

# Measuring the perceived value of malls in a non-Western context: the case of the UAE

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849

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Received 9 April 2014  
Revised 20 April 2014  
19 May 2014  
12 January 2015  
1 March 2015  
Accepted 17 May 2015

## Abstract

**Purpose** – The purpose of this paper is to identify the dimensions of a shopper consumption experience at the mall level, in relation to previous research on customer-perceived value. It aims to identify the customer-perceived value constructs of shopping malls (MALLVAL) and develop items for measuring these constructs, empirically validate the scale, carry out an initial investigation of the relationship, if any, among the MALLVAL dimensions, and discuss useful managerial implications based on the exploratory analysis of the statistical relationships between the various MALLVAL dimensions.

**Design/methodology/approach** – The constructs were tested and validated by means of a multidimensional procedure on a sample of 368 mall shoppers in the UAE. Amos 19 was used for this purpose.

**Findings** – The study revealed eight dimensions of MALLVAL: first, hedonic value; second, self-gratification value; third, utilitarian value; fourth, epistemic value; fifth, social interaction value; sixth, spatial convenience value; seventh, transaction value; and eighth, time convenience value.

**Research limitations/implications** – Although the current sample is big and diverse enough and the findings may be representative, the authors urge other researchers to replicate the study and get replies from different countries and in particular to use the measures developed in this study to test their robustness.

**Practical implications** – Recognition of the importance of the different dimensions of MALLVAL should encourage mall developers and managers to develop mall attributes and shopping environments that provide the different values that compose MALLVAL.

**Originality/value** – This study makes a number of contributions to the research on customer-perceived value in the mall context in an Arabian environment by developing and validating a multidimensional scale that consists of more different constructs than hedonic and utilitarian values alone.

**Keywords** Scale development, UAE, Shopping mall, Customer-perceived value

**Paper type** Research paper

## Introduction

Customer-perceived value has gained much attention from marketing researchers over the last three decades, but is still hotly debated in the marketing literature. It plays an important role in predicting customers' choice and future repurchase intentions and consequently in achieving sustainable competitive advantage (Chen and Dubinsky, 2003; Eid and El-Gohary, 2015). Nowadays, customers have become more value driven and the number of value-conscious customers is proliferating; therefore, retail managers in general and mall developers and managers in particular need to understand what customers value and where they themselves should focus their attention to achieve and



sustain their competitive advantage (Sweeney and Soutar, 2001; Diep and Sweeny, 2008). Specifically, as revealed by Zeithaml (1988), customer-perceived value is a trade-off between what the customer gets (i.e. benefits, quality) for what he/she gives (i.e. price or sacrifice). Focusing only on the trade-off between quality and price makes the value construct too narrow and too simplistic; hence, dimensions other than quality and price would increase the construct's usefulness (Sweeney and Soutar, 2001). Meanwhile, the meaning of value, seen panoramically, is composed of all the factors, qualitative and quantitative, subjective and objective, that make up the complete shopping experience (Zeithaml, 1988). This latter definition recognizes explicitly the subjective nature of value and shows that value is provided by the "complete shopping experience", and not simply by product acquisition (Babin *et al.*, 1994).

However, much research on customer-perceived value has focused on such value dimensions as utilitarian value and hedonic value (e.g. Stoel *et al.*, 2004; Michon and Chebat, 2004; Michon *et al.*, 2007, 2008; Allard *et al.*, 2009; Jackson *et al.*, 2011) but ignored other dimensions that may help to understand the complete shopping experience. In addition, customer-perceived value in the mall context has received less attention than customer-perceived value in the context of product/brand and stores. Moreover, studying customer-perceived value in malls in the non-Western context in general and in the Arabian context in particular has received very little attention from researchers and none of them has studied this concept in the UAE. Therefore, we will try to build and validate a scale that measures customer-perceived value in malls in the Arabian context so as to reflect all the values that can be derived from the total shopping experience in malls, not only the hedonic and utilitarian values. This study represents a step towards achieving this, as the following sections illustrate.

### **Research objectives**

The present study is an attempt to identify the dimensions of a shopper's consumption experience at the mall level, in relation to previous research on customer-perceived value. It aims to identify the customer-perceived value constructs of shopping malls (MALLVAL) and develop items for measuring these constructs, to empirically validate the scale, carry out an initial investigation of the relationship, if any, between the MALLVAL dimensions, and consider useful managerial implications based on the exploratory analysis of the statistical relationships between the various MALLVAL dimensions.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. First, a review of the relevant MALLVAL literature is presented. This is followed by an identification of the MALLVAL dimensions and development of the related scales. Empirical validation of the dimensions is presented next. Managerial implications based on the exploratory analysis of the statistical relationships between the various MALLVAL dimensions are then offered. The paper concludes with recommendations for future extensions of this research.

### **Literature review**

Reviewing the literature, we find that there is no agreement about the dimensions comprising perceived value. This is due to its subjective and contextual nature as well as the fact that the consumption experience varies from one person to another when he/she interacts with a specific object in a specific situation (Holbrook, 2006). With regard to the contextual nature of perceived value, different researchers have found different dimensions in different contexts. Some research has been done to study product perceived value at the product/brand level. However, another direction of research in customer-perceived value has focused on investigating the customer-perceived value at

the store level or context. Meanwhile, compared with research at the product/brand level or at the store level, perceived value at the mall level has attracted few studies. Most of the studies in the mall context focus on both hedonic and utilitarian values, as shown in Table I.

From the previous literature we conclude that the literature on customer-perceived value is fragmented, its findings are inconsistent and there is no well-accepted value measure (Sweeney and Soutar, 2001; Davis and Hodges, 2012). The literature also demonstrates the multidimensional and contextual nature of customer-perceived value. That is, customer-perceived value can change with the circumstances of the person, the consumption situation, and the context (i.e. product type/brand, store type, whether physical or internet shopping, mall, etc.). In addition, most of the earlier studies focus on studying customer-perceived value at the product/brand level or at the store level. Although, shopping malls may generate more values to customers that cannot be found at the stand-alone store level or at the product/brand level, little empirical research has examined the perceived value of mall shopping. Most mall studies have focused only on two value dimensions of malls (specifically, the hedonic and utilitarian values) abandoning other value dimensions such as self-gratification value, social interaction value, epistemic value, spatial convenience value, time convenience value, etc. that may increase our understanding of the benefits derived from mall shopping experience. Furthermore, most of the earlier studies have focused on studying perceived value in Western societies (Sarabia-Sanchez *et al.*, 2012). Only one study has constructed the value dimensions in the Arabian context. Therefore, this study contributes to the literature on perceived value by developing and validating a multidimensional scale that consists of a wider range of different constructs than the hedonic and utilitarian dimensions in the mall context and also in the non-Western context (i.e. the Arabian context).

### **Development of the MALLVAL scale**

Based on a review of the literature and a focus group of nine mall shoppers of different ages, genders, nationalities, and income, we conceptualize MALLVAL as a multidimensional construct comprising eight shopping values, namely, hedonic value, utilitarian value, self-gratification value, epistemic value, transaction value, social interaction value, spatial convenience value, and time convenience value.

#### *Hedonic value*

Customers in shopping are motivated by a range of psychosocial needs that go beyond the acquisition of products and services (Davis and Hodges, 2012). The total value of the shopping experience cannot be explained merely according to a traditional product-acquisition view; this fails to recognize many intangible and emotional benefits that may result from the shopping experience (Babin *et al.*, 1994; Jones *et al.*, 2010). The fun and playfulness of shopping represent the hedonic value that shoppers gain during their shopping experience (Babin *et al.*, 1994; Borges *et al.*, 2013). Recreational shoppers probably expect high levels of hedonic value which stems from the retailer's ability to provide customers with fun, excitement, fantasy, and inspiration (Babin *et al.*, 1994; Diep and Sweeny, 2008; Nsairi, 2012). Fortunately, the mall through its interior design, décor, music, aromas, lighting, fun and entertainment programmes, fashion shows, and events, as well as its physical environment, are able to create more hedonic value to shoppers than a stand-alone store can. Consulting the literature (e.g. Diep and Sweeney, 2008; Seo and Lee, 2008) as well as a focus group of nine mall shoppers, we revealed seven items of hedonic values in malls.

**Table I.**  
Examples of  
perceived value  
dimensions at the  
product/brand, store,  
and mall levels

Author(s)	Context	Country	Perceived value dimensions
Sheth <i>et al.</i> (1991)	Cigarettes	USA	Social, emotional, functional, epistemic, and conditional value
Sweeney and Soutar (2001)	Durable goods at brand level	Australia	Emotional, social, quality/performance, and price value for money
Carpenter <i>et al.</i> (2005), Carpenter and Fairhurst (2005)	Retailer's brand (apparel)	USA	Hedonic and utilitarian value
Gounaris <i>et al.</i> (2007)	Automobile	Greece	Emotional, social, product, and perceived sacrifice, procedural (i.e. after sale value), and personnel value
Chi and Kilduff (2011)	Casual sportswear	USA	Price, quality, social, and emotional
Choo <i>et al.</i> (2012)	Luxury goods	Korea	Utilitarian, hedonic, symbolic, and economic value
Li <i>et al.</i> (2012)	Luxury fashion brands	China	Social/emotional, perceived utilitarian, and perceived economic value
Babin <i>et al.</i> (1994)	Anchor stores	USA	Utilitarian and hedonic values
Arnold and Reynolds (2003)	Shopping in stores and malls	USA	Adventure, gratification, role, value, social, and idea shopping motivations
Terblanche and Boshoff (2004)	Supermarkets vs clothing retailers	South Africa	Personal interaction, merchandise value, internal store environment, merchandise variety and assortment, and complaint handling
Rintamaki <i>et al.</i> (2006)	Department store	Finland	Utilitarian value, hedonic value, and social value
Jones <i>et al.</i> (2006), Coittet <i>et al.</i> (2006), Carpenter (2008), Carpenter and Moore (2009)	Traditional retail store; hypermarkets and supermarkets; discount stores	USA/France	Hedonic and utilitarian values
Cardoso and Pinto (2010)	Specialty stores	Portugal	Seven shopping dimensions: pleasure and gratification, idea, social, role, value, achievement, and efficiency
Davies and Hodges (2012)	Department stores and mass merchandise stores	USA	Six in-store values: price, selection, shopping efficiency, product quality, in-store services, and shopping environment value. Five shopping trip values: functional, self-gratification, epistemic, socialization, and transaction
Davies and Dyer (2012)	Mass merchandise stores and department stores	USA	Acquisition, transaction, efficiency, choice, exploration, esthetic, self-gratification, social interaction, and social status value
Stoel <i>et al.</i> (2004), Michon and Chebat (2004), Michon <i>et al.</i> (2007, 2008), Allard <i>et al.</i> (2009), Jackson <i>et al.</i> (2011)	Mall	USA/Canada	Hedonic and utilitarian values

(continued)

Author(s)	Context	Country	Perceived value dimensions
Kim <i>et al.</i> (2005)	Mall	USA	Consumption-oriented mall shopping motivation (service consumption, value consumption, and eating) and experiential mall shopping motivation (diversion and aesthetic appreciation)
Keng <i>et al.</i> (2007)	Mall	Taiwan	Efficiency, service excellence, playfulness, and aesthetics
Farrag <i>et al.</i> (2010)	Mall	Egypt	Three functional motives (safety, bargain hunting, and convenience) and four hedonic motives (entertainment, freedom, appreciation of modernity, and self-identity)
Singh and Sahay (2012), Singh and Prashar (2014)	Mall	India	Ambience, convenience, marketing focus, safety and security, and physical infrastructure

Table I.

### *Utilitarian value*

Unlike hedonic value, which is concerned with feelings and emotions, utilitarian value is mainly related to the accomplishment of the intended purpose of the shopping trip in an efficient and convenient manner (Babin *et al.*, 1994). Utilitarian value reflects task-related worth; therefore, utilitarian customers see shopping trips from a work perspective as a mission to get what they need or want by purchasing a product; then the mission is completed (Babin *et al.*, 1994; Cai and Shannon, 2012). The unique features of malls over stand-alone stores and other types of retailer enable malls to satisfy every member of a family. Anybody of any age can find what he/she needs or wants in a mall. The large trade area that accumulates many types of store within one location can attract all family members, who will find a wide assortment of merchandise available within these stores. In fact, malls provide their shoppers with this utilitarian value through their ability to meet customers' needs and wants via the plurality and variety of stores, products, restaurants, and service providers, etc. in a mall. Utilitarian value was captured by ten items adapted from Babin *et al.* (1994); and Diep and Sweeney (2008), as well as a focus group of nine mall shoppers.

### *Self-gratification value*

Nowadays, people live in a fast-paced world that is sometimes very intolerant. The pressures they have to deal with at work, on the roads, and even at home seem relentless. Therefore, the search for ways to diminish the pressure of life has become important. Many people may practice shopping activities not only for the sake of purchasing or acquiring products but as stress relief, to alleviate a negative mood, or as a special treat for themselves (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003). Customers who are in a bad mood may choose to change it by going shopping since the pleasant emotions can be personally gratifying and can improve a shopper's mood (Babin and Harris, 2010; Cai and Shannon, 2012). In this concern, Babin *et al.* (1994) distinguish between "shopping with a goal" merely to acquire a product and "shopping as a goal" to gratify oneself. In their qualitative study, Davis and Hodges (2012) show that several participants admitted that they go shopping to relax, to relieve stress, to have a change from routine, or to forget about their problems. Arnold and Reynolds (2003) label such shopping motivations "gratification shopping".

Fortunately, malls through their delightful ambiance can help shoppers to relieve stress, relax, and improve their mood by walking around inside, browsing the window displays of the stores, listening to the piped music, viewing shows, sitting in coffee shops, etc. Self-gratification value was captured by four items adapted from Babin *et al.* (1994), Arnold and Reynolds (2003), Seo and Lee (2008), and Davis and Hodges (2012).

### *Epistemic value*

Epistemic value is defined as the perceived utility acquired when a product arouses curiosity, provides novelty and/or satisfies a desire for knowledge (Sheth *et al.*, 1991). Epistemic value applies when consuming or experiencing new products or services, such as buying a new computer or mobile phone (Bødker *et al.*, 2009). However, it may be particularly important in the case of experiential services such as holidays, adventures, and shopping trips (Sheth *et al.*, 1991). The pursuit of epistemic value can be seen in exploratory, novelty-seeking, and variety-seeking consumption behaviours (Yu, 2006). Customers may shop as an epistemic activity simply to increase an ever-growing body of knowledge about some product category of interest (Babin and Harris, 2010; Nsairi, 2012). Participants in a qualitative study by Davis and Hodges (2012) reflected on the epistemic value of shopping in department stores and mass merchandisers.

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Epistemic value factors in decisions when a person is bored with a current product, curious about something different, or simply wants to experiment with something new (Bødker *et al.*, 2009). According to Almakrami (2012), participants revealed the epistemic value of laptops at brand level. Since the seminal article by Sheth *et al.* (1991), very few researchers have investigated epistemic value either at the brand level (e.g. Bødker *et al.*, 2009; Almakrami, 2012) or at the store level (e.g. Davis and Hodges, 2012). As far as we know, research has never investigated this kind of value at the mall level.

The mall satisfies epistemic value in multiple ways. First, the mall itself inspires curiosity by enabling shoppers to explore a variety of stores, assortments of products, events, etc. Second, it provides novelty to customers through new offers, events, new trends and fashions, new ideas, and new assortments of products. In the case of products/brands, epistemic value declines over time because customers, having used the product, become familiar with its features, but this does not apply to the mall. Every time a shopper visits the mall s/he can find a new or unusual experience or occurrence. Third, it also satisfies the shopper's desire for knowledge through keeping them up with the newest trends and fashions. Epistemic value was captured in five items adapted mainly from the qualitative study of Davis and Hodges (2012).

#### *Social interaction value*

Social interaction value means the gain in positive shopping experiences through interaction with others, such as friends, family, salespeople, customers, etc. (Davis and Hodges, 2012). Throughout history the marketplace has traditionally been a centre of social activities. In today's world, the social components of the shopping setting are persistent and powerful (Murphy *et al.*, 2011). Several studies have addressed the social interaction value either in the context of stores (e.g. Kim and Jin, 2001; Jin and Kim, 2003; Davis and Hodges, 2012) or of malls (e.g. Kim, 2002) and found that the desire for social experience outside the home is one of the most important motives for shopping. The malls' neat and presentable atmosphere creates a pleasant environment for different ages to meet and greet friends or to find something to be enthusiastic about or simply to interact with other people. Social interaction value was captured by three items adapted mainly from Kim (2002) and Davis and Hodges (2012).

#### *Spatial convenience value*

The 1980s and 1990s have been labelled the "decades of convenience" (Clulow and Reimers, 2009a). This statement reflects the importance that customers, retailers, and academics assign to convenience. In today's marketplace, convenience is becoming more important in determining shopping behaviour and customer choice. Therefore, offering customers the benefit of convenience can be a strong source of differentiation (Beauchamp, 2007). Despite no shortage of studies reporting the importance of convenience, there is no universal definition of the term among academics who address convenience as a shopping value. This is due to the large number of attributes related to convenience and each researcher's individual interpretation of the meaning assigned to convenience (Clulow and Reimers, 2009a). For instance, Clulow and Reimers (2009a) reviewed the literature on retail centre convenience and found that 16 attributes might be related to convenience; they also found that there is no agreement among researchers about these attributes. Sometimes the same attribute is found to be related to convenience in one study and related to a different factor in another study. These writers summed it up thus: the review of the literature revealed that, just like snowflakes, no two academic definitions of retail centre convenience are alike.

Another problem results from the tendency of academics to consider convenience as a unidimensional construct although it comprises multiple dimensions such as time and effort (Clulow and Reimers, 2009a). In this study, we adopt the convenience definition by Beauchamp (2007); that is, convenience is anything that reduces customer time and effort. To this end, we divide value of convenience into two constructs: spatial convenience value and time convenience value.

The spatial convenience value of malls can be defined as the utility derived from the mall's ability to provide customers with the opportunity to carry out a wide variety of shopping tasks with minimal time and effort without leaving the mall. This is important for customers who are engaged in multi-purpose shopping or one-stop shopping (i.e. those who perform more than one activity at a time) or practice polychronic behaviour (Clulow and Reimers, 2009b). Reimers and Clulow (2004) found that the shopping mall is fortunate enough to offer customers greater spatial convenience than shopping strips would. To satisfy customers' need for one-stop shopping, malls have expanded to include service outlets, entertainment providers, fast-food courts, movie theatres, beauty salons, meeting places for young people and seniors, auto shows, banks, etc. (Ahmed *et al.*, 2007). Spatial convenience value was captured by six items adapted mainly from Reimers and Clulow (2004), Ahmed *et al.* (2007), and Khare (2011).

#### *Time convenience value*

Many of today's customers consider time as valuable a resource as money, if not more so. This is because of the unique characteristics of time: for example, it is a scarce resource; it cannot be stored or inventoried so it is lost if not used; participation in any activity requires a certain expenditure of time; and every customer has only 24 hours a day regardless of his/her wealth or age or gender or education (Beauchamp, 2007). In today's time-scarce environment, retailers must offer value for time as they offer value for money (Clulow and Reimers, 2009b). Retailers can offer time convenience via one-stop shopping, extended trading hours, an enclosed environment and locations that are close to where customers live or work (Clulow and Reimers, 2009b).

Clulow and Reimers (2009b) have also found that time convenience served as the most important determinant of retail centre patronage and the overall preference for time convenience is important and consistent across age, income, gender, and retail centre preference. They also found that shopping malls provide more time convenience than shopping strips. Time convenience value was captured by five items adapted mainly from Ahmed *et al.* (2007), Clulow and Reimers (2009b), and Khare (2011).

#### *Transaction value*

Although seeking a bargain is often viewed as planned economic behaviour (Lim, 2009), researchers such as Cox *et al.* (2005) have argued that bargain hunting involves more emotional satisfaction than the proposed economic gains would. In fact, bargain shopping is a common behaviour among customers, regardless of income level. Customers consider shopping for bargains as a challenge or a game to be won (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003). For instance, Danziger (2005) described reasons why luxury customers engage in bargain shopping as follows: "they don't go for a 50% off sale because they need to save that money; they go for it because it is a good, sensible, money-wise thing to do, and it is a matter of a lot of fun". Customers view the same price as more satisfying when it is framed as a discount rather than the original price (Darke and Dahl, 2003). When customers pay less than their reference price for luxury items, they perceive



additional value beyond the value obtained by product acquisition. This additional hedonic value generated from the deal itself can be capitalized as the transaction value of shopping (Lim, 2009). Babin *et al.* (1994) argue that bargains can provide increased excitement among customers. This argument is also supported by Davis and Hodges (2012) in their qualitative study, since they found that some participants shop to hunt bargains because they enjoy the thrill of finding an undeniably good deal.

Transaction value was found to have a critical role in satisfaction and behavioural intention among general customer goods, as well as in the context of luxury consumption (Lim, 2009). Fortunately, malls can provide transaction value to customers through the variety of offers made by different stores throughout the year. Transaction value was captured by five items adapted mainly from Lim (2009), and Davis and Hodges (2012).

## Research methodology

### *Sampling design and data collection*

The generalizability of the study relied on the representativeness of the respondents. Mall shoppers of above 18 years old were considered the target study population. Convenience sampling (Saunders *et al.*, 2007), mall intercept technique, and a self-administered questionnaire method were adopted when 400 questionnaires were distributed to mall shoppers in three cities in UAE (i.e. Abu Dhabi, Al Ain, and Dubai). A total of 382 questionnaires (95.5 per cent) was received. Of this total, 368 completed questionnaires were used in the data analysis; 14 questionnaires had to be excluded as outliers. This high response rate may be explained by the fact that the questionnaire was designed in such a way that only ten minutes was needed to complete it. Our sample size actually meets the suggestion of Bartlett *et al.* (2001) that, in determining the sample size for a structural equation modelling (SEM) study, ten observations per indicator (independent variable) is traditionally recommended. Since we have 368 cases, the current research sample size is very suitable for employing SEM, as well as being acceptable in practice.

The questionnaire was developed and administered in both Arabic and English since a considerable percentage of residents in the UAE do not speak Arabic. The accuracy of the translation from English to Arabic was achieved by the back translation method. The data collection in this study lasted approximately three months, from April to June 2013, and covered three cities in the UAE. A research team of final-year international business students in the UAE University collected data for this study. In order to reduce bias, one of the authors first held a training workshop for the data collection team to explain the questionnaire and the procedures to be followed in collecting it. A full-time research assistant was also hired to closely supervise the team during the period of data collection. All the persons involved in the study were personally approached and all gave their informed consent before they were included in the study.

The sample was dominated by female respondents (58.2 per cent). The age of 8.2 per cent of respondents was less than 20 years; 55.7 per cent were aged between 20 and 30; 23.1 per cent between 31 and 40; 10.1 per cent between 41 and 50; 2.2 per cent between 51 and 60 years; and only 0.8 per cent were above 60 years. In terms of marital status, nearly half (49.5 per cent) were married, 47.0 per cent were single, 2.7 per cent divorced, and a few respondent (approximately 0.8 per cent) were widowed. Approximately 62.8 per cent of the respondents had at least a university degree or the equivalent, 18.8 per cent had earned a postgraduate degree, 15.5 per cent had an A level or an equivalent qualification, and only very few (3 per cent) had only an O level or the equivalent. With respect to the income level, 32.6 per cent of the respondents reported a

household income less than 10,000 Dhs per month (\$1 = 3.67 Dhs), the household income of 20.9 per cent was between 10,000 and 15,000 Dhs per month, of 17.4 per cent it was between 15,001 and 20,000 Dhs per month, of 12.2 per cent it was between 20,001 and 30,000 Dhs per month, of 11.1 per cent it was between 30,001 and 40,000 Dhs per month, while of 5.7 per cent it was more than 40,000 Dhs per month. In terms of occupation, 30.2 per cent of the respondents were students, while 25.8 per cent held governmental positions, 38.3 per cent worked in the private sector, 4.1 per cent were housewives, 0.5 per cent were businessmen/women, and only 1.1 per cent were retired. Finally, we had respondents from 32 different nations, including, Afghanistan, Algeria, Australia, Bangladesh, Cameroon, Canada, Djibouti, Egypt, the Philippines, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Eritria, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the UAE, the UK, the USA, and Yemen.

To ensure that the valid responses were representative of the larger population, a non-response bias test was used to compare the early and late respondents.  $\chi^2$  tests showed no significant difference between the two groups of respondents at the 5 per cent significance level, implying that a non-response bias need not be a concern.

#### *Research instrument development – measures*

To empirically validate the eight constructs, a survey instrument was developed using the relevant literature and a focus group was convened of nine mall shoppers of from different ages, genders, nationalities, and income in the UAE. Items for all constructs were measured on a five-point Likert scale (5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neutral, 2 = disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree). Two consecutive rounds of pre-testing were conducted in order to ensure that respondents could understand the measurement scales used in the study: first, the questionnaire was reviewed by three academic researchers experienced in questionnaire design; next, the questionnaire was piloted with two marketing experts known to the researchers. The pilot took the form of an interview with 15 mall shoppers where the participants were first handed a copy of the questionnaire and asked to complete it and then to discuss any comments or questions they had. The outcome of the pre-testing process was a slight modification and alteration of the existing scales, in light of the scales context under investigation.

#### **Data analysis and results**

The evidence generated from the literature suggests that there are distinct aspects of MALLVAL. This section discusses the process used to establish the content for these dimensions and to validate the scale psychometrically and theoretically. The process follows Churchill's (1979) approach to developing measures of multiple-item marketing constructs. After the development of an initial set of items, the scale purification stage was begun.

#### *Exploratory factor analysis (EFA)*

First, it should be stated that, as recommended by Anderson and Gerbing (1982), before testing the full latent model, an EFA was conducted using principal components analysis with varimax rotation. As shown in Table II, EFA yielded eight distinct factors that accounted for 68.774 per cent of the variance extracted. All items loaded highly on their intended constructs except one item from the hedonic value, as well as three items from the utilitarian value, one item from the epistemic value, one item from spatial convenience, and two items from the time convenience value, which were dropped from further analysis.

MALLVAL dimensions	UTV	HEV	TRV	Component		SIV	TCV
				SGV	SCV		
I feel excited about walking into that mall		0.748					
I feel a sense of joy to look at the merchandise in that mall		0.675					
It is fun to be in that mall		0.677					
I feel happy going to that mall because of its environment		0.701					
Compared to other things I could have done, the time spent in that mall was truly enjoyable		0.616					
I continued to shop at that mall, not because I had to, but because I wanted to		0.570					
Shopping trip to that mall truly felt as an escape from life pressure				0.768			
While shopping in that mall, I was able to forget my problems				0.783			
Shopping trip to that mall helped me to release stress and to relax				0.793			
For me, doing shopping in that mall is a way to do something different from my daily routine				0.712			
I was easily able to find my way around the mall	0.581						
I could get what I wanted at that mall	0.690						
I could find what I wanted at that mall	0.609						
This mall can satisfy all family members	0.743						
Every family member can find what he/she wants in that mall	0.797						
I prefer shopping in that mall because it has a variety of activities to satisfy everyone in the family	0.688						
I prefer shopping in that mall because it has a variety of stores and products to satisfy everyone in the family	0.688						
I like to do shopping in that mall to get ideas about new trends, fashion, style, products, etc.						0.657	
I do shopping in that mall to see what is interesting or innovative						0.678	
I like to go to that mall to learn interesting ways of decoration, dressing models, using different colours together, folding a napkin, etc.						0.806	
I really enjoy looking around in that mall to keep up with newest trends and fashion						0.739	

(continued)

**Table II.**  
Results of factor  
analysis for  
value dimensions



*Reliability analysis*

Next, the psychometric properties of the constructs were assessed by calculating the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  reliability coefficient (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). These coefficients are represented for each of the constructs in Table III. All the constructs have reliability coefficients ranging from 0.778 to 0.896, which exceed the cut-off level of 0.60 set for basic research (Nunnally, 1978).

*Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)*

Before building a model that will consider all the dimensions of MALLVAL at once, it is also important to highlight, from a methodological point of view, that individualized analyses of each of those dimensions were made (the measurement model), in order to carry out a prior refinement of the items used in their measurement. Having established the eight dimensions of the scale, we conducted a CFA. For this research, we decided to use both the structural model (includes all the constructs in one model) and the measurement model (a separate model for each construct).

First, as suggested by Bollen (1989), we tested a null model, in which no factors were considered to underlie the observed variables, the correlations between observed indicators were zero and the variances of the observed variables were not restricted, against a series of models, namely: a one-factor model (suggesting that the observed variables represent a single value dimension); a two-factor model "in which utilitarian, epistemic, spatial convenience and time convenience" were suggested to represent a single functional dimension rather than four dimensions and "hedonic, self-gratification, social interaction and transaction values together" were suggested to represent a single emotional dimension rather than four dimensions; and an eight-factor model (in which the dimensions are as proposed in the earlier discussion).

The results, shown in Table IV, support the proposed eight-factor solution, comprising the utilitarian, epistemic, spatial convenience, time convenience, hedonic,

Constructs	Number of items	$\alpha$
Hedonic value (HEv)	6	0.884
Self-gratification value (SGv)	4	0.887
Utilitarian value (UTv)	7	0.896
Epistemic value (EPv)	4	0.866
Social interaction value (SIv)	3	0.871
Spatial convenience value (SCv)	5	0.847
Transaction value (TRv)	5	0.867
Time convenience value (TCv)	3	0.778

**Table III.**  
Reliability analysis

Model	$\chi^2$	df	AGFI	CFI	RMSEA
Null	3,797.37	629	0.492	0.615	0.117
Two factors	3,354.36	628	0.604	0.669	0.109
Eight factors	780.07	494	0.871	0.963	0.040

*Statistic*

Adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI)  
Comparative fit index (CFI)  
Root mean square residual (RMSEA)

*Suggested*  
 $\geq 0.80$   
 $\geq 0.90$   
 $\leq 0.10$

**Table IV.**  
Comparative  
analysis of  
models of various  
dimensionalities

self-gratification, social interaction, and transaction attributes as value dimensions. Not only did this model have the lowest  $\chi^2$  and highest adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI), but also the highest CFI and the lowest RMSEA.

A measurement model was developed for each construct to use the CFA for unidimensionality testing. In this model, individual items making up the construct are checked to find how closely they represent the same construct. A goodness of fit index (GFI) of 0.90 or higher for the model suggests that there is no evidence of lack of unidimensionality. The unidimensionality test results for eight constructs are summarized in Table V. Several fit statistics were used to evaluate the acceptability of each of the factor models. As recommended by Bentler and Bonnet (1980), the normed fit index was used and deemed acceptable if it was above the recommended value of 0.90. Additionally, the comparative fit index (CFI) was also used and an acceptable model fit was determined with CFIs above 0.90. Furthermore, the GFI, AGFI, and root mean square residual were also provided. Standard cut-offs for the above indices, as proposed by experts, are provided in Table V. The results indicated that the scales were unidimensional.

*Discriminant validity analysis*

The correlation matrix and the square root of average variance extracted (AVE) were used to assess the discriminant validity of the constructs. To meet the requirements for satisfactory discriminant validity, Fornell and Larcker (1981) recommend that the square root of AVE for each construct should be higher than the correlations between any combinations of any two pairs of constructs in the model. This indicates that each construct should share more variance with its items than it shares with other constructs. Table VI illustrates that the AVE for the eight constructs ranging from 0.73 to 0.85 and were greater than the square root of any correlation between any combinations of any two pairs of these constructs; this implied that constructs were empirically distinct and confirmed the discriminant validity of those eight constructs. Also, the AVE for each construct was greater than the generally accepted value of 0.50, supporting the discriminant validity of the MALLVAL scale (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

*Convergent validity analysis*

Convergent validity describes the extent to which indicators of a specific construct converge or share a high proportion of variance (Hair *et al.*, 2006). Convergent validity

Model	$\chi^2/df$	GFI	AFM**			IFM**	
			AGFI	RMR	RMSEA	CFI	NFI
<i>Obtained fit indices</i>							
Hedonic value	4.084	0.978	0.935	0.019	0.092	0.983	0.978
Self-gratification value	1.425	0.996	0.980	0.012	0.034	0.999	0.997
Utilitarian value	1.118	0.994	0.979	0.009	0.018	0.999	0.995
Epistemic value	0.000	1.000	1.000	0.000	0.000	1.000	1.000
Social interaction value	0.000	1.000	1.000	0.000	0.000	1.000	1.000
Spatial convenience value	3.157	0.983	0.948	0.019	0.077	0.985	0.978
Transaction value	0.084	1.000	0.999	0.002	0.000	1.000	1.000
Time convenience value	0.000	1.000	1.000	0.000	0.000	1.000	1.000
<i>Suggested fit indices</i>							
	$\leq 5$	$\geq 0.90$	$\geq 0.80$	$\leq 0.05$	$\leq 0.10$	$\geq 0.90$	$\geq 0.90$

**Table V.** Summary of model fit indices for MALLVAL constructs

**Note:** \*\*AFM, absolute fit measures; IFM, incremental fit measures

	HE <sub>v</sub>	SG <sub>v</sub>	Correlations					TR <sub>v</sub>	TC <sub>v</sub>
			UT <sub>v</sub>	EP <sub>v</sub>	SI <sub>v</sub>	SC <sub>v</sub>			
Hedonic	0.78								
Self-gratification	0.378**	0.82							
Utilitarian	0.300**	0.138**	0.75						
Epistemic	0.368**	0.274**	0.227**	0.77					
Social interaction	0.272**	0.322**	0.160**	0.305**	0.85				
Spatial convenience	0.339**	0.149**	0.470**	0.238**	0.186**	0.73			
Transaction	0.170**	0.163**	0.287**	0.208**	0.192**	0.274**	0.79		
Time convenience	0.131**	0.104**	0.238**	0.121**	0.079**	0.189**	0.243**	0.74	

**Notes:** \*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed). The diagonals represent the average variance extracted (AVE) and the lower cells represent the squared correlation among constructs

**Table VI.**  
Discriminant validity  
of MALLVAL  
constructs

can be assessed by three criteria (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Hair *et al.*, 2006; Čater and Čater, 2010). First, factor loading for an item should be at least 0.7 and significant. Second, construct reliability is a minimum of 0.7 (see Table III). Finally, AVE for a construct is greater than 0.5 (see Table VI). Note that all of the constructs had an acceptable convergent validity. These results provide direct evidence of convergent validity of the MALLVAL scale.

### Correlation among the constructs

One of the main objectives of this study was to set a valid structure for the MALLVAL constructs and to carry out an initial investigation of the relationship, if any, between these constructs. To confirm or reject the proposed research theory in this study, the second-order hypothesized MALLVAL model was run. It was found in this study, there are eight constructs constitute the MALLVAL model. First of all, it is clearly noted that all of the correlations among the constructs of the MALLVAL were positive and significant (see Table VI). These significant positive correlations also have major implications for marketing people, as they suggest the notion that to improve MALLVAL, the MALLVAL constructs should be implemented holistically rather than piecemeal.

### Discussion and implication

The present study is an attempt to identify the MALLVAL dimensions of a shopper consumption experience, in relation to previous research on customer-perceived value. This study makes a number of contributions to the research on customer-perceived value in the mall context by developing and validating a multidimensional scale that consists of other constructs than hedonic and utilitarian values alone. We named this parsimonious and practical scale MALLVAL. Previous studies mostly examined customer-perceived value at the product/brand level or at the store level. Little empirical research has examined the perceived value of mall shopping. In the retailing industry, the shopping experience is intangible, dynamic, and subjective and therefore it would never be acceptable to assume that the dimensions of values in a specific context are applicable to different customers and contexts.

A mall shopper's decision should not be seen from a purely rational point of view. The experiential view provides new keys to the valuations made by mall shoppers and therefore to the most important values that will later affect their buying behaviour.

The reliability, factor structure, and validity tests indicate that the items of the MALLVAL scale and its eight dimensions have sound and stable psychometric properties. Although functional and emotional values play a fundamental role in predicting customers' choice and future repurchase intentions, it would not be possible to understand the behaviour of mall shoppers without incorporating other values into the study. The availability of such values (hedonic, utilitarian, self-gratification, epistemic, social interaction, spatial convenience, transaction, and time convenience) is considered very important to a shopper when deciding to shop in a specific mall. Therefore, if such values are absent from a particular mall, the shopper may not select it.

With regard to the business implications, recognizing the importance of the different dimensions of MALLVAL should encourage mall developers and managers to develop mall attributes and a shopping environment that provide the different values constituting MALLVAL.

From a theoretical point of view, this study supports the experiential view proposed by Babin *et al.* (1994), which shows that value is provided by the "complete shopping experience", not simply by product acquisition. This means that the functional components (i.e. utilitarian, epistemic, spatial convenience, and time convenience) and the emotional components (i.e. hedonic, self-gratification, transaction, and social interaction) all play a fundamental role in explaining the decision to be a mall shopper.

### **Limitations and suggestions for future research**

As with any study, there are certain limitations that should be recognized. First, we assessed MALLVAL using only eight constructs: hedonic value, utilitarian value, self-gratification value, epistemic value, social interaction value, spatial convenience value, transaction value, and time convenience value; while MALLVAL could be composed of a much broader range of values that might include aesthetics (Gallarza and Saura, 2006) and religiosity (Eid, 2015). Second, the data are cross-sectional in nature and hence it is not possible to determine causal relationships. Finally, while the sample size and the approach to data analysis indicate that our findings are robust, there is always a lingering question whether these results are generalizable or are specific to the participating countries. We believe that, although the current sample is big and diverse enough and our findings may be representative, other researchers should be urged to replicate the study and get replies from different countries and in particular to use the measures developed in this study to test their robustness.

The main direction for future research, which emerged from our findings, seems to be to improve our understanding of the MALLVAL. For example, each MALLVAL construct discussed in this study warrants more in-depth study in other service industries such as tourism, hospitality, education, etc. Given the importance associated with the MALLVAL, a potentially fruitful area would be to develop the quantification of MALLVAL into an "index of practice" so that retailers could determine the level of performance on a time-based approach. The results of an audit with regard to the index could pinpoint areas that need attention and improvement.

Future research may choose to focus on one or more of the MALLVAL constructs to generate an in-depth knowledge which might inform both theoretical and practical applications. Researchers could use these factors to gauge the success of mall management in attracting new shoppers. At the same time, the MALLVAL measurements should be subjected to review, critique, and discussion for an extended period before getting



general acceptance. Additional items in each category might be tried out. Finally, different constructs to measure the MALLVAL effect could also be tried out. To this end, a very promising research approach is to study the consequences of MALLVAL for the shoppers' post-purchase behaviours. More specifically we suggest analysing the causal relationship between perceived value and satisfaction and loyalty.

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