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Authors: Faïçal Belaid, Rim Boussaada, Houda Belguith

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**Bank-firm relationship and credit risk: An analysis on Tunisian firms****Faiçal Belaid<sup>1</sup>, Rim Boussaada<sup>2\*</sup>, Houda Belghith<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> PhD candidate, The Higher Institute of Management, ISG Tunis, Tunisia  
Université de Tunis, ISG, GEF2A lab, ISG, Tunis, Tunisia  
faicel.belaid@gmail.com

<sup>2</sup> Assistant professor  
**\*Corresponding author**  
Faculty of Law, Economics and Management of Jendouba, Tunisia  
Université de Tunis, ISG, GEF2A lab, ISG, Tunis, Tunisia  
boussaada.r@gmail.com

<sup>3</sup> Assistant professor  
Faculty of Economic and Management of Nabeul, Tunisia  
Université de Tunis, ISG, GEF2A lab, ISG, Tunis, Tunisia  
h.belghith@gmail.com

**Abstract:**

Using the unique dataset that matches banks with their client firms, we investigate the impact of the intensity and duration of bank-firm lending relationships on credit risk over the period 2001-2012. Using probit and ordered probit methods as well as a sample which includes 494 bank-firm lending relationships for 383 firms, we find out that the firms which engage in intense relationships with banks are less likely to encounter a credit default. However, no evidence has been found for the impact of the relationship duration on loan quality. Further, the findings show that private banks, unlike the public financial institutions, take advantage of their close lending relationships with borrowers to mitigate information asymmetry and therefore improve their loans portfolio quality.

**Keywords:** Bank-firm lending relationship, credit risk, Tunisian banks, probit, ordered probit.

**JEL classification :** G21; G30; G32; G33

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