

## **L'influence des valeurs non utilitaires de magasinage sur la fidélité au centre commercial : Application au Maroc et en Tunisie**

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## **L'influence des valeurs non utilitaires de magasinage sur la fidélité au centre commercial : Application au Maroc et en Tunisie**

### **Résumé :**

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Les centres commerciaux se développent rapidement en Afrique du Nord. Cette recherche étudie l'influence des valeurs non utilitaires sur la satisfaction et la fidélité au centre commercial au Maroc et en Tunisie. En se basant sur les modèles d'équations structurelles, nous montrons que les valeurs hédoniques, de relaxation et de socialisation influencent positivement la fidélité au centre commercial dans les pays étudiés. Cependant, seuls les deux premiers types de valeurs affectent la satisfaction du client. Nous avons identifié des différences significatives entre les deux pays étudiés en ce sens qu'au Maroc les consommateurs s'intéressent plutôt la valeur de socialisation alors qu'en la Tunisie, les clients cherchent davantage des bénéfices hédoniques. Ces résultats avancent la théorie marketing et comportent plusieurs implications managériales.

**Mots-clés :** Centre commercial, Valeurs non utilitaires, Satisfaction, Fidélité, Maghreb

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### **The influence of non-utilitarian shopping values on customer loyalty to the shopping mall: Evidence from Morocco and Tunisia**

#### **Abstract :**

Shopping malls are growing rapidly in North Africa. This research investigates the influence of non-utilitarian values on customer satisfaction and loyalty to the shopping mall in Morocco and Tunisia. Based on structural equation modeling, we show that hedonic, relaxation and socialization values positively influence loyalty to the shopping mall in the countries studied. However, only the first two types of values affect customer satisfaction. We identified significant differences between the two countries investigated in the sense that Moroccans are more interested in socialization value in shopping malls while Tunisian customers rather seek hedonic benefits with shopping malls. These results advance marketing theory and have several managerial implications.

**Key-words:** Shopping mall, Non-utilitarian value, Satisfaction, Loyalty, Maghreb

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## **Résumé Managérial**

Les centres commerciaux se développent rapidement en Afrique du nord. Par exemple, le Morocco Mall (Casablanca) et Carrefour La Marsa (Tunis) sont aujourd'hui aux standards européens. Ces deux centres comprennent un hypermarché, des magasins de moyennes et de grandes marques, des espaces de restauration, etc. Le Morocco Mall et Carrefour La Marsa sont souvent décrits comme des lieux de loisir (valeur hédonique), de détente (valeur de relaxation), de sortie en famille et/ou avec des amis et de rencontre avec d'autres personnes (valeur de socialisation). Toutefois, les consommateurs marocains et tunisiens semblent privilégier le commerce traditionnel pour effectuer leurs achats. En effet, le commerce traditionnel reste prédominant dans les deux pays et représente respectivement 88% et 80% du marché<sup>1</sup>. Il est donc important d'étudier l'impact des valeurs non-utilitaires (hédonique, sociale et de relaxation) associées à une visite de ces centres commerciaux sur la satisfaction et la fidélité du client.

En se basant sur une étude auprès de 244 clients marocains et 131 clients tunisiens, cette recherche montre la supériorité des valeurs non-utilitaires, par rapport à la satisfaction (effet non significatif), pour expliquer la fidélité à l'égard des centres commerciaux retenus. Les valeurs hédonique et de relaxation sont des antécédents significatifs de la satisfaction client. Enfin, les résultats de l'étude mettent en évidence des différences significatives entre les deux pays étudiés en ce sens qu'au Maroc les clients s'intéressent plutôt à la valeur de socialisation alors qu'en la Tunisie, ils cherchent davantage des bénéfices hédoniques associés au centre commercial. L'ensemble de ces résultats permet de dégager des implications managériales importantes. Etant donné l'importance des valeurs non-utilitaires en général, et les valeurs hédoniques en particulier, sur la satisfaction et la fidélité client, les managers des centres commerciaux ont intérêt à organiser des événements (ex : des concerts), des jeux, des animations pour favoriser l'expression de ces valeurs. Par ailleurs, ils doivent adapter leurs stratégies à chaque pays. Des actions telles que la proposition des jeux faisant participer le consommateur avec sa famille et/ou d'autres visiteurs du centre commercial favoriseraient à la fois le plaisir et l'interaction avec les autres.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/Article/ARTJAJA2587p112.xml0/actualite-afrique-la-grande-distribution-gagne-de-la-surface.html>

## **L'influence des valeurs non-utilitaires de magasinage sur la fidélité au centre commercial: Application au Maroc et en Tunisie**

### **1. Introduction**

In many emergent countries, managing a mall represents a critical challenge because many local consumers are not familiar to this modern form of commerce and its related concepts such as self-service, price discounts or the wide supply of products. Morocco Mall in Casablanca and Carrefour La Marsa in Tunis give a good illustration of the difficulties to reach local consumers. The Morocco Mall is the first shopping center in Morocco and the largest in Africa (250 000m<sup>2</sup>). It opened in December 2011, and holds a hypermarket, department stores, small stores, an amusement park, an aquarium, a food court, a cinema, a traditional souk, a prayer place and a musical fountain. Even if the concept of shopping mall is developed in Tunisia since 80's, Carrefour La Marsa is the first shopping center having European standards particularly with its hypermarket Carrefour. The mall comprises a hypermarket, stores offering mid-range and high-end brands, restaurants, etc. Morocco Mall and Carrefour La Marsa are often described as a leisure place (hedonic value), where families have relaxing Sunday lunch and walk (relaxation value), and where teens and young adults socialize on Friday and Saturday afternoons (socialization value). One could think that such non-utilitarian values would have a positive impact on purchase intention, which is a form of loyalty. But, sales don't follow. Local consumers are still attached to their traditional stores, which represent about 88% and 80% of the market shares respectively in Morocco and Tunisia<sup>2</sup>. As a consequence, the Galeries Lafayette in the Morocco Mall had to cut off its offer, reducing drastically its clothing department (from two floors to only one).

The Morocco Mall and Carrefour La Marsa cases raise questions about customer overall satisfaction and loyalty to the mall. Are customers globally satisfied with the Morocco Mall and Carrefour La Marsa? Are they loyal to these malls? From a broader perspective, we intend to address the following question: do non-utilitarian values (hedonic, socialization, relaxation) contribute to customer overall satisfaction and loyalty?

When answering this question, we also intend to analyze the results across the two countries investigated (Morocco and Tunisia) to figure out whether the socio-cultural

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.jeunefrique.com/Article/ARTJAJA2587p112.xml0/actualite-afriquela-grande-distribution-gagne-de-la-surface.html>

context, which is different between these two countries, affects the relationships investigated. Such an analysis helps advance international marketing theory in understanding how non-utilitarian values affect satisfaction and loyalty in different cultural contexts. Furthermore, Morocco Mall and Carrefour La Marsa represent two rich contexts from which international managers can learn. Thus, our research also intends to provide managerial avenues through a better understanding on the mall non-utilitarian values and their effects on customer loyalty and satisfaction towards malls.

## **2. Conceptual framework and hypotheses development**

### **2.1. Non-utilitarian values**

The shopping experience is recognized as an activity that produces utilitarian and non-utilitarian outcomes (Antéblian, Filser and Roederer, 2013; Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982). In particular, non-utilitarian values play a central role in shaping consumer behaviors and attitudes (Fischer and Arnold, 1990; Miller et al., 1998; Sherry, 1990). In our research, shopping malls are conceived as experiential contexts (Carú and Cova, 2006), which have the potential to provide consumers with non-utilitarian values (Csaba and Askegaard, 1999; Goss, 1993; Tsai, 2010). Shopping malls offer high potential for social interaction and are sources of pleasurable experience (Bloch, Ridgway et Dawson, 1994). Kim, Li and Suh (2015) have shown that shopping experience in malls impacts satisfaction and loyalty. Chebat et al. (2014) demonstrated that the hedonic value contributes to customer overall satisfaction towards a mall. Accordingly, one can think that non-utilitarian values have the potential to orient positively consumers in the long term (i.e., to build loyalty). In this research, we focus on three specific non-utilitarian values of malls (hedonic; socialization; relaxation) and their effect on customers' satisfaction and loyalty because these values were found critical for consumers frequenting malls in general (Michaud-Trevinal, 2013; Stillerman and Salcedo, 2012; Tsai, 2010).

### **2.2. Effect of non-utilitarian values on customer overall satisfaction to the mall**

We define customer overall satisfaction as “the individual emotional reaction to his or her evaluation of the total set of experiences realized from patronizing the retailer” (Westbrook, 1981, p.71). The non-utilitarian values of shopping in stores have a positive impact on consumer overall satisfaction to the store (Chang and Fang, 2012; Cottet et al., 2006; Eruglo, Machleit and Barr, 2005). We believe that such effects are likely to appear in malls and propose to test the effect of the three different non-utilitarian values separately. Hence, we propose:

H1: The mall hedonic value has a positive impact on customer overall satisfaction

H2: The mall socialization value has a positive impact on customer overall satisfaction

H3: The mall relaxation value has a positive impact on customer overall satisfaction

### **2.3. Effect of non-utilitarian values on customer loyalty to the mall**

We define shopping mall loyalty as “a shopper’s attitudinal predisposition consisting of intentions to continually patronize the mall in terms of repeated shopping at the mall and willingness to recommend the mall” (Chebat, El Hedhli and Sirgy, 2009, p.54). Some authors have investigated customer loyalty to shopping malls (e.g. Adkins, Burgess and Wesley, 2002). Their findings suggest that customers are likely to be loyal towards a mall and that various values influence such loyalty. Besides, shopping well-being positively influences mall loyalty (El Hedly, Chebat and Sirgy, 2013). The research of Tsai (2010) highlights the effect of exhilaration (hedonic), exploration, relaxation and socialization values on patronage frequency and purchase amount in malls. Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

H4: The mall hedonic value has a positive impact on customer loyalty

H5: The mall socialization value has a positive impact on customer loyalty

H6: The mall relaxation value has a positive impact on customer loyalty

### **2.4. Effect on customer satisfaction on customer loyalty**

Customer satisfaction is found to be predictor of customer loyalty (Bloemer and de Ruyter, 1998; Parasuraman and Grewal, 2000; Yang and Peterson, 2004). Customers who are satisfied with their shopping trip in a mall tend to spend more money (Chebat et al., 2014). In Tunisian retailing context, Bouzaabia et al. (2013) shed light on the significant relationships that exist between customer satisfaction and loyalty. Radder and Han (2013) confirm such relationships. Hence, we suggest:

H7: The customers’ overall satisfaction has a positive impact on customers’ loyalty

## **3. Methodology**

### **3.1. Context of investigation**

This research was undertaken in two Maghrebian countries (Morocco and Tunisia), which, over the last years, have experienced tremendous developments in retailing (Amine and Lazzaoui, 2011) and especially with shopping malls (Diallo et al., 2015). The latter have emerged in Maghreb to complement or replace existing markets (Troin, 2005). We chose to investigate Morocco and Tunisia for several reasons. On theoretical grounds, these countries share common values (e.g. Muslim countries) and background (former French protectorates), but they are culturally different in terms of habits,

consumer behavior and local languages. On practical grounds, these countries are ranked among the top 5 African countries for FDI projects (Ernst and Young, 2014). In each country, we selected one shopping mall with international standards (Morocco Mall in Morocco and Carrefour La Marsa Mall in Tunisia). These malls have several similarities in terms of modernity, product/brand selection and service quality policy, making them roughly comparable.

### **3.2. Data collection and measurement**

Data were collected through mall-intercept surveys with a questionnaire administered by trained investigators. The consumer samples came from metropolitan cities in each country (Casablanca and Tunis), where the retail contexts are roughly similar. Furthermore, respondents belonged to the same social class (middle and wealthy classes) across the two countries. Respondents were intercepted during their shopping trips; they had to be at least 18 years old. Because shopping motives vary by time of day and day of the week, the data collection spanned multiple times of the day and different weekdays. Overall, this process produced 375 usable questionnaires ( $N_{\text{Morocco}} = 244$  and  $N_{\text{Tunisia}} = 131$ ). The respondents were correctly distributed across socio-demographic categories (age, gender, income and education).

We developed the survey instrument based on a comprehensive review of the relevant literature. Well know scales, adapted to the local context, were used to operationalize our constructs. Non-utilitarian values are measured with three dimensions (hedonic, relaxation and socialization values) respectively adapted from Ligas and Chaudhuri (2012); Tsai (2010) and Tsai (2010). Each dimension was operationalized by three items. We operationalized customer satisfaction toward the shopping mall with three items adapted from Mägi (2003). Loyalty to the mall was measured with five items adapted from previous studies on shopping malls (Rabbanee et al., 2012).

## **4. Analyses and results**

### **4.1. Measurement models**

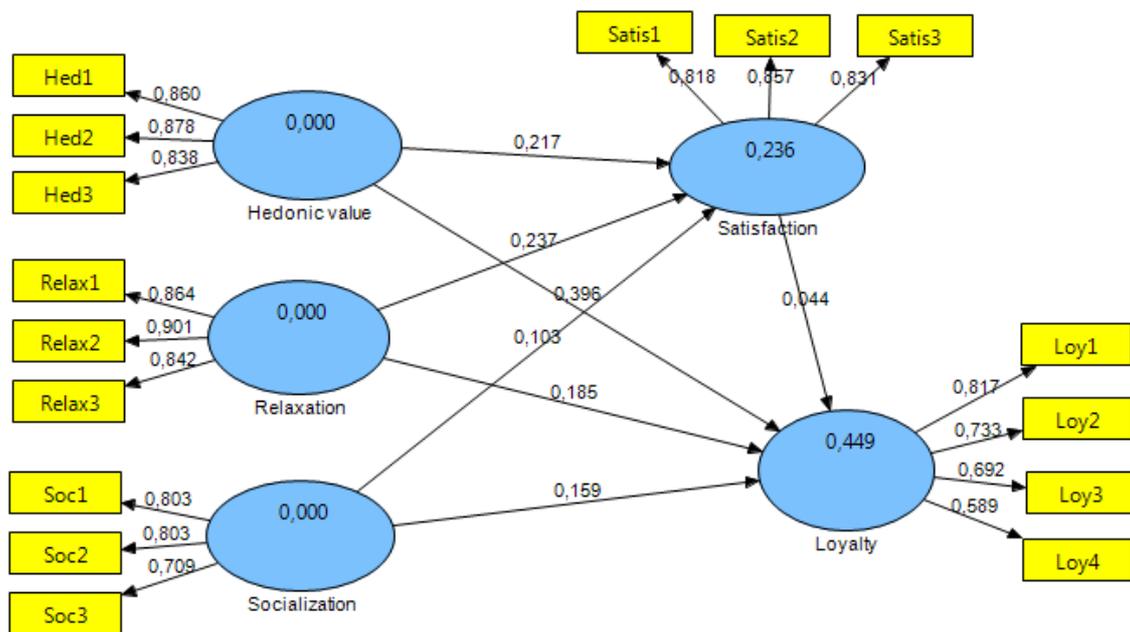
The measurement model was assessed using confirmatory factor analysis following Gerbing and Anderson (1988). We used PLS estimation (with SmartPLS) because it fits studies of more exploratory nature, does not require normality of data and deals more adequately with smaller sample sizes (Hair, Ringle and Sarstedt, 2011). The overall measurement model's fit indices indicated satisfactory model fit. Reliability values (Jöreskog  $\rho$ ) were above the recommended cut-off criteria (0.7). Convergent (Rho cv  $> 0.05$ ) and discriminant validity (Rho cv  $> r^2$ ) are satisfactory based on the

recommendations of Fornell and Larcker (1981). Appendix 1 offers more details about measurement items.

#### 4.2. Structural model and hypotheses testing

The results (PLS SEM estimation) indicated that the predictors explained correct amounts of variance in the dependent variable: loyalty to the mall:  $R^2 = 0.45$ . Figure 1 presents the structural coefficients. All our hypotheses, but two (relationships between socialization and satisfaction and between satisfaction and loyalty –  $p > 0.05$ ) are supported. We included covariates in the model (age, gender, income and education), but they did not affect our substantive findings. In the next section, we analyze the results across countries (see Appendix 2) and discuss the findings.

Figure 1. Results and hypotheses testing



### 5. Conclusion, discussion and implications

#### 5.1. Discussion and theoretical implications

Our analyses show that non-utilitarian values associated to shopping malls (hedonic, relaxation and socialization values) affect positively and significantly customer loyalty in the Maghreb countries investigated. Such findings are in line with previous studies (Chaudhuri and Ligas, 2009; Hart et al., 2007). However, our results indicate that only hedonic and relaxation values affect significantly customer satisfaction with the mall. Thus, our results confirm previous studies on the effectiveness of hedonic and relaxation values in leading to satisfaction (Chebat et al., 2014). The non significant

effect of socialization value on satisfaction contrasts with the results of Kwon and Ha (2013). This result can be related to the fact that social conventions prevent older women from socializing in shopping malls. It could also be explained by the Maghrebian context where malls replicate Western countries' socialization styles while consumers may expect more local culture elements in the mall. Thus, they continue to frequent the malls for socialization (opportunistic loyalty), even if they are not really satisfied by it. This result is confirmed by the absence of a significant relationship between satisfaction and loyalty. Therefore, overall, opportunism seems to be a driving factor of shopping mall frequentation. We also estimated our model in each country for comparisons (see Appendix 2). The results show that in Morocco hedonic value does not affect satisfaction and relaxation does not influence loyalty while satisfaction has no effect on loyalty to the mall. In Tunisia, it is interesting to notice that socialization value has no effect effects on satisfaction and loyalty while relaxation value affects significantly customer satisfaction, but not loyalty to the mall. These results underline differences between Morocco and Tunisia. They point out the role of the cultural context in customer behavior (Ladhari et al., 2011) and shopping malls (Laroche et al., 2005). Clearly, Moroccan customers rather seek socialization while Tunisians are more driven by hedonic benefits. Thus, even geographically close Maghrebian countries can significantly differ in their behaviors toward modern shopping malls. These results have several managerial implications.

## **5.2. Managerial implications**

While a vast majority of local consumers are still attached to the mall, the new forms of retailing increase their market shares at a drastic pace in Morocco and Tunisia (+15% annual growth in Morocco). Such insight suggests that mall managers should focus on long-term orientation and implement now the basis for strong differentiation strategies. Thus, we propose three main managerial recommendations that foster differentiating strength.

First, we demonstrate the importance of non-utilitarian values in general and hedonic value in particular on both customer satisfaction and loyalty to shopping malls. Therefore, we recommend managers to organize more leisure events to allow full expression non-utilitarian values in shopping malls. However, managers should adapt the activities to the visitors. For instance, teens and young adults are a visible population and main target on Friday and Saturday afternoons. Since they are less conservative than their elders (Rachik et al., 2005), events such as a pop-music show

with a DJ or a guest star could be organized. On the opposite, familial activities should take place on Sundays (e.g. make up for children, small car races, or puppet shows). Managers should use these assets to build a competitive differentiation of the malls. While utilitarian values may be found in traditional stores, the non-utilitarian values combined with product arrangements and services provide avenues to differentiate the malls from their competitors, and constitute a strong basis for sustainable management.

Second, our results show that customer satisfaction has no significant effect on loyalty to the mall. Such findings contradict previous Western studies related to store traffic (Bloemer and de Ruyter, 1998). However, the Morocco Mall and the Carrefour La Marsa are perceived as luxury places that hold an exclusive character. One may think that luxury means stability, and no variation. Thus, managers who target loyalty and repeat visits could organize diverse leisure activities with seasonal themes to encourage visitors to come back (e.g. Ramadan nights with singers, bowling for small children in winter, distribution of gifts for Ashura, etc.). Visitors could be satisfied with a first visit and willing to discover new activities during their next visits. Therefore, managers should build communication campaigns around such activities. They should encourage multiple experiences, insisting on the argument that each visit is different and unique. However, managers should build a continuity in the episodic events that is congruent with the competitive positioning strategy of their mall.

Third, our results urge managers to adapt locally their management strategies. The Maghreb region is often conceived as a homogeneous whole in terms of consumption. International managers who are based in Morocco are often in charge of the Maghreb region. Such a human resource management practice has the negative effect to foster replications of marketing strategies across Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. Our results remind the necessity to adapt locally managerial strategies. For instance, managers should consider their primary objective: is it customer satisfaction or loyalty? Targeting customer satisfaction may lead to loyalty to the shopping mall in Tunisia but not in Morocco. Besides, while targeting customer satisfaction, managers should focus on social values in Morocco but not in Tunisia. Thus, as an illustration, Moroccan managers should organize activities in the mall such as tombola, lottery, or demonstrations. Such animations have the potential to nourish both hedonic and social values for mall visitors have the opportunity to interact with unknown visitors during such events.

### **5.3. Limitations and future research**

This research has some limitations which are also avenues for future studies. First, future studies should investigate other countries in Maghreb (e.g. Algeria) or elsewhere in Africa and identify additional variables (ex. traditional values, religion, perception of modernity, etc.) that may affect the relationships between non-utilitarian values and loyalty to the mall. Second, we focused exclusively on customer loyalty to the mall while customers may also be loyal to a specific outlet in the mall (Rabbanee et al. 2012), to a specific brand or to a specific person. Thus, future research should clarify how service quality affects loyalty to shopping malls, and to specific stores and global brands in malls.

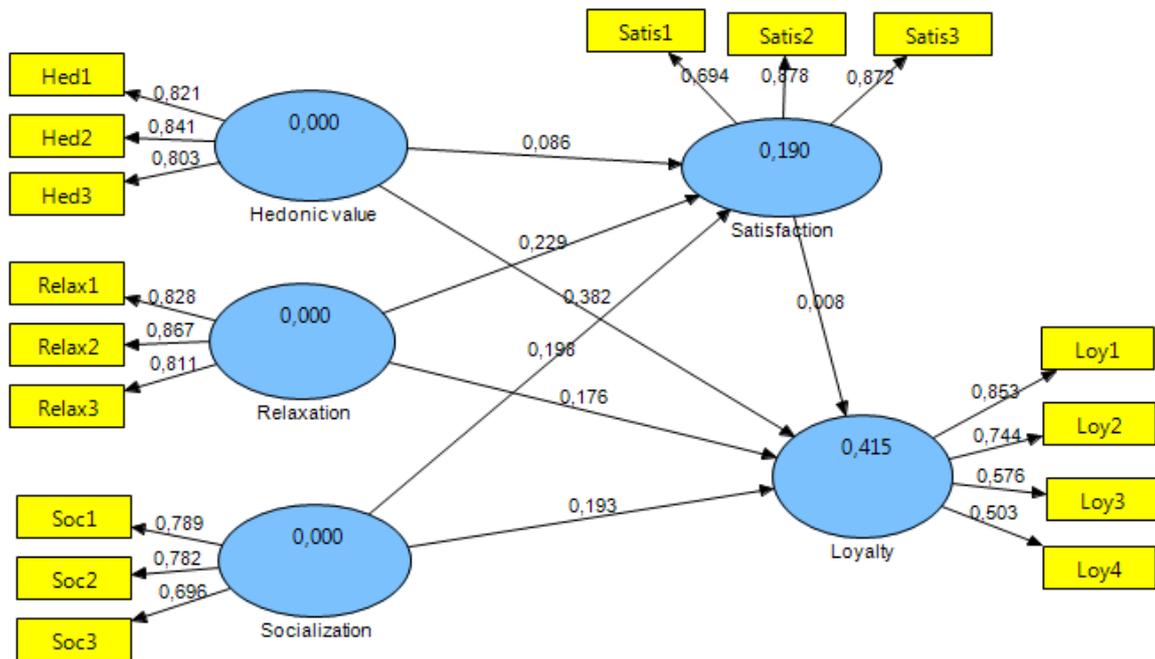
**Appendix 1: Psychometric quality of measurement scales**

<b>Constructs</b>	<b>Dimensions and measurement items</b>	<b>Stand. loading (1)</b>	<b>AVE</b>
<b>Hedonic value</b> $\rho = .89$	Hed1. I feel good when I shop at this shopping mall	.86	.73
	Hed2. I enjoy my visits to this shopping mall	.87	
	Hed3. This shopping mall puts me in a good mood	.83	
<b>Relaxation value</b> $\rho = .90$	Rel1. This shopping mall makes me feel ease of body and mind	.86	.75
	Rel2. This shopping mall relieve my stress	.90	
	Rel3. This shopping stretches me out	.84	
<b>Socialization value</b> $\rho = .81$	Soc1. Visiting this shopping mall is an experience I share with family	.80	.59
	Soc2. Visiting this shopping mall is an opportunity to hand out with friends	.80	
	Soc3. Visiting this shopping mall allow me to mingle with interesting people	.70	
<b>Satisfaction</b> $\rho = .87$	Sat1. How satisfied are you with this shopping mall? (1. very dissatisfied – 5. very satisfied)	.81	.69
	Sat2. How well does this shopping mall match your expectations? (1. not at all – 5. completely)	.85	
	Sat3. Imagine a perfect shopping mall. How close to this ideal is this shopping mall? (1. not at all close – 5. Very close)	.83	
<b>Loyalty</b> $\rho = .80$	Loy1. I speak favorably about this shopping mall to others	.81	.51
	Loy2. I can't see me ending my relationship with this shopping mall	.73	
	Loy3. I consider myself loyal to this shopping mall	.60	
	Loy4. I would pay more for products or services in order to buy them from this shopping mall compared with prices at other stores	.59	

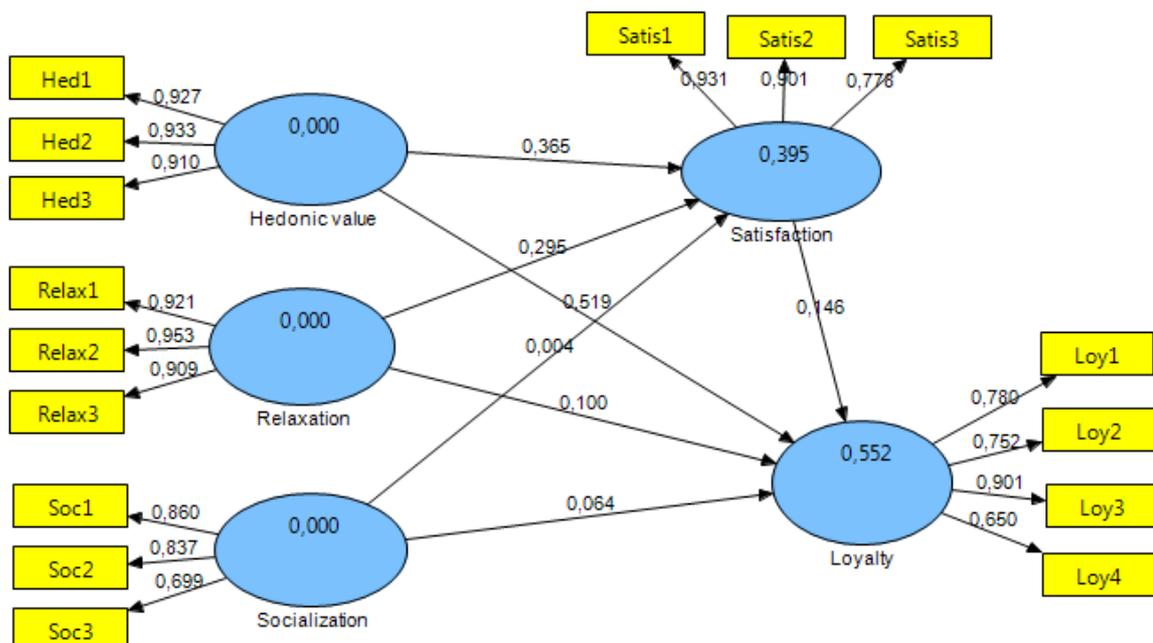
Notes: <sup>(1)</sup> standardized coefficients.

## Appendix 2: Country comparison

### Appendix 2A. Results in Morocco



### Appendix 2B. Results in Tunisia



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