

THE SATISFACTION OF BEING A REBEL

Bernard Gangloff¹, Luisa Mayoral², & Amine Rezrazi³

¹LAPPS-TE2O, Université Paris 10 (France)

²UNCPBA, Tandil (Argentina)

³Université de Rouen (France)

Abstract

Several researches in organizational environment have shown that there is a norm of allegiance; it consists in valuing positively employees who not only obey the orders of their hierarchical superiors but who also avoid any criticism of them. Here is questioned the degree of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with adopting or refusing to adopt such behavior.

120 employees of the Argentinian private sector (60 men and 60 women) were contacted using the snowball technique and, on a voluntary basis, answered anonymously to two questionnaires.

The first one was an allegiance questionnaire of 24 items from the questionnaires of Gangloff & Caboux (2003) and Gangloff & Duchon (2008): 12 items of general allegiance and 12 items differentiating the reasons for allegiance (ideological vs. opportunist). Examples: "With my boss, I rarely try to defend my ideas" (general allegiance item); "When my boss takes a decision, I rarely challenge it. Whatever the decision: you should not challenge your boss" (ideological allegiance); "Even if my boss's orders sometimes seem absurd to me, as I want to have quick promotions, I generally obey" (opportunistic allegiance). The subjects answered each item by indicating whether, usually, they adopted rather allegiant or rather rebellious conduct, and they specified, in each of the two cases, if this adoption satisfied or dissatisfied them.

Considering that satisfaction is a constituent element of well-being, a second questionnaire was used the Scale for Measuring Manifestations of Psychological Well-Being (EMMDEP) by Massé et al. (1998), made up of 25 items in which subjects ticked off as "somewhat agree" (rated 1) vs. "somewhat disagree" (rated 0).

The results show that 1) allegiant conducts are more frequent than rebellious ones, but only among women (among men, the difference is not significant); 2) dissatisfaction is more frequent with adopting allegiant conducts than with adopting rebellious ones, whatever the gender; 3) satisfaction is more frequent than dissatisfaction, both for the allegiant conducts and for the rebels; 4) Satisfied participants express more well-being than unsatisfied participants.

The limits and practical consequences of these results will be discussed.

Keywords: *Allegiance, rebellion, hierarchical superior, satisfaction.*

1. Introduction

More than 20 centuries ago, Aristotle (ed. 1991) underlined that the first reason for which Diomedes chose Ulysses responded to the desire "to have a companion inferior to himself" (p278); so much we appreciate "those who humiliate themselves in front of us and who do not contradict us, because they make us see that they consider themselves as our inferiors" (p193). In terms of governance, Plato (ed. 1966, p230) considered that "for some people it is by nature [...] to govern the city, for others [...] to obey the leaders". However, it seems that in two millennia the situation has hardly changed. Bourdieu and Passeron underlined in 1970 (p252-253) that it is important for "each social subject to remain in the place which is incumbent upon him by nature, to stick to it and to hold on to it". It is the same if we refer to the functioning of companies.

Thus Dubost (1979, p171-172) indicates that the main criteria for evaluating workers is "obedience to orders, even the most absurd [...]: not responding to leaders, not say what you think". Similarly, Kramer observes (1994, p3 and 4) that "individual performance and its valuation are rarely priorities [...]. Flexibility with respect to authority, [...] loyalty to the hierarchy [...] constitute] all elements of the assessment of merit, the weighting of which seems to outweigh the results obtained".

Similarly, Grignon (1971, p164) defines the good worker as being "one who respects order and hierarchies, who knows how to obey without kicking back, and who behaves at all times like someone reasonable, that is to say [...] like someone harmless", having acquired "the good spirit, [...] the spirit of deference and submission". Onfray (1997, p38) also underlines that the good employee is characterized "by his submissive understanding, made to consent to obedience".

Concretely speaking, the behavior expected of a good employee is characterized by the absence of any dispute, any criticism of the leader whose point of view must systematically prevail; by the proscription of any personal initiative on the part of subordinates; by a control that extends to the psyche of individuals. Enriquez (1976) underlines that "the leader is not criticized [...], is not subject to any rule [...], is accountable to no one [...], has full authority over his subordinates" (p86). "When the order arrives, we must obey without trying to understand" (Dubost, 1979, p171). As Aubert and Gaulejac (1991, p110) relate, the extent of this control has no limit and encompasses the totality of the being: "Michel Foucault had shown that the hierarchical order was intended to render docile and helpful individuals. But this order was mainly based on the control of the body [...]. Now it is the control of the psyche that becomes essential". The examples could be multiplied: they all highlight a valuation of obedient employees, to such an extent that we are now talking about a norm of allegiance. This norm is defined as "the social valuation of explanations and behaviors preserving the 'social environment of any questioning [...] that is to say like] the valuation of explanations and behaviors ensuring the sustainability [...] of the hierarchy of powers inherent in this social order" (Gangloff, 2002). As is true that the questioning of the chef's authority, bastion of the hierarchical structure, can only weaken this structure.

Several researches are consistent in highlighting the positive valuation of allegiant people (for a review see Gangloff, 2011). Respect for this norm was also measured. Thus Guedes Gondim et al. (2008) asked Brazilian and Spanish workers and unemployed to judge on an altercation, presented in a scenario, between a boss and his subordinate. It was observed that if the Spaniards, especially the employees, criticized the rebellious employee less than the Brazilians did, on the other hand the majority of the participants, both Spanish and Brazilian, agreed with the leader. However, this respect is not systematic. For example, Gangloff (2012) asked employees to indicate whether they usually behave towards their boss in an allegiance or rebellious manner, and the results showed rebellious behavior more frequent than the allegiance ones. This result was all the more interesting as this study included a second question: the participants were also asked whether they would have liked to adopt even more such rebellious behavior, and the answers obtained were overwhelmingly in the affirmative. This meant that, had the circumstances been more favorable, the rate of rebellion would have been even higher. But it also meant that these participants said they were hindered in carrying out the behaviors they would have liked to adopt. This second result then prompted us to ask ourselves on the one hand whether the employees were satisfied with the behaviors they adopted, whether these behaviors were of allegiance or protest, on the other hand, knowing that satisfaction is a constitutive element of well-being, to consider that if variations in satisfaction were to appear, they should also be reflected in the level of well-being experienced.

So, we established the following 4 hypotheses:

H1: rebellious conducts will be more frequent than allegiant ones.

H2: dissatisfaction will be more frequent with allegiant conducts than with rebellious ones (H2.1) and satisfaction more frequent with rebellious conducts than with allegiant ones (H2.2),

H3: for allegiant conducts, dissatisfaction will be more important than satisfaction (H3.1) while for rebellious conducts satisfaction will dominate (H3.2).

H4: satisfied respondents will show more well-being than unsatisfied ones.

2. Method

120 employees of the Argentinian private sector without hierarchical responsibility (60 men and 60 women) were contacted using the snowball technique and, on a voluntary basis, answered two questionnaires in a face-to-face situation.

The first one was a 24 items allegiance questionnaire previously adapted to Hispanic populations (Gangloff, Mayoral & Auzoult, 2016): 12 of them used the general allegiance questionnaire established by Gangloff and Caboux (2003), the other 12, taken from Gangloff and Duchon (2008), were also made up of allegiance / non-allegiance conducts but with precision of the reason (ideological vs opportunistic) of these conducts. Examples: "With my boss, I rarely try to defend my ideas" (general allegiance item); "When my leader takes a decision, I rarely challenge it. Whatever the decision: we must not challenge our leader" (ideological allegiance); "Even if my boss's orders sometimes seem absurd to me, as I want to have quick promotions, I usually obey" (opportunist allegiance). These 24 items were mixed up.

Four columns were arranged next to these items, the participants being instructed to respond to each item by checking one of it (see Table 1).

Table 1. Presentation of the satisfaction questionnaire (example).

	This is my usual behavior and I am		This is not my usual behavior and I am	
	satisfied with it	dissatisfied with it	dissatisfied with it	dissatisfied with it
When my boss makes a decision, I rarely challenge it. Whatever the decision: we must not challenge our boss				

The second questionnaire was the Psychological Well-Being Manifestations Measurement Scale (EMMDEP) developed by Massé et al. (1998a; 1998b for the English version). This scale, made up of 25 items, has excellent validity (Cronbach's alpha = .93). Exploratory factor analyses have shown that it measures six dimensions: self-esteem (4 items), psychological balance (4 items), social engagement (4 items), sociability (4 items), self-control (4 items), happiness (5 items)¹. Its adaptation to Hispanic populations (cf. Mayoral, Rezrazi & Gangloff, 2020) has been used. Respondents checked off each item according to a dichotomous principle (somewhat agree, rated 1, vs. somewhat disagree, rated 0). Items example: “I have confidence in myself” (self-esteem), “I feel emotionally balanced” (psychological balance), etc.

3. Results

Table 2. Results for satisfaction.

	Allegiant conducts			Rebellious conducts		
	This is my usual behavior and I am			This is not my usual behavior and I am		
	satisfied with it	dissatisfied with it	Total	satisfied with it	dissatisfied with it	Total
allegiance items Women + Men	1045	442	1487	1037	298	1335
allegiance items Women	530	196	726	496	147	643
allegiance items Men	515	246	761	548	141	689

Our first hypothesis was that rebellious conducts would be more frequent than allegiants. This hypothesis is invalidated. In fact, it is the allegiant conducts that dominate, both globally, that is to say men and women together (1487 against 1335, $X^2_1 = 8.19, p = .004$) and among women (726 against 643, $X^2_1 = 5.03, p = .025$); but in men, the difference is not significant (761 vs. 689, $X^2_1 = 3.58, p = .058$).

We also thought (H2.1) that the participants would be more dissatisfied when they adopt allegiant conducts than when they adopt rebellious ones. It is the case, both men and women together (442 against 298, $X^2_1 = 28.02, p \approx .00$) as among women (196 against 147, $X^2_1 = 7.00, p = .008$) and among men (246 against 141, $X^2_1 = 28.49, p \approx .00$).

We also expected (H2.2) to find more satisfaction with rebellious conducts than with allegiant ones. This hypothesis is not confirmed. The participants experience as much satisfaction when they adopt allegiance conducts and when they adopt rebellious ones, both men and women grouped together (1037 for the rebellious conducts against 1045 for the allegiances, $X^2_1 = .31, p = .86$) as among women (496 against 530, $X^2_1 = 1.13, p = .29$) and among men (548 against 515, $X^2_1 = 1.02, p = .31$).

Finally, we considered that with the adoption of allegiant conducts, dissatisfaction would dominate satisfaction (H3.1), while with the adoption of rebellious conducts, satisfaction would dominate (H3.2). Regarding allegiance, our hypothesis is invalidated: satisfaction dominates dissatisfaction both globally (1045 against 442, $X^2_1 = 224.53, p \approx .00$) as among women (530 against 196, $X^2_1 = 153.66, p \approx .00$) and men (515 against 246, $X^2_1 = 95.09, p \approx .00$). On the other hand, for rebellious conducts,

¹Note that, compared to the initial scale, two items were transformed: "I easily have a beautiful smile" has become "I easily smile" (sociability item); and "I feel healthy, in great shape" became "I feel in good health, in great shape" (happiness item). In addition, all the items, initially formulated in the past tense, have been put in the present tense.

satisfaction dominates dissatisfaction both globally (1037 against 298, $X^2_1 = 409.07$, $p \approx .00$) as among women (496 against 147, $X^2_1 = 189.42$, $p \approx .00$) and men (548 against 141, $X^2_1 = 240.42$, $p \approx .00$).

Finally, concerning the level of well-being, the comparison of means indicates that it varies according to satisfaction ($F(1, 118) = 8.68$, $p = .004$), with more well-being for satisfied participants ($M = .80$, $SD = .13$) than for the unsatisfied ($M = .71$, $SD = .16$). This result corroborates our hypothesis H4.

4. Discussion-conclusion

Based on the study by Gangloff (2012), conducted in France, rather than that of Guedes Gondim et al. (2008) conducted on Brazilian and Spanish populations, we formulated the H1 hypothesis according to which rebellious conducts would be more frequent than allegiance conducts. This hypothesis is invalidated. Undoubtedly many variables are likely to intervene in the conducts adopted in an organizational environment. For example, with regard to the allegiant conducts, we could cite the national or company culture, the organizational mode of management (liberal vs autocratic), the status of the respondents (fixed or indefinite contract), etc. The fact that we did not take such data into account constitutes a first limit to the generalization of our results.

On the other hand, we find, as expected (H2.1), that the adoption of allegiant conducts leads to more dissatisfaction than the fact of behaving rebelliously. However, this does not mean more satisfaction with rebellious conducts than with allegiant ones (H2.2 is invalidated): the satisfaction is identical. In other words, our participants are more dissatisfied by being allegiant than by being rebellious, but they are not more satisfied by being rebellious than by being allegiant.

By differentiating between the two possible types of conducts, we also considered that for allegiant conducts, dissatisfaction would dominate satisfaction (H3.1), while for rebellious conducts, satisfaction would be preponderant (H3.2). If the first hypothesis is invalidated, on the other hand, for the second, we observe effectively that rebellious conducts provide more satisfaction than dissatisfaction.

Finally, we notice, as expected (H4), that well-being is higher among satisfied participants than among unsatisfied ones.

Thus, these results provide new knowledge. But on a practical level, we would also like them to encourage managers to think about the freedom they agree to allow their subordinates. For a long time, the literature has shown that job satisfaction is a guarantee of efficiency, commitment to the company, and organizational citizenship behaviors (Castel, 2011; Francès, 1981). We also know for a long time that performance goes hand in hand with a certain latitude for protest. Thus, drawing a portrait of the best North American companies, Peters and Austin (1985) clearly demonstrated that performance can only be obtained through the establishment of a climate of freedom, which means in particular by acceptance and even encouragement of deviant behavior. In innovative companies, indicate these authors, "the semi-licit is a norm celebrated, openly accepted by all and that each one cherishes" (p206); "Instead of emphasizing formalisms [... these companies] insist on non-conformist behavior [... and demand] disrespect towards the central authority and the institution" (p208). Peters and Austin provide numerous illustrations confirming their analyzes. They indicate for example that one of the first principles of the Dana company is a protest slogan: "Discourage conformism" (p363); that at IBM, "the first task of the units is not to follow the planning of the headquarters [... and] to bypass the system" (p218); that at Raychem, successful managers are those who "show a constant disrespect for their own procedures and regulations, and regularly encourage others to circumvent the regulations" (p229). In fact, these successful managers have become aware that they are fallible, that "unlike the God of Philosophers, the boss does not know everything" (Landier, 1991, p120), that "no man is infallible [... and that] everything is debatable" (Alain, 1956, p545). Thus, it is time to promote those who have "the insolent audacity to say I" (Adorno, 1983, p47).

References

- Adorno, T.W. (éd. 1983). *Minima moralia*. Paris: Payot.
 Alain (1956). *Propos*. Paris: N.R.F., La Pléiade.
 Aristote (éd. 1991). *La rhétorique*. Paris: Le Livre de Poche.
 Aubert, N., & Gaulejac, V. de (1991). *Le coût de l'excellence*. Paris: Seuil.
 Bourdieu, P., & Passeron, J.-C. (1970). *La reproduction*. Paris: Ed. de Minuit.
 Castel, D. (2011). *La satisfaction au travail: comprendre, mesurer, prédire le point de vue de l'individu*. Thèse de doctorat, Université Lille 3.
 Dubost, N. (1979). *Flins sans fin*. Paris: Maspéro.

- Enriquez, E. (1976). Evaluation des hommes et structures d'organisation des entreprises. *Connexions*, 19, 79-110.
- Francès, R. (1981). *La satisfaction dans le travail et l'emploi*. Paris: PUF
- Gangloff, B. (2002). L'internalité et l'allégeance considérées comme des normes: une revue. *Les Cahiers de Psychologie Politique*, n°2. [<http://www.cahierspsypol.fr>].
- Gangloff, B. (2011). La norme d'allégeance. In S. Laberon (Ed.). *Psychologie et recrutement*. Bruxelles: De Boeck. 177-197.
- Gangloff B. (2012). Niveau d'allégeance exprimé de manière spontanée et selon le paradigme du moi idéal: effets du genre et du statut. In S. Pohl, P. Desrumaux et A-M. Vonthron (Eds). *Jugement socio-professionnel, innovation et efficacité au travail*. Paris: L'Harmattan 13-23.
- Gangloff, B., & Caboux, N. (2003) Conformismo a la norma de alineación y reacciones a las injusticias profesionales. *29^{ème} Congrès de la Société Interaméricaine de Psychologie*. Lima (Pérou).
- Gangloff, B., & Duchon, C. (2008). When an ideologist and a mercenary meet an allegiant and a rebel: A study on the estimated social desirability of their conducts. *Actes de la 5th International Conference of Applied Psychology* (Timisoara, Roumanie, 2007). Timisoara (Roumanie): Editura Eurobit, 240-249.
- Gangloff, B., Mayoral, L., & Auzoult, L. (2016). Nivel de obediencia ideologica o arribista y nivel de creencia en un mundo justo en asalariados activos o retirados hombres y mujeres. *Alternativas Cubanas en Psicología*, 4(10), 119-138.
- Grignon, C. (1971). *L'ordre des choses*. Paris: Ed. de Minuit.
- Guedes Gondim, S.M., Alvaro Estramiana, J.L., Schweiger Gallo, I., de Oliveira Sa, M., & Rios, M. (2008). O chefe tem sempre razão? Um Estudo Intercultural das Expectativas Sociais em Interações de Trabalho. *Interamerican Journal of Psychology*, 42 (2), 381-389.
- Kramer, C. (1994). Evaluation des performances individuelles en entreprise. *Communication au 8^{ème} Congrès de l'A.I.P.T.L.F.* Neuchâtel.
- Landier, H. (1991). *Vers l'entreprise intelligente*. Paris: Calmann-Levy.
- Massé, R., Poulin, C., Dassa, C., Lambert, J., Bélaïr, S., & Battaglini, M.A. (1998). Elaboration et validation d'un outil de mesure du bien-être psychologique: l'EMMBEP. *Revue Canadienne de Santé Publique*, 89 (5), 352-357. doi : <http://dx.doi.org/10.17269/cjph.89.1014>
- Massé, R., Poulin, C., Dassa, C., Lambert, J., Bélaïr, S., & Battaglini, A. (1998c). The Structure of mental health: higher-order confirmatory factor analyses of psychological distress and well-being measures. *Social Indicators Research*, 45: 475-504.
- Mayoral, L., Rezrazi, A., & Gangloff, B. (2020). Si quiere que su jefe lo aprecie... sonriale! *Ciencias Administrativas*, 15 (revue électronique non paginée).
- Onfray, M. (1997). *Politique du rebelle*. Paris: Grasset.
- Peters, P., & Austin, N. (1985). *La passion de l'excellence*. Paris: Interéditions.
- Platon (éd. 1966). *La république*. Paris: Garnier-Flammarion.