The Effects of Loyalty Program Quality on Word -of -Mouth Recommendations Intentions

Nedra Bahri-Ammari

Abstract—Literature review revealed the importance of the adoption of marketing Relationship for loyalty and retaining profitable customer (Customer Relationship Management). LPQ satisfaction will reinforce the loyalty and customer brand attachment. Customer will communicate the operator to others. The focus of this study is to examine the relationship between the LPPQ and the WOM recommendations through: customer satisfaction, loyalty and attachment. The results show that LPQ affect positively the satisfaction, negatively the loyalty. LPQ has an indirectly effect on WOM recommendations but through the satisfaction and attachment. The mediating effect of satisfaction in the relationship between LPQ and Loyalty is rejected. This finding can be explained by the nature of mobile sector in Tunisia.

Keywords—Attachment, Loyalty program quality, satisfaction, WOM

I. INTRODUCTION

THE realization of the importance of loyalty is in a situation of saturated market. This one has more than one characteristic: in competition intense, recruitment costs are higher than those associated with retention [1]. Retention strategy is a plausible alternative to develop company's business and to defend its market share. The firm must determine the specific profile of the customer (specific information) to satisfy him [2]. The aim of the relational firm, through satisfaction, trust, commitment, is the loyalty of its customers through rewards [3]. The effect of the loyalty program is manifested in the duration of the relationship [1], [4] and by the efficient WOM recommendation [5]. Generally, the more a customer remains loyal to the firm, the more propensities he has to recommend the firm and the more are appropriate the recommendations. This form of interpersonal and informal (WOM) communication takes benefits from the free aspect and especially of the conviction effect. Despite a lack of research concerning the determinant of the brand attachment, [6] argues the importance of relationship variables between the individual aspects and the brand. There are also considerations for the satisfaction, loyalty, trust….. The brand attachment is an affective reaction and a sustainable emotional relationship [7], [8]. The loyal customers are then attached to the firm brand.

This paper aims to show how the LPQ affects indirectly the WOM recommendations, through the relationships variables as: the customer satisfaction, loyalty and brand attachment? We will also examine the mediator effect of satisfaction in the relationship between the LPQ and le loyalty?

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II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

A. Loyalty program quality

Loyalty is, rather, a defensive strategies designed to keep the most profitable customers and ensure profitability [9]. Customer loyalty program is defined as: "…mechanism for identifying and rewarding loyal customers" [10]. The objectives consist in: selling more expensive, making higher profits generated by customer, reducing costs and the recommendation effect or free advertising [11]. The company, through its loyalty tools, seeks to increase the number of products purchased [12] and to enhance the customer relationships duration that generate higher income [13]. These techniques are also chosen to improve the cross selling [14]. The effect of the loyalty program on customer retention is significant, but indirect through loyalty [1], [4]. Loyal customers are willing to pay more for the same product since they fear contacts with cheaper and unknown competitors for them [15]. The customer will consider the surcharge as lower total price of the new product purchased, and which may dissatisfy him.

Loyalty programs, through promotion, contribute positively to enhance purchases and consumption [16] [12]. Relying on tools; their aim is retaining customers with a high financial value. These profits generated following the purchasing frequency and average amount of purchases made by customers [17]. The more the customer remains within the company, the more the profits increase [15]. This reflects the growing trust felt towards the seller and the best knowledge of the offer. It is easier, according to some researchers, to increase sales based on trust that transform non-buyers; the cost of a new customer is ten times higher than the cost keeping a customer acquired [18]. However, [19] determines the correlation between frequent customers of the company and the value of rewards loyalty program. In [13], authors confirm this and define the loyalty program as a discriminative marketing tool that rewards not only the frequent but also the loyal customers. Loyalty strategy has a really effective recommendation. Generally, the longer the duration of the relationship between the customer and the company is, the more propensities to recommend the companies are strong and significant. These informal and interpersonal communications (WOM recommendations) take advantage of free and focus on its belief. The benefits from this communication will incite and encourage maintaining businesses and evolving the relationship side.

B. Word-of- Mouth recommendations

In [20], authors suggest three dimensions in favor of a positive behavioral intention towards the brand or product. These, namely: (1) Word-of-mouth, (2) purchase intention and (3) sensitivity price. We will, in our study, focus on

word-of-mouth recommendation which refers to customers who want to share their experiences with others and use this type of communication and also tell their friends and relatives of the matter [21]. The customer uses his experience with product or brand as a communicational vector identity and has a higher motivation to speak about the brand with friends. Buyer uses his experience with the consumption of the product as vector for identity communication and is highly motivated to talk to the people around him about his products or brands. Researches indicate the importance of Word-of-mouth as a social phenomenon [22]. The social relationship has an impact on the word of mouth communication, from where the notion of proselytizing is assured. Consumer satisfaction to product or brand will have an effect on the company loyalty and especially the reinforcement of positive relationship between the two parties. Reinforcement Relationship results in a customer's commitment to deal with this company [23].

Relational company aims through satisfaction, trust and commitment to retain the most profitable consumers [24], [25]. Customer loyalty has an effective recommendation. Generally, the more the customer is older, the more propensities to recommend the company are stronger and the more are pertinent the recommendations [26]. This informal and interpersonal type of communication (word-of-mouth) takes advantage of free of charge and focus on its belief. Benefits from this communication will incite and encourage company to maintain and to evolve the relational orientation. A positive word-of-mouth communicational will contribute to a positive recommendation and then to the brand success [5]. In this research, we will take word-of-mouth variable as word-of-mouth recommendation in the telecom context.

C. Customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is the satisfaction with: product attributes; relationship with the company and the information exchanged [27]. According to [13], Customer satisfaction is defined as: customers' post-purchase evaluations and overall affective responses to their service experiences. Relational satisfaction corresponds to the consumer's affective state following an overall relationship assessment [28]. Customer satisfaction was defined as an: « affective state resulting from a process of comparing the results of the experiment at different personal standards» [29]. This emphasizes the individual nature of the assessment of satisfaction.

Expectations and standards are the antecedent's key to satisfaction, followed by perceived performance, equity, quality and perceived value and emotional responses (mood, temperament, emotions, and feelings). Satisfaction's derived from emotional and cognitive variables, [12], [13], [30] within personal, social, and cultural contexts [31]. It is an emotional response from the most recent transactional experience or cumulative through time [32]. This process may induce consumer loyalty to the product or brand and customer retention [33]. The customers satisfied are not necessarily loyal. Dissatisfied customers can remain faithful to their suppliers, for lack of alternatives or because the switching costs are too high [34]. These costs are inherent to specific training in the use of the new product, loss of loyalty rewards programs and relational history.

D. Customer Loyalty

Customer loyalty allows the company to continue the business relationship over time and to establish and develop a common history [35]. Loyalty evolves from a vision based on the needs satisfaction to a vision based on relational [20]. It is expressed by commitment and trust between the exchange actors [24]. It is a dynamic concept that is developed by strengthening mutual commitment and trust in partner. The company aims, through satisfaction, trust and commitment, the loyalty of its most profitable customers. The purpose is to bring them to the highest level of the relationship scale [3]. The prospect becomes progressively buyer, client, supporter, lawyer and partner. A partner is a loyal customer who will recommend the company's products for other potential customers. Thus, the profitability will improve. Loyal customer is one who made other purchases and is and will be less sensitive to high prices. Loyalty is the basis of a psychological process, while retention is far from having a cognitive component [36]. Retention is measured by the duration of time the consumer's purchasing history with the company, while the loyalty is determined by the percentage of requests [33]. According to [13], loyalty is measured by emotional and cognitive states. They can be manifested by: attitudinal loyalty, resistance to competing offers, propensity to be loyal, complaining behavior intentions and behavior loyalty.

E. Customer Brand attachment

The marketing literature considers attachment as: « consumer Emotional predisposition for the long- term toward the brand [37], [38], and [39] ». The attachment is: «The emotional and affective relationship between the consumer and the brand [37] ». He worked on the psychological dimension of the proximity relationship between consumer and brand, and advances two types of attachment, the functional and existential Attachment. Only the second dimension develops emotional and affective relationships.

In [8], author confirms and defines the concept as: « a psychological variable which explains an affective relationship in the duration and inalterable (separation is painful) with the brand, and which expresses a psychological proximity relationship with it ». According to [8], the friendly and dependency notions in its definition, added that: a psychological, an emotional, a strong and durable relationships to the brand, which results from a sentimental concomitance and a correlation with the brand. The attachment has also been used in the object relationship and presented as a bidimensional concept: temporal and identity [40].

The attachment is a variable that reflects an emotional link with the brand referring to the nostalgic connections. The concept is reflected not only by the possession of objects but also the relationship between the individual and the brand. Thus, an individual can be attached to a brand if it provides him personal and cultural values similar to hers or his aspirations respondents. In other words, the attachment existence is related to the congruence between self-concept of the consumer and the brand personality [41].

This congruence is depending of past events lived by the person [42]. The attachment to the object is related to this expressive function, where the object symbolizes the values, beliefs, which we share or want to join [41].

In summary, brand attachment is a long term relationship that predicts the engagement of consumers towards the concept, their determination to continue the relationship and their willingness to make financial sacrifices to obtain it. These variables are the consequences of the brand attachment

III. HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

The impact of the customer loyalty program on customer behavior

A. LPQ on Customer Satisfaction

The perception of the service quality offered by company enhances the level of customer satisfaction [43], [32]. The evaluation of experiences with product generates in fine a state of satisfaction or dissatisfaction: cognitive dissonance. Thus, the company must improve its service quality ensuring satisfaction and profitability [44]. In fact, [45] evokes the service quality impact on intention to return but mediated by the customer satisfaction. This concept is influenced by interactions and relationships between the customer and the company [46]. The company must, after a detailed and precise analysis on perceptions and expectations and through a complete process, deliver a high service quality. A process update and measures adaptation are however necessary to enable a higher level of perceived service quality [47]. In this direction, marketers should present a satisfied loyalty program quality because it constitutes one aspect of the services offered [43]. Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: The loyalty program quality positively influences the customer satisfaction;

B. LPQ on loyalty

The loyalty program quality is considered in this paper as the comparison between customer expectations and the perceptions of service quality [47], [48].Considered as a tridimensional concept, it based on interaction (equity in the exchange of information and communication), examine and association quality [49]. According to [50], two components are important: technical (process) and functional quality. These are related to process by which rewards are made and offered to consumer.

Three types of equity were advanced by [51]: (1) distributive, (2) procedural and (3) interactional. The last type is particularly important because it gives benefits to the company and the consumer about the equity in exchange of information and communication process. All these aspects must be taken into account to reach positive customer perceptions about the loyalty program. Thus, loyalty program should enable the company to develop rewards based on customer transactions. It is the case of distributive equity which is based on equity between rewards given and customer transactional value.

program structure can help the company to: reward customers to their just transactional value; upgrade consumer's repertoire of purchases; involve consumer to loyalty process [52]; maximize exchange of information about consumer's expectations [51], [20], and build customer loyalty and retention. In [53], author also argued that program structure "must give customers an incentive to adopt a dynamic perspective".

In this paper, we consider also the impact of loyalty program quality on customer loyalty. The following hypothesis was proposed and confirmed by [13]:

Hypothesis 2: The loyalty program quality positively influences the customer loyalty;

C. Satisfaction/Loyalty

Satisfaction is a global purchase and consumption evaluation in the time [54]. This evaluation depends on the overall customer experience with the company [27]. It is an affective state resulting from a comparison process of results of the experiment at different personal standards [29].

This is a retrospective assessment of the overall difference between expectations and what was actually obtained after using the product [55]. Loyalty is the commitment (psychological and behavioral engagement) to anchor the business relationship in the long term by establishing and developing a history and a common asset [35]. Loyalty evolves from a vision based on the needs satisfied to one based on the relationship, and which is expressed by the commitment and the trust of actors in the exchange [31]. However, satisfaction is certainly a necessary but insufficient condition for consumer loyalty [56]. Customers satisfied are not necessarily loyal. Dissatisfied customer can remain loyal to their suppliers, for lack of alternatives or because the switching costs are too high [34]. In fact, customers can leave their provider if they find a better value or better quality and convenience [56]. The study in [57] show that satisfaction has an important effect influencing customer loyalty, only in industries that have not reached maturity. Thus, we propose followed this line of thinking the hypothesis that examines the impact of customer satisfaction on loyalty customer:

Hypothesis 3: Customer satisfaction positively influences customer loyalty;

D. Satisfaction / Brand attachment

According to [68], « an individual attached to a brand is generally satisfied by it". However, a dissatisfied customer may remain attached to a mark for lack of alternatives and / or to avoid transfer costs [34]. This is also possible for a customer who is dissatisfied with a brand, and to which he is not attached. The relationship between satisfaction and attachment has been studied in literature, in fact revealing the low non-significant correlation between attachment and dissatisfaction [58]. This indicates that customer satisfaction may constitute a factor explaining the attachment to the brand. It is then possible to argue that a satisfied customer may be emotionally attached. The studies of [59] revealed the contribution of customer satisfaction to explaining

attachment compared to other variables related to product and the individual, such as: trust, congruence and product category. The results show that satisfaction with the brand influences the attachment with a standardized beta value around 0.327. Thus, we propose followed this line of thinking the hypothesis that examines the impact of customer satisfaction on attachment:

Hypothesis 4: Customer satisfaction positively influences brand attachment;

E. Satisfaction / WOM recommendations

Little study has made demonstrating the role of satisfaction to enhance the WOM recommendations. The WOM constitutes a promotional and free tool if company gives an importance to bring customers to have positive behaviors [60]. Customers that have more than one experience with brand which are positive and directly, will enhance their satisfaction [60]. Then, word-of-mouth should represent a logical reaction following a total of positive experiences [61]. Numerous researchers consider satisfaction as a prior condition to a favorable word of mouth [32], [62]. The customer will be engaged in WOM behaviors when he is satisfied [63]. We propose that:

Hypothesis 5: Customer satisfaction positively influences WOM recommendations;

F. Loyalty/WOM recommendations

The word of mouth concept has been suggested by some studies as the result of a relational collaboration between the consumer and the company [43]. The initiative is not limited only to the brand, the consumer is also involved because it must develop considerable efforts to maintain and preserve a good relationship and better service. According to [63], this commitment is the basis of WOM. In other words, the consumer relationship must engage with the brand and eventually recommend it to others. However, the consumer can remain engaged with the brand to avoid the costs of transferring to another supplier. The company still needs customers which are there because they believe this commitment and the brand. The benefits of this relationship are especially the recommendation, retaining customer and *in fine* the company profitability [62]. Thus the sixth hypothesis:

Hypothesis 6: Customer loyalty positively influences WOM recommendations;

G. Brand attachment/ WOM recommendations (Proselytism)

The relationship between the two concepts deserves much attention because they are two elements that affect the emotional aspect of behavior. The brand attachment reflects a durable emotional and psychological relationship and which are the concomitant of dependence on brand and a friendship feeling with the brand [8]. Among the effects of these two elements is the proselytism or word of mouth. This translates to consumer willingness to engage [8]. A committed consumer is a consumer that: involves with the brand, promotes the brand and speaks to his entourage. Thus, the more is the customer loyal by attachment, the more is positive the WOM. According to [8], WOM recommendation is the continuation of loyalty invested. The investment reflects the commitment costs, dependency and friendship sentiment with the brand and the consumer's explicit communication. Many researchers believe that brand attachment is the proselytism source [64]. That's the seven hypotheses:

Hypothesis 7: Customer attachment positively influences the WOM recommendations;

IV. METHOD

A. Measures

Firms need a continuous adaptation of the relational process to ensure a better level of perceived quality of service offered [47], [65]. The SERVPERF measure is the adaptation of the SERVQUAL measure [66]. The scale is chosen because it has been used in research on evaluations of service quality following an experience with the product. It has three dimensions: helpfulness, assurance and empathy. Initially, it's a 7 points likert scale and 14 items, but reduced to 5 points and 9 items after the preliminary testing of the questionnaire from the experts. The 7-points scale had some ambiguities because it can induce confusion. Satisfaction (scale with 5 items) and Loyalty measures (scale with 4 items) were taken from [30]. Brand attachment was measured by scale developed by [8] and using 5 items. Items for the WOM recommendations were taken from [20] scales of behavioral intentions. It has a good reliability of 0, 96 in the study of [43]. Scales measured the variables in this research can be seen in Appendix A.

B. Sample and data collection

The research was conducted in the Tunisia telecommunication sector. Customer experience with a telecom loyalty program membership was required in our study.

We have chosen two Tunisian operators: Tunisiana and Tunisie Telecom. The sample was made up of 250 respondents who either were directly interviewed or responded online to the survey (The questionnaires were sent by e-mail). Directive interviews helped to avoid information bias and thoughtless responses. The interviews lasted about 15 minutes in order to prevent boredom. To ensure the good comprehension of the questions by the respondents, a pre-test was made near 25 customers (10% of the sample). A total of 200 responses were collected (60% from Tunisie Telecom and 40% from tunisiana). This total doesn't include the 10 % of the preliminary research conducted (testing the measurement instrument). Questions involved measures of Loyalty program quality, satisfaction, loyalty, attachment, WOM recommendations using 5 point Likert scale (from 1: disagree very strongly to 5: agree very strongly).

C. Analysis method

To measure the construct validity and reliability scales we

proceed with the factorial and reliability analyses [67]. The indicator more performed purify the measurement is the Cronbach alpha score. This coefficient according to [68] allows checking the internal coherence items for any scale.

Principal component analyses (ACP) were carried out in order to study the properties of the 5 measuring instruments, to reduce the number of the items and as well as possible to summarize information which they bring around a limited number of factors. The Varimax rotation was performed to determine if the measurement scales comprised sub-dimensions or if more than one construct explained the same measurement. Collected data was analyzed by using *SPSS 19.0 So*ftware. In order to test hypothesis, structural equation modeling was used. This method of second generation adopted to enable us to estimate the relationships and the parameters within the theoretical model as well as the adjustment compared to digit data. A Maximum Likelihood test [69] lead to the selection of the best data adjustment with the theoretical model. The use of software *AMOS 18*, made possible all these tests.

V. RESULTS

A. Measure purification and reliability

Scales were assessed using reliability analysis. Most reliability ranged from 0,776 to 0,938, which allows us to accept these values [67]. A first order factorial analysis was then conducted on research scales: Loyalty program quality, satisfaction, loyalty, attachment, WOM recommendations. Test results revealed the existence of four factors and confirm their validity. Communalities are all above 0, 5 (from 0,664 to 0,947). The correlations of items with their respective factors are also higher than 0.6. All variables are unidimentional and explain more than 50% of variance extracted. The KMO test validates the continuity of analysis. Items and factors are summarized in Table I.

TABLE I
PURIFIED MEASUREMENT ITEMS OF SELECTED VARIABLES

	Extracted communalities	Factor loading	Cumulative variance explained	KMO test
- Loyalty Program quality (0,785)			**70,015**	**0,702**
P3:Sellers Sellers are polite and have an easy contact with clients;	0, 664	0,815		
P5: They listen to customers and understand their needs and expectations,	0,723	0,851		
P7: The service quality is a great opportunity for customers	0,713	0,844		
Customer satisfaction (0,914)			**89,823**	**0,709**
S2: With this operator, I'm not complaining,	0,947	0,973		
S3: There is a strong interaction between us,	0,822	0,907		
S4: Products and services of this operator give me much joy and pleasure.	0,926	0,962		
-Customer loyalty (0,878)			**81,070**	**0, 727**
F2:I Would like to try new products and services of the operator,	0,845	0,919		
F3:The marketing activities of competitors do not affect me,	0,749	0,866		
F4: I expect to continue my relationship with this operator.	0,838	0,915		
-Brand Attachment (0,938)			**85,061**	**0,8**
A1 : I have great affection for this operator ;	0,886	0,941		
A2 : I am somehow related to this operator ;	0,879	0,937		
A3 : This operator gives me pleasure ;	0,915	0,956		
-WOM recommendations (0,875)			**82,881**	**0,7**
W1 : Say positive things about this operator to other people,	0,880	0,938		
W2 : Recommend this operator to someone who seeks your advice,	0,716	0,846		
W3: Encourage friends and relatives to do business with this operator.	0,890	0,947		

B. Measurement model fit

Confirmatory factor analysis was developed on the various measures to examine the reliability, validity and the degree of adjustment of the measurement model [70]. The model estimation was made by combining the variables step by step. Model fit was based essentially on the examination of factorial contributions, modification indices and standardized residuals [69]. The results revealed a good fit for all constructs which present satisfactory values fit indices. As indicated by the results of CFA (Table. II).

Two step approaches were recommended for estimating the measurement model [71]. The first revealed that all factor contributions are higher than 0, 5 for Student's values well higher than 1, 96 (Table III).

The scales reliability and convergent validity are also tested. The results of *measure reliability* confirm the exploratory factor analysis. We used the Jöreskog Rhô test [72] which all values were accepted because they were above 0, 7 [69]. They confirm also the exploratory factor analysis. The average variance extracted achieved the minimum requirement of 0, 50 for all variables scales [71].

The *discriminant validity* results (Table IV) revealed that relationships between latent's variables are less strong than those between the constructs and their observed variables.Each measure is correlated with its specific variable, confirming then the discriminant validity.

TABLE II
THE RESULTS OF CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS

Construct Indicator		LPQ			Satisfaction			Loyalty			Brand attachment			WOM recommendations	
	Per3	Per5	Per7	Sati2	Sati3	Sati4	Fid2	Fid3	Fid4	Att1	Att2	Att3	Adh 1	Adh2	Adh3
Estimates (t-value)	1.00	1.13 (8,1)	1.22 (8,1)	1.00	0.813 (25,52)	1.14 (18,7)	1.00	0.94 (42,17)	0.01 (51,19)	1.00	0.73 (26, 9)	0.87 (25,6)	1.00	1.01 (19,70)	1.04 (12,58)
SMC	0.51	0.58	0.57	0.88	0.80	0.85	0.87	0.836	0.865	0.84	0.86	0.835	0.88	0.86	0.520

C. Structural model

The second order factorial analysis, based on factors of the previous step, consisted in determining the best data fit compared with the theoretical model [69]. The results indicate that the theoretical model reproduces the data collected. The model fit to the data is acceptable (X^2/df = 180, 40/94= 1, 92); $RMSEA$ = 0,059; $SRMR$ = 0,042; GFI = 0,892; NFI = 0,911; CFI = 0,907; $AGFI$ = 0,869. The model fit is accepted and confirms in this research the theoretical model proposed [73], [69]. The Results of structural model revealed that LPQ influences positively customer satisfaction (γ= 0, 695, p < 0, 01) but not the customer loyalty (γ= - 0,158). Then we confirm the first hypothesis (H1) and reject the second research hypothesis (H2). This result shows that the mediating effect of satisfaction is rejected. The conditions of mediation weren't checked. The relationships between satisfaction-loyalty (H3) and satisfaction- brand attachment (H4) were confirmed with high contributions. According to the figure1, we found that customer satisfaction has a significant and positive effect on WOM (β= 0,624; p < 0, 01), supporting H5. The hypothesis that stipulates that customer satisfaction positively influences the WOM recommendations (H6) was also supported. The direct impact of brand attachment on WOM suggested by hypothesis 7 was also supported. In fact, satisfied customers may desert if they believe they can get better service quality from another provider (Egan, 2000). In the telecom context, the LPQ must reconsider the customers' expectations.

Loyalty program can help the managers firstly, to have huge amounts of data on customers which prevent the purchase behavior [74] and secondly, to effectively reward customers.

The customer satisfaction affects positively the customer loyalty. This finding confirms that satisfaction constitute an antecedent to loyalty [43], [13], [57]. Managers must improve the service quality and the rewards value ensuring then the satisfaction and the customers retain. The results concerning the direct effect of customer satisfaction on attachment was significant. In fact, customer should be firstly satisfied with the operator services, and then emotionally attached. The study of [58] argued that customer satisfaction may constitute a factor explaining the attachment to the brand. The results found in [59] reveal that satisfaction contributes to explain the attachment with a strongly high value. The customer satisfaction affects positively the WOM recommendations. This indicates that satisfaction (summarizing customer consumption experiences over time) enhances the degree of WOM intentions when experiences are positive [61]. The same result has been shown between the loyalty and WOM. In fact, satisfaction and loyalty customer are necessary to have positive WOM recommendations. According to [43], WOM intention was generated through satisfaction rather than loyalty. This differential effect can be explained according to theses authors. Satisfaction "represents a summative experience-based evaluation….and can form the content WOM message", but the loyalty reflects future intention.

TABLE III
RESULTS OF RELIABILITY AND CONVERGENT VALIDITY

Variable	Convergent Validity (Rhô de Joreskog)	AVE
LPQ	0.786	0.764
Satisfaction	0.895	0.756
Loyalty	0.847	0.688
Attachment	0.885	0.755
WOM	0.795	0.687

TABLE IV
DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY

	LPQ	SATISF	LOY	ATTACH	WOM
LPQ	1				
SATISF	0,30	1			
LOY	0,03	0,27	1		
ATTACH	0,01	0,20	0,49	1	
WOM	0,46	0,12	0,35	0,40	1
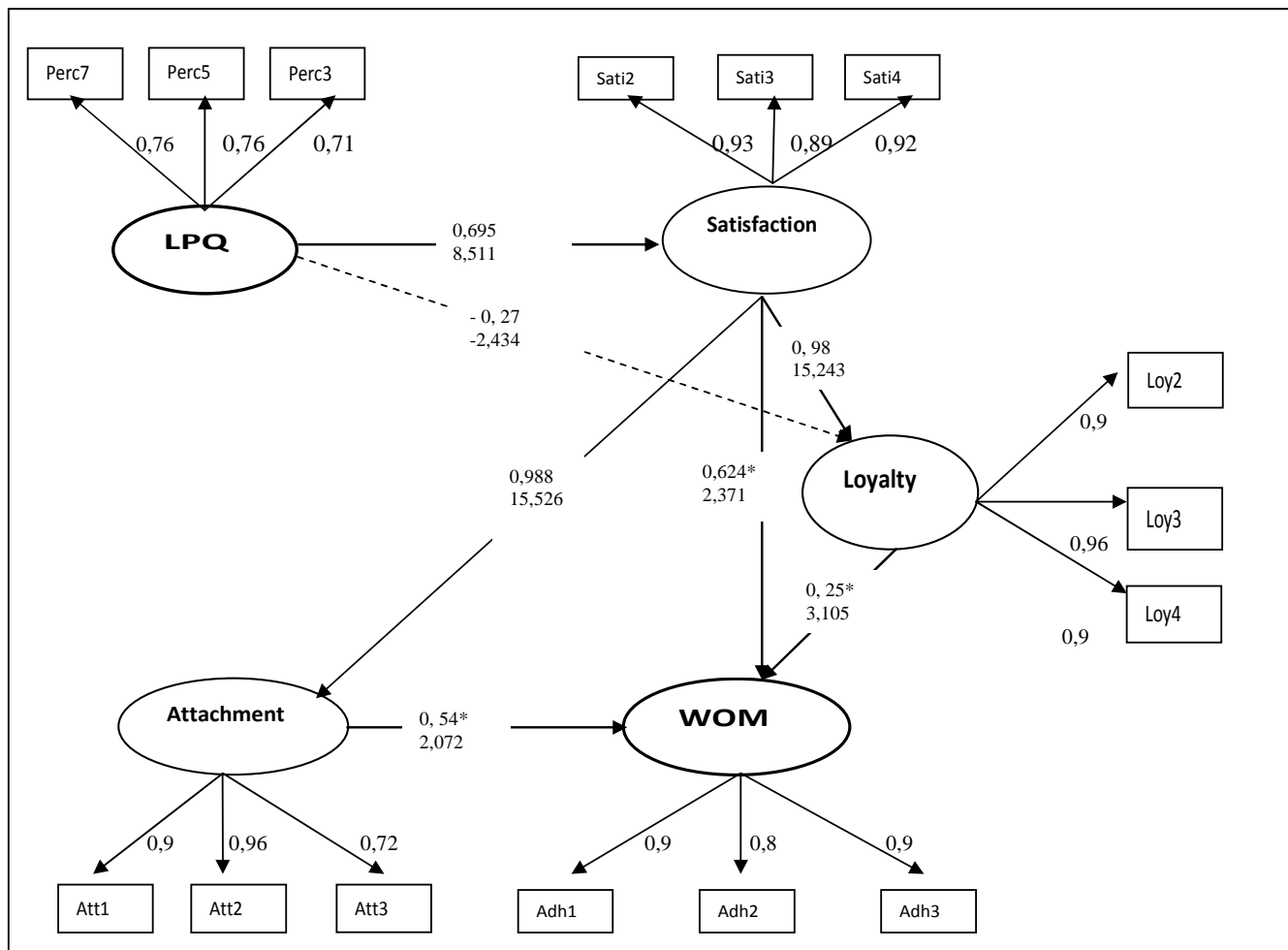
(*Significant at the p-value of 0.05 or less)

Fig. 1 Model test results

VI. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this research, we tried to show the indirect impact of the loyalty program quality perception on the word of mouth through variables such as: customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and attachment. Findings revealed the directly significant effect of LPQ on customer satisfaction, which confirms the propositions and findings of some previous authors [43], [31]. Moreover, [13] argued that service quality is an antecedent of customer satisfaction. In our context, we consider the LPQ as an important part of the overall operator service quality. Then, the operator must firstly satisfied the customer and after think to retain him by offering a specific loyalty program. The finding concerning the directly influence between LPQ and loyalty are unexpected. In fact, the relationship between these variables has been shown positive and significant in others studies [13], [52].

This finding can be explained by the important role of satisfaction in this relationship. In other words, satisfaction is a necessary condition to reach customer loyalty. According to [13], the customer satisfaction has a mediating role between the LPQ and loyalty. In this study, we found that satisfaction hasn't the character of mediating variable.

The last finding revealed that attachment affects WOM recommendations, also observed by [64], [8]. More customer is loyal by attachment, more is positive the WOM. In fact, WOM recommendation is the continuation of loyalty invested [8]. The dependency and friendship feeling will be developed between the customer and the firm, which will also improve the WOM recommendation.

VII. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

We have tried through this research to show the impact of loyalty program on the WOM recommendations through some relationship marketing variables. The results gave explanations

but they also shown the possibility of integrating other concepts which can improve the quality of contributions. These are particularly related to trust, consumer retention, personal interaction quality...Our present research has carried out in the telecommunication context, which limits the generalization of the results to other area. In fact, the Tunisia telecommunication sector is not yet at the stage of maturity. Only three operators constitute this sector: Tunisie Telecom, Tunisiana and Orange. These operators still have a potential to know how to better retain and applying effective relationship marketing using an appropriate technological tools such as CRM (Customer Relationship Management). Customers are certainly satisfied with the operators' services and offers but they have not yet intended to become loyal in the future. Operators must then highlight ways to get the maximum information about the consumer and communicate the relational strategy to appropriate personnel. They must have a data base sufficiently in crucial information to decision-making (optimization of the offers). The IT as well as the MIS can provide information to the relationship success.

They must also listen to customers and better communicate with them to develop programs based on their expectations. Marketing "one to one" requires the adhesion of the individuals and the establishment of a dialogue between the company and its client. According to [54], the firm must adopt a relationship in order to know the specific needs, identify and retain the most profitable.

As future research and when sector comes to maturity (especially in relationship marketing efforts), we can incorporate other variables that will help to better explain the consumer behavior intentions such as operator credibility (expertise and trust worthiness). Finally, as the market competition becomes intense, the CRM system seems to be, through an integrated approach, one of the main implements to attract more customers, improve their satisfaction and eventually retain some of them. Companies that imply efficiently CRM will likely guarantee customer loyalty and retention.

APPENDIX
MEASUREMENT ITEMS ARE SHOWN BELOW

Construct	Items
LPQ	- Employees of the operator have a lot of knowledge and competences on the loyalty program; - Sellers have much range of products and services based on client needs; - Sellers are polite and have an easy contact with clients; - Sellers respect their promises of rewards; - They listen to customers and understand their needs and expectations ; - Their programs are transparent and credible ; - The service quality is great opportunity for customers ; - The services provided are free of doubt ; - The physical equipments and employees of the compagny are reliable.
Satisfaction	- I am satisfied with this operator; - With this operator, I'm not complaining; - There is a strong interaction between us; - Products and services of this operator give me much joy and pleasure.
Brand Attachment	- I have great affection for this operator ; - I am somehow related to this operator ; - This operator gives me pleasure ; - I finf a confort to use the products or services of this operator ; - I am very attracted by this operator.
Word-of-Mouth	- Say positive things about this operator to other people; - Recommend this operator to someone who seeks your advice; - Encourage friends and relatives to do business with this operator.
Loyalty	- I prefer the products and services of this operator ; - I would like to try new products and services compagny ; - The marketing activities doesn't affects me ; - I am commited to continue my business relationship with this operator.

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