreign independent surveyor service providers opening their business in the country's market. It is inevitable for the local independent surveyor service companies, in order to survive in the free of competition, to adapt the ideal competition strategies. Based on the mentioned background, this research, therefore, aims to provide a model of consumer loyalty for the professional purposes of independent surveyor service in relation to activities of examining coal export in Indonesia by adopting the relationship marketing concept as the approach. Data are collected through handing out questionnaires for 51 exporting companies and coal traders represented by 93 respondents selected by their professional levels that include management and official working directly with the independent surveyor service providers. The collected data are analyzed using the Structural Equation Model (SEM). The results from the analysis show that customer satisfaction is a crucial factor to strengthen the relationship between the independent surveyor service providers and their clients. However, other factors are not less important in building consumer loyalty; these include switching barrier, relationship bond, trust and information sharing by each own's level of contribution. In addition, customer satisfaction is found to be influenced by perceived quality, perceived value and customer expectation. Customer perceived quality is achieved by having reliability, assurance, responsiveness and empathy with different contribution respectively. The managerial implication of this research is thus to offer competition strategies for the independent surveyor service providers. The suggestions consist of the willingness to maintain their interaction with the customers by integrating factors that help strengthening the relationship mainly through the provided integrated service with aspects of legal, knowledge, technology and systems to facilitate the communication. Furthermore, it is important for the providers to pay attention to their customers' time by furnishing their business with reliability, assurance and value of money as the center.

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INTRODUCTION

We have been anticipating the government's immediate policy to open wide marketing opportunities for foreign surveyor companies to operate their business in Indonesia which will result in the similar openness for foreign inspection service. As in the Economy 101, this will lead to the extended competition in the independent surveyor service market, including those for coal export industry. Therefore, the role of the service providers for the industry improves which consequently demands the companies to understand customers' point of view in order to maintain good relationship. Kilpady(2005) states that adopting relationship-oriented marketing

strategies or relationship marketing(RM) plays important roles in the success of the business in future. There have researches aiming to prove that relationship marketing in business-to-business (B2B) industries, particularly professional service, has complex problems related to the communicating process between the service provider and the customer which eventually causes impact to the long-term relationship. Brito (2011) finds that one of the outcomes from relationship marketing is customer loyalty. Thus, to describe more comprehensively, the purposes of this research include the following:

1. To identify and to examine the role of the aspects of perceived quality, perceived value, customer expectation, customer satisfaction,

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information sharing, trust, switching barriers, relationship bonds, and customer characteristic in the relationship between the professional service provider and the customer.

2. To build and develop a relationship-oriented marketing model representing the relationship between the variables mentioned in point 1 and customer loyalty.

Literary Reviews and Hypothesis Development:

Zeithaml et al. (2009) say that principally relationship marketing represent a changing paradigm in marketing shifting from focus on acquisition/transaction to the retention/relationship. Relationship marketing generates a principle that customer is a partner and the company is obliged to build a long-term commitment to maintain the customers with quality, service, and innovation based on the philosophy of running business and strategic orientation on the foreground of maintaining a good relationship with the current customers is more important than simply investing in new ones. Hakansson (1982) says that in many B2B relationships among service industries, certain number in the sale goal is not necessarily the sole effort of marketing, but it goes beyond that; building a continuous healthy long-lasting relationship with the customers is far more crucial to ensure sales in the future. Moreover, Bagdoniene and Jakstaite (2009) believe that professional service providers and clients are required to have the constant strength to develop communication and relation. Also, according to Hakansson and Wootz (1978), service providers must not only understand the dimension of the problem, but also propose solutions for the problem; therefore, it is highly suggested to the company to develop a certain ability of solution-transfer to carry on customer loyalty. Loyalty itself initially is described in a simple description as repeat purchase, which is also known as behavioral loyalty. Nevertheless, such dictionary entry needs to be developed as the business is expanding by leaning towards more to the concept of attitudinal loyalty which expresses the term loyalty in a more comprehensive way. Palmatier et al. (2005) finds that the concept of word of mouth (WOM) is the pre-eminent way to indicate an intense loyalty. It is considered that only customers with a strong relationship with the seller who want to take a risk of their own reputation to provide referral. To affirm this, Rauyruen and Miller (2007) argue that behavioral loyalty alone without the loyalty itself does not yet prove the true loyalty. And having a number of loyal customers for the company is included in the company's main goals, as Ndubisi and Chan (2005) put it. Ndubisi (2007) then concludes that loyal customers can be created, strengthened, and maintained through an all-embracing marketing plan. Still in the topic of customer loyalty, Lamet. al. (2004) see a gradual

improvement in the interest of this issue, yet investigation to the antecedents of customer loyalty in the context of B2B service is still limited.

Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988), however, have conducted a series of researches on various service industries by identifying five main dimensions of service quality: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. The latter dimension has not been vastly highlighted in professional service industries; thus, it is not included in this research. Therefore, the other four dimensions of service quality are counted for as latent variables with the following hypotheses:

H1: *Reliability* has positive influence to *Perceived Service Quality*

H2: *Responsiveness* has positive influence to *Perceived Service Quality*

H3: *Assurance* has positive influence to *Perceived Service Quality*

H4: *Empathy* has positive influence to *Perceived Service Quality*

A company is expected to start a process of relationship development by providing an excellent core service in order to fulfil customer expectation and satisfaction (Zeithaml et al, 2009). Moreover, they also argue that satisfaction, perceived service quality and perceived value are core service provisions are the main keys to build a strong customer relationship or customer loyalty. Prior to the previous argument, Rauyruen et al. (2007) have come with the opinion that customer loyalty does not only relate to the commitment but also is effected by service quality, satisfaction, and trust; the trinity is called relationship quality. Hsu (2010) and Casalo et al. (2011) in their respective researches present their findings that can be overall concluded that, in service industries, trust is highly influenced by customer satisfaction. This is in accordance with Gounaris (2005), that trust is the result of service quality. To refer to the literary reviews, the following hypotheses are compiled.

H5: *Perceived Service quality* has positive influence to *Customer Satisfaction*.

H6: *Perceived Service Quality* has positive influence to *Perceived Value*.

H7: *Perceived Value* has positive influence to *Customer Satisfaction*.

H8: *Expectation* has positive influence to *Perceived Value*

H9: *Expectation* has positive influence to *Customer Satisfaction*

H10: *Customer Satisfaction* has positive influence to *Trust*

H11: *Customer Satisfaction* has positive influence to *Customer Loyalty*

Trust determines company's focus as the positive motivation to survive as the business is running in the relation of connected feelings (Geyskens et al, 1996). Based on the relation between trust and loyalty, a hypothesis as follows:

H12: *Trust* has positive influence to *Customer Loyalty*

Communication in relationship marketing refers to the constant contact with the customers, preparing reliable information in the certain time, and proactive communication should a problem arise (Ndubisi, 2007). This is also what Morgantand Hunt (1994) argue that communication has an effect to trust. The latest similar argument comes from Sohail (2012) saying that communication affects loyalty. Thus, these following hypotheses come into the research.

H13: *Information Sharing* has positive influence to *Trust*

H14: *Information Sharing* has positive influence to *Loyalty*

Switching barriers affects customer's decision making process whether they want to terminate the relationship with the company and consequently, it helps facilitating their retention which eventually influence their loyalty (Zeithaml et al. 2009). The following hypothesis is made based on the review.

H15: *Switching Barriers* has positive influence to *Loyalty*

An efficient relationship technique in order to build trust is by minimizing the uncertainty of the outcomes from a relationship as this is a process through where a buyer and service provider build a relationship benefiting for both parties involved (Cross and Smith, 1996). Meanwhile, customer characteristics, particularly for the purposes of this research behavioralistic characteristic is believed to have positive impact on brand loyalty. Based on the previous account, hypotheses on the matter are as follows:

H16: *Relationship Bond* has positive influence to loyalty

H17: *Customer Characteristic* has positive influence to *Loyalty*.

To sum up all the reviews and proposes hypotheses, a conceptual framework explaining the research process is shown in the following figure.

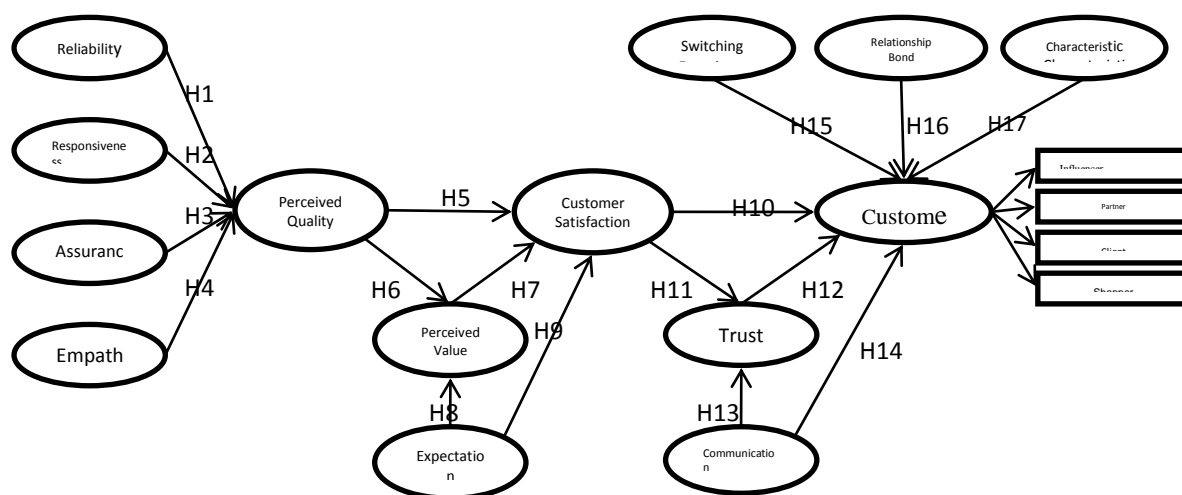


Fig. 1: Conceptual Model of Company-Customer Relationship

Methodology:

This research is conducted to a selected population that includes exporting companies, coal mining corporations, and coal trading businesses as the service clients of independent surveyor providers in Indonesia. The relevant data for the research are collected through a series of processes in April to August 2013. The analysis unit is chosen based on the assumption that every selected company in the population is represented by the decision making level in employing a surveyor service provider in the company. The samples for the interview are respondents from every company out of 51 companies with the criteria such as company's leader, and/or management-level employees or anyone in charge and be responsible of decision

making process in purchasing in the company. Samples are drawn with the method of purposive sampling.

In this research, the analysis methods used here consist of descriptive statistics and structural equation model (SEM) to ensure a confirmation over the built model. SEM analysis aims to examine statistics model and is in the form of cause-and-effect models. It is also an analysis based on the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Finally, to conduct a righteous analysis, the LISREL 8.5.1 software is selected to affirm reliable data.

Types of and Relationships among Variables:

The types of variable are divided into independent variables or exogenous variables with x

indicator and dependent variables or endogenous variables with y indicator. Both exogenous and endogenous latent variables are measured with a series of questions. Every question is composed based on the indicators responded with Likert scale

from 1 to 5, where 1 means strongly disagree and 5 means strongly agree. Cross diagram and hypotheses to be tested explaining the relationship among the variables are shown in the following figure.

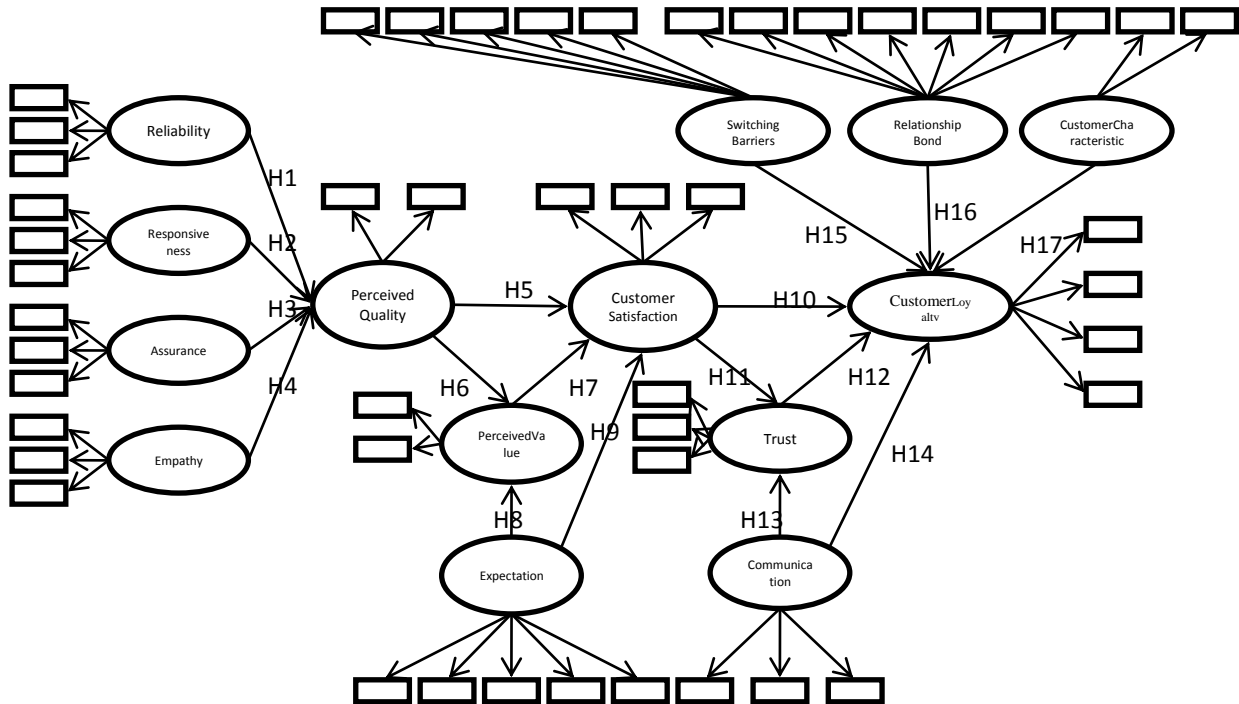


Fig. 2: Path Model

Results and Analysis:

Respondents Profile:

This research includes 93 respondents representing 51 user companies of independent surveyor service providers with total filled questionnaires of 200 units. The companies range from 43(88.2%) producing and exporting companies (mining and exporters) to 8 (11.8%) trading companies (buyer and exporters). The majority group of companies has the tendency of increase in production and export each year. There are four independent surveyor service providers selected by the users; they are Sucofindo (46%), Geoservices (30.50%), IOL Indonesia (12.50%) and Carsurin (8.50%) or 97.50% of the total four companies combined.

Data Analysis:

The initial phase of analysis for this research is to examine each sub-model of relationship marketing (latent variable modelling) to see the primacy of the measuring model in order to indicate the ability of each indicator in explaining its latent variable. Hair *et al.* (2006) states that a construct is considered reliable when the construct reliability (CR) value is not less than 0.7 or the construct validity (CV) value is not less than 0.5. Meanwhile, Joreskog and Sorborn (1996) have proposed a simpler figure by requiring that the standardized indicator variable coefficient value (lambda) is at least 0.5. The results from the construct reliability and construct validity test for each relationship marketing sub-model are presented in the following table.

Table 1: Latent Variable, Indicator Variable and Results of Reliability and Validity Test

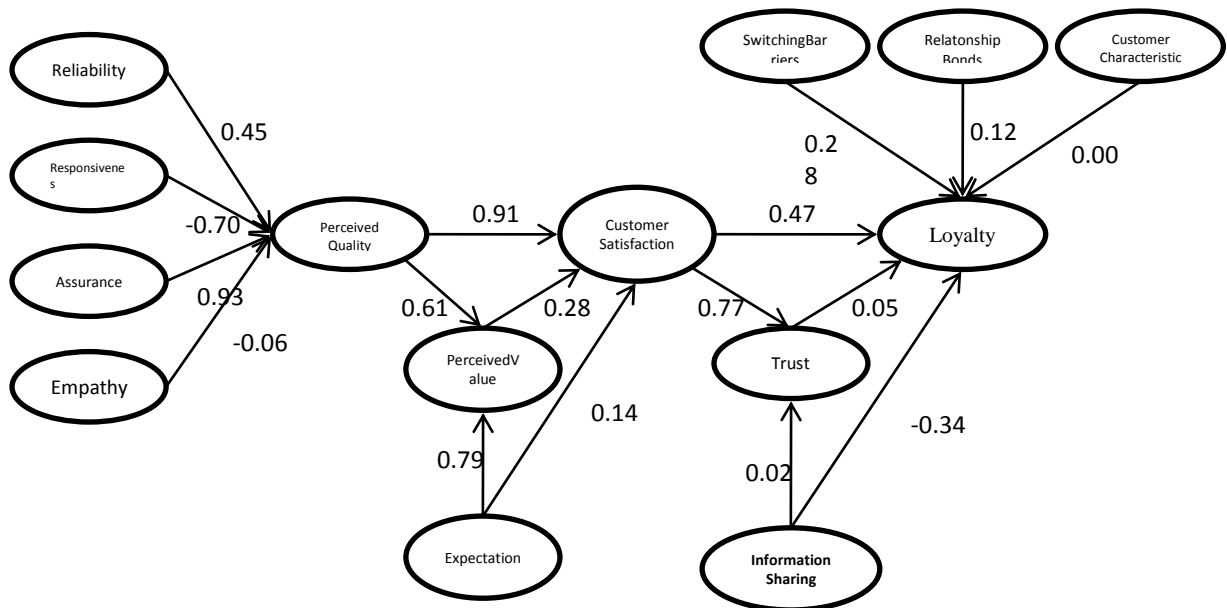
No.	Variabel Laten	Variabel Indikator	code	Lambda	Error	T	CR	VE	Referensi
1.	Reliability	Accuracy	x1	0,80	0,35	14,58	0,74	0,49	Zeithaml, Berry dan Parasuraman (1988; 1990)
		Expertise	x2	0,67	0,55	19,90			
		Delivery	x3	0,61	0,63	14,08			
2.	Responsiveness	Informativeness	x4	0,71	0,50	15,87	0,77	0,52	
		Speed	x5	0,69	0,53	16,66			
		Supportive	x6	0,77	0,40	17,07			
3.	Assurance	Reputation	x7	0,72	0,48	15,90	0,70	0,43	
		Security	x8	0,61	0,63	17,78			
		Competency	x9	0,64	0,59	15,43			
4.	Empathy	Individual Attention	x10	0,70	0,51	12,01	0,66	0,39	

		<i>Understanding</i>	x11	0,63	0,60	12,33			
		<i>Flexibility</i>	x12	0,54	0,71	12,20			
5.	Perceived Quality	<i>Customer's Feeling</i>	y1	0,79	0,37	0,73	0,65	0,48	Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry (1988); Jiang & Wang (2006)
		<i>Actual Experience</i>	y2	0,58	0,66	0,59			
6.	Perceived Value	<i>Price-Quality Ratio (Value for money)</i>	y3	2,94	5,15	0	0,63	0,63	Mazler et al. (2006), Turel & Sorenko (2004) dalam Malik, S.U. (2012)
7.	Customer Expectation	<i>Customer Philosophies</i>	x13	0,62	0,64	16,03	0,86	0,55	Zeithaml et al. (1993)
		<i>Customer Needs</i>	x14	0,82	0,33	15,54			
		<i>Perceived Service Alternatives</i>	x15	0,89	0,20	15,29			
		<i>Service Promises</i>	x16	0,69	0,52	13,69			
		<i>Past Experience</i>	x17	0,64	0,58	12			
8.	Customer Satisfaction	<i>Service Features</i>	y4	0,78	0,39	0	0,77	0,52	Zeithaml et al. (2009)
		<i>Customer Emotion</i>	y5	0,68	0,54	0			
		<i>Perception of Equity</i>	y6	0,71	0,50	0			
9.	Trust	<i>Credibility</i>	y7	0,72	0,49		0,83	0,46	Ulaga & Eggert (2004); Wong & Sohal (2002); Morgan & Hunt (1994); Moorman et al. (1992); Crosby et al. (1990)
		<i>Integrity</i>	y8	0,74	0,46				
		<i>Benevolence</i>	y9	0,66	0,56				
10.	Information Sharing	<i>Informal sharing</i>	x18	0,50	0,75	10,53	0,26	0,12	Anderson & Narus (1990); Morgan & Hunt (1994); Palmatier et al. (2006); Sohail (2012)
		<i>Meaningful Information</i>	x19	1,00	0,01	11,28			
		<i>Timely Information</i>	x20	0,51	0,74	10,85			
No.	Variabel Laten	Variabel Indikator	Kode	Lambda	Error	T	CR	VE	Referensi
11.	Switching Barriers	<i>Switching Cost</i>	x21	0,28	0,92	5,69	0,66	0,31	Halmlund dalam Gronroos (2000); Zeithaml et al. (2009)
		<i>Legal Bond</i>	x22	0,66	0,57	9,26			
		<i>Technological Bond</i>	x23	0,86	0,26	9,84			
		<i>Geographical Bond</i>	x24	0,37	0,87	12,49			
		<i>Time Bond</i>	x25	0,45	0,87	9,48			
12.	Relationship Bond	<i>Economic/Financial Bond</i>	x26	0,30	0,91	0,47	0,23	0,23	Berry (1995); Peltier & Westfall (2000); Halmlund dalam Gronroos (2000); Zeithaml et al. (2009)
		<i>Social Bond</i>	x27	0,34	0,89	6,44			
		<i>Structural Bond</i>	x28	0,77	0,41	16,10			
		<i>Knowledge Bond</i>	x29	0,54	0,71	1,82			
		<i>Cultural Bond</i>	x30	0,26	0,93	8,34			
		<i>Ideological Bond</i>	x31	0,25	0,94	12,97			
13.	Customer Characteristic	<i>Behavior Characteristic</i>	x33	0,17	0,97	-0,05	0,06	0,03	Zeithaml et al. (2009)
		<i>Psychological Characteristic</i>	x34	0,17	0,97	-1,28			
14.	Customer Loyalty	<i>Recomendation</i>	y10	1,20	-0,43	0,30	0,70	0,43	Pearson (1996); Sharma & Patterson (1999); Palaima & Auruskeviciene (2007)
		<i>Partnership</i>	y11	0,64	0,59	0,30			
		<i>Client</i>	y12	0,52	0,73	0,30			
		<i>shopper</i>	y13	0,15	0,98	0,14			

The results from measuring model analysis of the 14 latent variable constructs show that the statements explaining the indicators are valid to elucidate and affirm that all statements are equally important as the bases to get the picture of latent variables with different coefficient values.

Structural Model of Relationship Marketing:

Based on the structural model proposed in the framework, it is important to identify the model coefficient values or the contribution of each latent exogenous modifier to the endogenous latent modifier by assuming the coefficient with unweighted least square (ULS) term. The assuming results along with the coefficient test are shown in Figure 3.

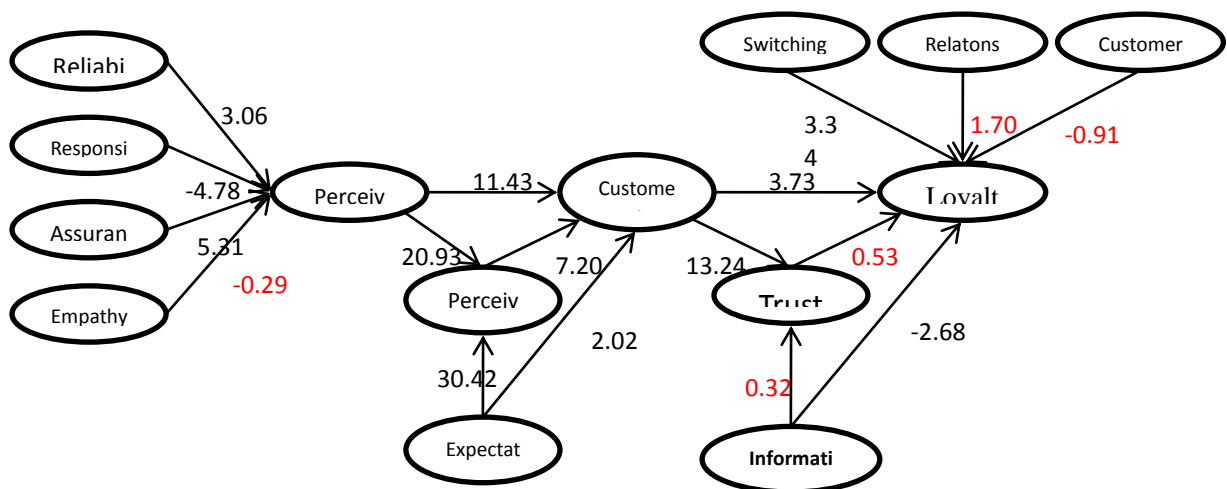


Chi-Square= 348. Df=352 P-Value=0.53909, RMSEA=0.000

Fig. 3: Coefficient Model of Relationship Marketing Structural Equation

The hypotheses are tested using two testing statistics methods (Joreskog, 1998): statistic Khi-kwadrat (χ^2) and RMSEA. Ho is acceptable if P-value (test χ^2) is bigger than 0.05 or the RMSEA value is less than 0.08. The result from the test in this research is that P-value =0.53909 and RMSEA=0.000, meaning that overall the empirical

model is acceptable in accordance with the required criteria by Joreskoget al. (1996), with the P-Value more than 0.05 and RMSEA value < 0.08. Meanwhile, the T-value showing the significance of the relationship among the latent variables is presented in the following figure.



Chi-Square= 4329,09. df=352 P-Value=0.53909, RMSEA=0.000

Fig. 4: T-value of Relationship Marketing Structural Equation

The relationship among the latent variables are explained in the following table.

Table 2: Relationship among Latent Variables

Endogen Variables	Influence of Exogenous Variables	Explanation	Reference
CUSTOMER LOYALTY	<i>Customer Satisfaction</i> (22.09%)	Customer satisfaction for the surveyor service providers has the biggest contribution of 22.09% in determining customer loyalty (significant influence)	Rauyruenet al. (2007); Zeithaml et al. (2009)
	<i>Information Sharing</i> (11.56%)	Sharing information with the customers has contributed as much as 11.56% in determining customer loyalty (significant) where the more information given can also decrease customer loyalty.	Sohail (2012)
	<i>Switching Barrier</i> (7.84%)	Switching barrier as the result from forming a bond with the providers has contributed 7.84% (significant) in determining customer loyalty.	Han et al. (1993); Wilson et al. (1995)
	<i>Relationship Bond</i> (1.44%)	Forming a certain bond with the providers is able to strengthen relation and has contributed 1.44% (fairly significant) in determining customer loyalty.	Han et al. (1993); Wilson et al. (1995)
	<i>Trust</i> (0.25%)	Customer trust has contributed 0.25% (fairly significant) in determining customer loyalty. Trust is mediating variable for CS and IS.	Moorman et al. (1992); Morgan and Hunt (1994); Ganesan (1994); Ryuet al. (2007); Rauyruenet al. (2007)
	<i>Customer characteristic</i> (0.00)	Customer characteristic does not have any influence to customer loyalty. Hypothesis (H7) is unacceptable.	Different from Moorman et al. (1992); Morgan and Hunt (1994); Ganesan (1994); Ryuet al. (2007); Rauyruenet al. (2007)
TRUST	<i>Customer Satisfaction</i> (59.29%)	Customer satisfaction to the providers has contributed 59.29% (highly significant $t=13,24$) in determining trust.	Rauyruenet al. (2007); Zeithamlet al. (2009)
	<i>Information Sharing</i> (0.04%)	Sharing information to the customer has contributed only 0.04% (significant, $t=0,32$) in determining trust.	Morgant and Hunt (1994)
CUSTOMER SATISFACTIO N	<i>Perceived Quality</i> (82.81%)	The quality perceived by the customer has contributed 82.81% (highly significant, $t=11,43$) in determining customer satisfaction.	Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman (1988); Jiang and Wang (2006)
	<i>Perceived Value</i> (7.84%)	The value perceived by the customer has contributed 7.84% (significant, $t=7,20$) in determining customer satisfaction. The perceived quality variable and customer expectation (PQ à PV à CS, or CE à PV à CE. <i>Perceived Value</i> as the mediator.	Fornelet al. (1996); Zeihamlet al. (2009)
	<i>Customer Expectation</i> (1.95%)	Customer expectation has contributed 1.95% (significant, $t=2,02$) in determining customer satisfaction.	Fornelet al. (1996); Hong-Youi (2005)
PERCEIVED VALUE	<i>Customer Expectation</i> (62.41%)	Customer expectation has contributed 62.41% (highly significant, $t=30,42$) in determining perceived value.	Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman (1988); Jiang and Wang (2006)
	<i>Perceived Quality</i> (37.25%)	The quality perceived by the customer has contributed 37.25% (highly significant, $t=20,93$) in determining perceived value.	Fornelet al. (1996); Zeihamlet al. (2009)
PERCEIVED QUALITY	<i>Assurance</i> (86.49%)	The ability to build trust on the company's reputation to the customer has contributed 86.49% (highly significant, $t=5,31$) in determining perceived quality.	Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman (1988); Jiang and Wang (2006) <i>Empathy</i> , however, is not significant.
	<i>Responsiveness</i> (47.00%)	The availability and ability of the employee in service providers in helping the customer has contributed 47% (significant, $t=-4,78$) in determining perceived quality.	
	<i>Reliability</i> (20.25%)	The ability to provide an accurate service to the customer has contributed 20.25% (significant, $t=3,06$) in determining perceived quality.	
	<i>Empathy</i> (0.36%)	The ability to provide personal attention to the customer	

		has contributed 0,36% (insignificant, t= -0,29) in determining perceived quality.	
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Conclusion and Suggestion:

Conclusion:

Based on the results and analysis on the data, Customer Loyalty is influenced by Customer Satisfaction, Switching Barriers, Relationship Bond, Trust and Information Sharing. Customer Satisfaction and InformInformation Sharing also affect the loyalty through the trust. Customer Satisfaction is influenced by Perceived Quality, Perceived Value and Customer Expectation. The Perceived Quality and Customer Expectation variable also influence Customer Satisfaction through Perceived Value. Perceived Quality is significantly influenced by Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy.

Suggestion:

It is important to study the aspects of perceived value and trust more comprehensively considering that perceived value is the important determinant for the construction of customer satisfaction and trust is the important determinant for the construction of customer loyalty.

Managerial Implication:

To ensure customer loyalty, it is worth noted for the managers of independent surveyor companies in coal industry to improve:

1. Perceived quality through the improvement of customer's feeling/memory. The customers for the service are known to demand for high quality service performance considering that their expectation is equally high.
2. Accuracy, because the company's capability in providing service, which includes accurate survey results, is the sole foundation of the independent surveyor company to achieve reliability from the customers.
3. Assurance, which is the ability of the staff members to build the company's reputation before the customers and to guarantee security for them.
4. Supportive attitude from the staff members by responding customer expectation.
5. Customer satisfaction through the improvement of service features, service types and service attributes considering that customer satisfaction is measured to overall customer perception of the services.
6. Switching barriers by providing customer requirements (technological bond) and fulfilling the legal aspect, such as the clear contract clausal between the company and the customers (legal bond).
7. Structural bondby providing operational systems that make it customers easy to get in touch for crate the quality inspection and testing activities, training for customers. The economic or financial

bond for customers is very important aspects of saving the time.

8. Information sharing by providing the useful information (meaningful information), the time that customers needed (timely information) and informal information sharing(informal sharing).

9.Customer trust by establishing customer satisfaction eventhough the effect of trust on customer loyalty is not significant.

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