Original article

Service with style and smile. How and why employees are performing emotional labour?

Servir les clients avec le sourire et avec style. Comment et pourquoi les employés effectuent le travail émotionnel ?

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ABSTRACT

Introduction. – Three main emotion regulation strategies (naturally felt emotions, reappraisal and emotion suppression) have been identified among customer service agents. Each has an important impact on employees' attitudes. Yet, employees are likely to combine these strategies in what we call emotion regulation styles.

Objectives. – Two studies aimed at identifying the emotion regulation styles used by customer service employees and at linking these styles to organizational consequences and motivation to perform emotional labour.

Method. – Two studies (n_1 = 147 and n_2 = 195) evaluated the use of these strategies. Measures of job attitudes (satisfaction, affective commitment and intention to quit) were taken, as well as measures of motivation to perform emotional labour.

Results. – Six styles were identified; four were common to both studies. Globally, employees classified as *suppressors* (use of emotion suppression only) or as *non-regulators* (no strategy used) reported lower levels of job satisfaction and affective commitment toward their organization compared to employees who used a *flexible* style (use of all three strategies) or an *authentic* style (use of reappraisal and expression of the naturally felt emotions). Employees adopting an *acting* style (use of emotion suppression and reappraisal) or a *reappraising* style (marked by preferential use of reappraisal) obtained results located between the non-regulating and the suppressing styles on one hand, and the authentic and the flexible styles on the other hand. Employees adopting a *suppressing* or a *non-regulating* style also manifested lower levels of motivation to regulate their emotions.

Conclusion. – Results suggest that employees use a dynamic range of styles, which differ in their associated consequences.

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RÉSUMÉ

Introduction. – Les études antérieures identifient trois stratégies principales de régulation émotionnelle adoptées par les agents de service (expression naturelle des émotions, réévaluation de la situation et suppression émotionnelle). Chacune a des conséquences importantes sur les attitudes des employés. Pourtant, les employés sont susceptibles de combiner ces stratégies de façon à former ce que nous appelons des styles de régulation émotionnelle.

Objectifs. – Deux études visent à identifier les styles de régulation utilisés par les employés de service à la clientèle et à les relier à des attitudes au travail et à la motivation à s'engager dans le travail émotionnel.

Méthode. – Deux études (n_1 = 147 et n_2 = 195) ont évalué l'utilisation des stratégies mentionnées. Des mesures attitudinales (satisfaction au travail, engagement affectif, et intention de quitter) ont été prises, ainsi que des mesures pour apprécier la motivation des employés à réguler leurs émotions.

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Résultats. – Six styles ont été identifiés, dont quatre sont communs aux deux études. Globalement, les employés adoptant un style *suppresseur* (utilisation de la suppression émotionnelle seulement) ou *non-régulateur* (aucune stratégie utilisée) rapportent moins de satisfaction envers leur emploi et d'engagement envers leur organisation que les employés adoptant un style *authentique* (réévaluation et expression naturelle des émotions ressenties) ou *flexible* (utilisation des trois stratégies). Les styles *acteur* (utilisation de la suppression et de la réévaluation) et *réévaluateur* (utilisation plus marquée de la réévaluation) obtiennent des résultats situés entre les styles *non-régulateur* et *suppresseur*, d'une part, et les styles *authentique* et *flexible*, d'autre part. Les employés des styles *suppresseur* et *non-régulateur* sont aussi ceux qui manifestent moins de motivation à réguler leurs émotions dans le cadre de leur travail.
Conclusion. – Les résultats suggèrent que les employés utilisent différents styles de régulation émotionnelle, chacun étant associé à des conséquences différenciées pour les employés.

The main role of customer service employees is to offer products and services that fill customers' needs and make them feel positively toward the organization (Pugh, 2001). As customer service employees work to achieve this goal, they are expected to display enthusiasm, which is why many organizations establish emotional display rules (Hochschild, 1983), such as serving customers with a smile and suppressing negative emotions toward them (Diefendorff, Erickson, Grandey, & Dahling, 2011; Grandey, Fisk, Mattila, Jansen, & Sideman, 2005; Grandey, Fisk, & Steiner, 2005). In order to comply with these rules, employees must use emotion regulation strategies; in other words, they must perform what has been termed emotional labour (Hochschild, 1983; Grandey, 2000).

Employees can use various strategies to regulate their emotion expression. Surface acting is the modification of the observable aspects of an emotion irrespective of the employees' subjective feelings; it focuses on emotional responses (Grandey, 2000). Deep acting is the effort to match subjective feelings with expressed emotions; it focuses on the antecedents of emotions (Grandey, 2000). Employees can also spontaneously feel and express the emotions prescribed by their organization. When they do so, they express their naturally felt emotions (Cossette & Hess, 2012; Diefendorff, Croyle, & Gosserand, 2005).

Past studies on emotional labour have not focused on the interrelations between these three strategies. Even though all these strategies are used to comply with emotional display rules, they greatly differ in the manner by which they achieve this goal: some strategies involve acting on emotion antecedents; others involve controlling emotional response tendencies (Grandey, 2000; Gross, 1998); and then there are those that involve monitoring the match between felt and expressed emotions on the one hand and the match between felt emotions and display rules on the other (Diefendorff & Gosserand, 2003). In this paper, we raise the following question: Do employees only use one emotion regulation strategy or do they use several while interacting with customers?

The emotional labour literature offers an ambiguous answer to this question. Only two studies address this question. Sutton (2004) suggests that a majority of teachers use at least two emotional labour strategies. For example, they may use some combination of attentional deployment, cognitive change, modification of the observable aspects of emotions, etc.; however, Sutton's study does not indicate whether there are combinations among these strategies. The other study by Gross and John (2003), suggests that persons use either reappraisal or emotion suppression, which are conceptually close to deep acting and surface acting respectively (see Grandey, 2000). The contradicting results from these two studies and the lack of research on this topic raise the following questions:

- do customer service employees combine different emotion regulation strategies? and;

- if they do, which specific combinations do they use?

These two questions are important, not only for emotional labour theory, but also for practitioners. From a theoretical point of view, answering them would improve understanding of the Gross (1998) emotional regulation model dynamic. From a practical point of view, it is possible that certain combinations are more beneficial than others, both for employees and for organizations. If it is in fact true that they are more beneficial, relevant action plans could be put in place, such as personnel selection, training management, performance management, etc.

Continuing on from Sutton and by Gross and John, the first goal of the present study is to identify emotional regulation styles. We define an emotion regulation style as a dynamic use of different emotion regulation strategies in different contexts. In other words, an emotion regulation style consists of the repertoire of strategies that customer service employees use to regulate their emotions.

The second goal is to relate these styles to job and organizational attitudes. Previous studies have mainly focused on the consequences of emotion regulation strategies (see Hülsheger & Schewe, 2011). To provide emotional labour theory with a firmer foundation, it is important to link emotion regulation styles with outcomes relevant to employee attitudes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intention to quit the job (Goodwin, Groth, & Frenkel, 2011; Hülsheger & Schewe, 2011).

The third goal is to understand the link between the motivations of employees and their emotion regulation style. Some researchers maintain that emotional labour consists of motivated acts (Cossette, 2014; Diefendorff & Croyle, 2008). From this perspective, emotional labour can be seen as motivated by a desire to avoid negative consequences or to obtain positive consequences (Diefendorff & Croyle, 2008), or it can be seen as motivated by reasons related to the internalization of emotion display rules (Cossette, 2014). Two studies focusing on the motives underlying emotion regulation have contradicting results: one study suggests that motivation is positively associated with both surface acting and deep acting (Gosserand & Diefendorff, 2005), whereas the other suggests that motivation is positively related to deep acting and naturally felt emotions, but negatively related to surface acting (Cossette & Hess, 2012). The next three sections present the relevant literature on employee emotion regulation at work, on the consequences of emotion regulation strategies, and on the reasons for using them.

1. How emotional labour is performed by employees

Studies focusing on emotional labour have emphasized two strategies: deep acting and surface acting. Deep acting is an antecedent-focused strategy (Grandey, 2000) that aims to change the perception that employees have of the situation. This is achieved through perspective taking (e.g., reappraising the

situation by adopting another person's point of view). Surface acting occurs when an employee modifies the observable aspects of the unsuitable, typically negative, emotion by suppressing its expression or by faking positive affects that are not actually felt (Grandey, 2000). Employees are also likely to express their naturally felt emotions. Still, even when expressing their naturally felt emotions, employees need to monitor their inner feelings and their emotional display closely in order to comply with display rules (Diefendorff & Gosserand, 2003; Diefendorff et al., 2005; Martinez-Inigo, Totterdell, Alcover, & Holman, 2007).

2. Emotion regulation styles

Gross and John (2003) argue that certain persons use emotion suppression (surface acting) as their main strategy to regulate their emotions (the style suppressor discussed below), whereas others use reappraisal (deep acting, which corresponds to the style reappraiser discussed below). In their study, the correlation between emotion suppression and reappraisal was not significant, and this led the authors to conclude that individuals who frequently use reappraisal are no more or less likely to use suppression than individuals who use reappraisal infrequently (Gross & John, 2003). They also conclude that in some situations there may not be enough time to regulate emotions with an antecedent-focused regulation strategy such as reappraisal. This implies that individuals in these situations will use another emotion regulation strategy, such as surface acting, to comply with display rules. When discussing their results, the authors suggest that individuals are likely to combine strategies to regulate their emotions. This assumption was confirmed by Sutton's finding that 67% of teachers report using two or more emotion regulation strategies in their work (attentional deployment, cognitive change, modification of the observable aspects of emotions, etc.). However, neither Gross and John (2003) nor Sutton (2004) tried to determine which strategies are most likely to be combined by employees. Such a combination of emotion regulation strategies represents what we call emotion regulation styles. In each emotion regulation style, all three emotion regulation strategies may be used, but to different degrees.

Deep acting and surface acting are under the employees' active control, in that employees make specific efforts to comply with organizational display rules (Martinez-Inigo et al., 2007). By contrast, naturally felt emotion can be considered an automatic regulation strategy (Diefendorff et al., 2005; Martinez-Inigo et al., 2007). Still, employees expressing their naturally felt emotions must ensure that their emotional expressions are consistent with display rules (Diefendorff & Gosserand, 2003). These three strategies are independent constructs (Cossette & Hess, 2012; Diefendorff et al., 2005; Martinez-Inigo et al., 2007), so that it is possible that employees use one, two, or even all three strategies depending on the situation; it is also possible that employees do not use any of these three strategies (Sutton, 2004). Grandey (2000) suggests that surface acting may be a reaction to an event, whereas deep acting may occur on a more continuous basis. Gross and Thompson (2007) maintain that some employees use a strategy based on emotional responses first and then use a strategy based on emotional antecedents to facilitate social interaction. These examples of different possibilities for combining strategies raise the question of how to identify the different combinations that create emotion regulation styles.

To identify the combinations of strategies, a person-centered approach was adopted in the present study. This approach identifies distinct groups of employees that share similarities on different variables (see Cossette & Gosselin, 2012; Sinclair, Tucker, Cullen, & Wright, 2005). In the context of the present study, emotional labour

Table 1
Emotion Regulation Styles.

Deep acting	Surface acting	Naturally felt emotions	Emotion Regulation Styles
+	+	+	→ Flexible regulators
+	+	−	→ Actors
+	−	+	→ Authentics
−	+	+	→ Response regulators
+	−	−	→ Reappraisers
−	+	−	→ Suppressors
−	−	+	→ Natural expressors
−	−	−	→ Non-regulators

Note that "+" indicates a high use of a strategy and that "−" indicates a low use of a strategy.

strategies were the variables used to create the different groups. To simplify the presentation of the different emotion regulation styles, we limit ourselves to examining two levels of use for each strategy, high use and low use; this enables us to identify eight distinct styles (Table 1).

"Flexible regulators" use all three strategies, depending on the context and the customer. They use deep acting to try to understand the customer experience, surface acting when required, and the authentic expression of their emotions in interactions that do not require any modification of internal feelings or emotional display. "Actors" are employees who report that they never express their true emotions to customers and that they feel like they are playing a role in their service performance with customers. It is as if they were using different acting strategies in different scenes in a play or a movie. "Authentics" are employees who have an inherent tendency to feel and express prescribed emotions when interacting with customers. Even if they do not feel and express them, they are still able to interpret the situation in a way that is congruent with display rules. "Response regulators" use both authentic expression of their emotions and surface acting as their emotion regulation strategies. In other words, they only use response-focused strategies while monitoring their expressed emotions to comply with display rules.

Other styles involve the use of a single strategy or no strategy at all. As mentioned above, Gross and John (2003) suggest that some persons use only reappraisal or suppression to regulate their emotions. Employees who choose to use deep acting to regulate their emotions are called "reappraisers". "Suppressors" exclusively use surface acting. Employees who adopt this style do not use deep acting and do not express their naturally felt emotions. In contrast to suppressors, "natural expressers" always show their naturally felt emotions without using deep or surface acting. The final style is the style of employees who do not regulate their emotions in any of the three ways mentioned above. These employees may be called "non-regulators".

3. Emotion regulation styles and job attitudes

Past studies have investigated how emotional labour affects attitudes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intention to quit (see Hülsheger & Schewe, 2011). Since surface acting leads to negative consequences and deep acting, to positive consequences (Hülsheger & Schewe, 2011), we anticipate that emotion regulation styles involving the use of deep acting and authentic expression of emotions will have positive consequences (a high level of job satisfaction and organizational commitment, and a low level of intention to quit). Conversely, emotion regulation styles in which surface acting is used without authentic expression of emotions should have more negative consequences (job dissatisfaction, disengagement from the organization, and a high level of intention to quit). Considering the exploratory nature of our study,

it is impossible to state specific hypotheses, but we make the two following assumptions:

- employees who combine the strategies of expressing their naturally felt emotions and deep acting will be more satisfied in their job and more committed to their organizations, and they will not manifest a high level of intention to quit and;
- conversely, employees who use surface acting, and who do not express their naturally felt emotions nor use deep acting, will be more dissatisfied and less committed, and will have a stronger intention to quit their job.

4. Why do employees regulate their emotions

Following Ashforth and Humphrey (1993), Cossette (2014) has recently argued that employees who internalize emotion display rules are more likely to express their felt emotions naturally and to use deep acting, but less likely to use surface acting. Employees who have internalized display rules are therefore more likely to express the prescribed emotions, because doing so becomes a goal consistent with their values. Inversely, employees who are less inclined to internalize display rules tend to use more surface acting to avoid being criticized by their supervisors.

This means that emotion regulation strategies can be conceived of as motivated acts (Cossette, 2014). More specifically, self-determination theory (SDT) posits two categories of motivation: controlled motivation and autonomous motivation (Gagné et al., 2010; Kim, Deci, & Zuckerman, 2002). According to Cossette (2008, 2014) and Sisley and Smollan (2012), considering these different motivations helps the understanding of why employees use different emotion regulation strategies. These two categories include different types of motivated behaviours that can be aligned on the self-determination continuum (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Gagné & Deci, 2005).

Intrinsic motivation is the motivation that is the most autonomous. When employees are intrinsically motivated, they perform activities for the interest or the pleasure that they procure. Extrinsic motivation gives energy to employees so that they can achieve external goals set by the organization (Gagné & Deci, 2005). SDT posits different types of extrinsic motivations, which vary with respect to their degree of self-determination. The least self-determined form of extrinsic motivation is external motivation, where there is a relation of direct dependence between the behaviour and a desired consequence (approval, rewards). Other types of extrinsic motivation refer to situations where a person internalizes the behaviour to different degrees (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Gagné & Deci, 2005). Introjected motivation refers to a behaviour that is adopted by persons, but is not endorsed as their own (Gagné & Deci, 2005). Identification is a form of motivation that occurs when persons identify with the value of a behaviour and the behaviour corresponds to a self-selected goal. This motivation is a self-determined form of motivation (Gagné et al., 2010). A more complete level of internalization involves the integration of a behaviour into other aspects of the self. With integrated motivation, employees feel that the behaviour is an integral part of who they are. Therefore, the behaviour is more central to their identity and they are more likely to act in ways that are consistent with their sense of self (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Gagné & Deci, 2005). In other words, employees act with a sense of authenticity and fully endorse the requirement to perform an activity; in our context, this activity consists of performing emotional labour (Cossette, 2014).

For emotional regulation, intrinsic motivation seems theoretically less relevant. Employees engage in emotional labour to satisfy the organizational demand to comply with display rules (Diefendorff et al., 2011). Therefore, emotional labour gives, by

definition, an external focus to the motivation to regulate emotions. When employees internalize organizational demands such as serving the customer with positive instead of negative emotions, these demands are congruent with the employees' sense of self. This reasoning is consistent with the study by Kim et al. (2002) that investigates the extrinsic forms of motivation mentioned above as potential motives for persons to withhold their negative emotions in social interactions.

Another study identifies two goals that teachers have for regulating their emotions: academic effectiveness and keeping a good relationship with students (Sutton, 2004). These are extrinsic goals and have nothing to do with the pleasure or the interest of regulating emotions, which is the case for intrinsic motivation. Twenty percent of teachers indicate that they regulate their emotions because doing so is natural for them. In SDT terms, these teachers internalize emotion regulation. In addition, certain teachers regulate their emotions because they feel ashamed of showing their anger in front of their students whereas others want to serve as role models for their students. In SDT terms, these reasons refer to introjected and external motivation respectively.

More direct evidence supports SDT as a relevant framework for explaining how employees regulate their emotions at work (Cossette & Hess, 2012; Cossette & Lépine, 2012). These studies provide more specific evidence for the existence of the different types of extrinsic motivation to regulate emotions at work. Further, Cossette and Lépine (2012) show statistically that intrinsic motivation is detrimental to factorial solutions. Moreover, their study, which used items developed from validated instruments, indicates that items measuring intrinsic motivation to smile to customers or to suppress negative emotions toward them hinder goodness of fit for theoretical models. In other words, factorial solutions that exclude intrinsic motivation items achieve better fit indices, whereas solutions including them have worse fit indices.

5. Motivation and emotion regulation styles

Cossette (2014) proposes that employees who regulate their emotions for reasons relating to self-determined forms of motivation (identified and integrated) are more authentic, whereas employees who regulate their emotions for reasons relating to controlled forms of motivation (external and introjected) are less authentic. Deep acting is an emotion regulation strategy that is positively related to authenticity and surface acting negatively related to authenticity. Cossette's (2014) reasoning relies notably on the fact that deep acting is positively related to authenticity, whereas surface acting is negatively related to authenticity (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002). Cossette and Hess (2012) confirmed and extended these results by relating motivation to deep acting, surface acting and naturally felt emotions. More specifically, self-determined motivation, which was measured by an index reflecting the motivation continuum, was positively related to naturally felt emotions and to deep acting but negatively related to surface acting. Interestingly, the naturally felt emotion strategy is more strongly related to self-determined motivation than is deep acting. This supports the proposition that the more employees regulate their emotions for self-determined reasons, the more they use authentic emotion regulation strategies. Similarly, in a theoretical analysis of the link between the different forms of motivation and emotion regulation strategies, Sisley and Smollan (2012) suggest that:

- surface acting is related to external and introjected motivation;
- deep acting is related to identified and integrated motivation and;
- naturally felt emotion is related to integrated motivation.

Again, the exploratory nature of our study prevents the formulation of more specific hypotheses. We rather suggest a more general proposition, based on the preceding discussion. Specifically, we expect that the self-determined forms of motivation (identified and integrated) should be related to emotion regulation styles that are based on the use of deep acting and naturally felt emotion strategies, and the controlled forms of motivation should be related to emotion regulation styles that are based on the use of surface acting and the low use of deep acting and naturally felt emotions.

6. Study 1

6.1. Methods

6.1.1. Participants

A total of 147 (82 women) participants with a mean age of 25.6 years (SD = 5.9) who were currently holding a job with frequent customer contact were recruited from a list of individuals who had previously indicated their willingness to participate in research and received $5. The majority of participants were university students (86.4%). Mean organizational tenure and mean job tenure were respectively 1.70 years (SD = 1.60) and 1.56 (SD = 1.49).

6.1.2. Procedure

Participants completed the computerized questionnaire in the laboratory in groups of up to 19. Participants responded to all items on a 7-point scale anchored by 1–strongly disagree and 7–strongly agree.

6.1.3. Measures

6.1.3.1. Emotion regulation measures. Emotion suppression and reappraisal were assessed using the Emotional Regulation Questionnaire (John & Gross, 2004). Four items measure suppression (e.g., When I am feeling negative emotions, I make sure not to express them) and six items measure reappraisal (e.g., When I want to feel less negative emotion [such as sadness or anger], I change what I'm thinking about). This measure has good psychometric properties. Naturally felt emotions were measured using items from Diefendorff et al. (2005, e.g. The emotions I show customers come naturally). The scales were translated into French using parallel back translation. An initial confirmatory factor analysis suggested only a moderate fit for a three-factor structure for this measure, $\chi^2_{(51)} = 142.0$, $p < .001$, $C_{min}/dl = 2.73$, GFI = .86, CFI = .87, RMSEA = .111. However, the fit was acceptable when the errors of the two items "When I want to feel more positive emotion (such as joy or amusement), I change what I'm thinking about" and "When I want to feel less negative emotion (such as sadness or anger), I change what I'm thinking about" were allowed to correlate, $\chi^2_{(50)} = 84.6$, $p = .002$, $C_{min}/dl = 1.69$, GFI = .91, CFI = .95, RMSEA = .069. Allowing this correlation is acceptable for items with considerable semantic overlap (Byrne, 2001). Scale reliabilities are shown in Table 2.

6.1.3.2. Job satisfaction, intention to quit and organizational commitment. Job satisfaction and intention to quit were measured with items that were validated in a customer service context (Cossette & Gosselin, 2012). Four items measure job satisfaction (e.g., I am very satisfied with my current job) and three items measure intention to quit (e.g., I have the intention to quit my job within the next months). Affective commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990) was measured using the scale developed by Vandenberghe, Stinglhammer, Bentein, and Delhaise (2001). Confirmatory factor analysis supports the three-factor model for the scales, $\chi^2_{(62)} = 72.7$, $p = .166$, $C_{min}/dl = 1.17$, GFI = .93, CFI = .99, RMSEA = .034. Alpha coefficients were satisfactory (see Table 2).

6.1.3.3. Motivation to express positive emotions. This measure was created based on the logic of the Self-Regulation of Withholding Negative Emotions Questionnaire de Kim et al. (2002). The items were phrased so as to reflect the motivation to express positive emotions towards the customer in terms of integrated, identified and introjected motivation as well as external regulation. Example items are: "It is important to me to smile at clients" (integrated), "To stay efficient, I show positive emotions towards clients" (identified), "I would feel guilty if I did not smile at clients" (introjected), "Managers expect me to show a smile when I interact with clients" (external regulation). Confirmatory factor analysis was used to assess the independent of the scales. Items which did not load significantly on their assigned factors were eliminated. The resulting scales showed adequate fit, $\chi^2_{(84)} = 117.5$, $p = .009$, $C_{min}/dl = 1.40$, GFI = .90, CFI = .97, RMSEA = .052. Table 3 shows the coefficients for this analysis. Table 2 shows the alpha coefficients for the four scales.

6.1.4. Emotion regulation styles

Cluster analysis, using Ward's method with squared Euclidian distance, was performed to assess emotion regulation styles. Cluster analysis allows to identify groups of respondents who make similar responses to the three emotion regulation strategies. The members of each cluster of respondents are homogenous with regard to their use of emotion regulation strategies and the clusters are heterogeneous with regard to the combination of strategies described (Clatworthy, Hankins, Buick, Weinman, & Horne, 2007; Hair & Black, 2000). Specifically, Ward's method calculates the distance between clusters based on the sums of squares such that in each iteration the sums of squares within clusters is minimized by creating more homogenous clusters (Hair & Black, 2000). This approach reliably identifies clusters in situations where sample sizes are medium and the clusters might be of unequal size (Clatworthy et al., 2007). To identify the number of clusters, the level of homogeneity within clusters is plotted against the number of clusters; the resulting graph can be interpreted similarly to screen plots for factor analyses (Aldenderfer & Blashfield, 1984; Clatworthy et al., 2007), such that a plateau in the graph indicates the best choice for the number of clusters.

6.2. Results

As Fig. 1 suggests 4 styles represent the best solution. Fig. 2 shows for each style the means for the three strategies. In order to describe the clusters, we compared the mean for each strategy within a style cluster to the grand mean across all clusters ($M_{appraisal} = 4.77$; SD = 1.29; $M_{suppression} = 4.54$; SD = 1.33; $M_{natural\ expression} = 4.82$; SD = 1.36). This allows to show whether a given strategy within a style is used more or less than on average or (in the absence of a significant difference) at about average level.

The first style identified by the cluster analysis was named *flexible* ($n = 46$). This style was characterized by a high level of use of all three strategies ($M_{appraisal} = 5.60$; SD = .86; $t_{(45)} = 6.0$, $p < .001$; $M_{natural\ expression} = 5.51$; SD = .78; $t_{(45)} = 6.5$, $p < .001$; $M_{suppression} = 5.30$; SD = .75; $t_{(45)} = 6.9$, $p < .001$). The second style was named *authentic* ($n = 53$) and was characterize by a high level of natural expression ($M = 5.58$; SD = .95; $t_{(52)} = 5.8$, $p < .001$) combined with a medium level of reappraisal ($M = 4.62$; SD = 1.13; $t_{(52)} = -1.0$, $p = .321$) and a low level of suppression ($M = 3.31$; SD = 1.01; $t_{(52)} = -8.8$, $p < .001$). Thus, these employees generally show their authentic emotions and regulate these, when needed, preferentially using reappraisal.

By contrast, employees using the suppressing style (*suppressors*) used preferentially suppression ($M = 5.61$; SD = .82; $t_{(34)} = 7.7$, $p < .001$) rather than reappraisal ($M = 4.63$; SD = 1.26; $t_{(34)} = -0.66$, $p = .512$). Also, this group of employees rarely showed their natural

Table 2
Correlations of variables.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Reappraisal	*.83/.85*	.28**	.30**	.30**	.35**	−.23**	.14	.11	–	.43**
Suppression	.11	*.67/.72*	−.04	.12	.11	−.07	.22**	.14	–	.12
Naturally felt emotion	.22**	−.32**	*.72/.66*	.45**	.40**	−.22**	.07	.16*	–	.16*
Job satisfaction	.18*	−.14	.26**	*.89/.90*	.77**	−.73**	.13	.31**	–	.34*
Affective commitment	.12	−.09	.18*	.75**	*.81/.87*	−.68**	.15*	.31**	–	.45**
Intention to quit	−.11	−.10	−.07	−.54**	−.47**	*.86/.90*	−.06	−.23**	–	−.31**
External motivation	.13	.04	.17*	.14	.07	.02	*.78/.73*	.49**	–	.22**
Introjected motivation	.14	.07	.19*	.10	.11	.06	.51**	*.89/.74*	–	.38**
Identified motivation	.06	−.08	.29**	.29**	.22**	−.09	.41**	.45**	*.82/na*	–
Integrated motivation	.08	−.07	.25**	.31**	.21**	−.11	.42**	.50**	.71**	*.85/.68*

[†] $p < .10$; [*] $p < .05$; [**] $p < .01$.
Correlation on the lower part are from study 1 and on the upper part are from study 2.
Motivation: study 1: motivation to express positive emotion; study 2: motivation to withhold negative emotions.
Note. Reliabilities are on the diagonal.

emotions ($M = 3.36$; SD = .93; $t_{(34)} = −9.3$, $p < .001$). Finally, a fourth, non-regulating style (*non-regulators*; $n = 13$) was characterized by low levels of use of all three strategies ($M_{\text{reappraisal}} = 2.83$; SD = .86; $t_{(12)} = −8.2$, $p < .001$; $M_{\text{natural expression}} = 3.18$; SD = .60; $t_{(12)} = −9.8$, $p < .001$; $M_{\text{suppression}} = 4.00$; SD = .93; $t_{(12)} = −2.1$, $p = .057$).

6.3. Influence of emotional regulation style on job attitudes and motivation to express positive emotions

Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was performed on job attitudes (satisfaction, intention to quit and affective commitment) and motivation to show positive emotions with emotion regulation styles as the independent variable. Results indicated differences between the styles, $F_{(7,137)} = 2.793$, $p = .009$, $\eta^2 = .123$. As regards satisfaction at work, the *flexible* and *authentic style* resulted in better outcomes (see Table 4) than the *suppressing* and *non-regulating styles*, which did not differ from each other. The same pattern of results obtained for affective commitment but the

post-hoc tests were not significant. For intention to quit no significant overall difference emerged.

As regards motivation to express positive emotions, no differences for external regulation and introjected motivation as a function of regulation style emerged. However, employees with a suppressing style were characterized by significantly lower identified and integrated motivation than any other style ($p < .05$).

6.4. Discussion

Study 1 had the goals to:

- identify emotion regulation styles for customer service agents;
- identify the consequences linked to these styles;
- verify whether motivation to express positive emotions varies as a function of emotion regulation style.

Table 3
Factor loadings for the items on the motivation to express positive emotions (study 1) and the motivation to suppress negative emotions (study 2).

|	Study 1				Study 2			
	External	Introjected	Identified	Integrated	External	Introjected	Identified	Integrated
External 1								
External 2	.70				.67			
External 3	.78				.58			
External 4								
External 5	.73				.64			
External 6					.66			
External 7								
Introjected 1						.63		
Introjected 2		.64				.58		
Introjected 3		.90				.71		
Introjected 4		.76				.72		
Introjected 5		.89						
Introjected 6		.61						
Introjected 7								
Introjected 8								
Introjected 9								
Identified 1			.81					
Identified 2								
Identified 3			.80					
Identified 4								
Identified 5								
Identified 6								
Identified 7			.81					
Identified 8								
Integrated 1				.80				.56
Integrated 2				.74				.64
Integrated 3								.56
Integrated 4				.70				.65
Integrated 5				.81				
α	.78	.89	.82	.85	.73	.74	–	.68

Study 1
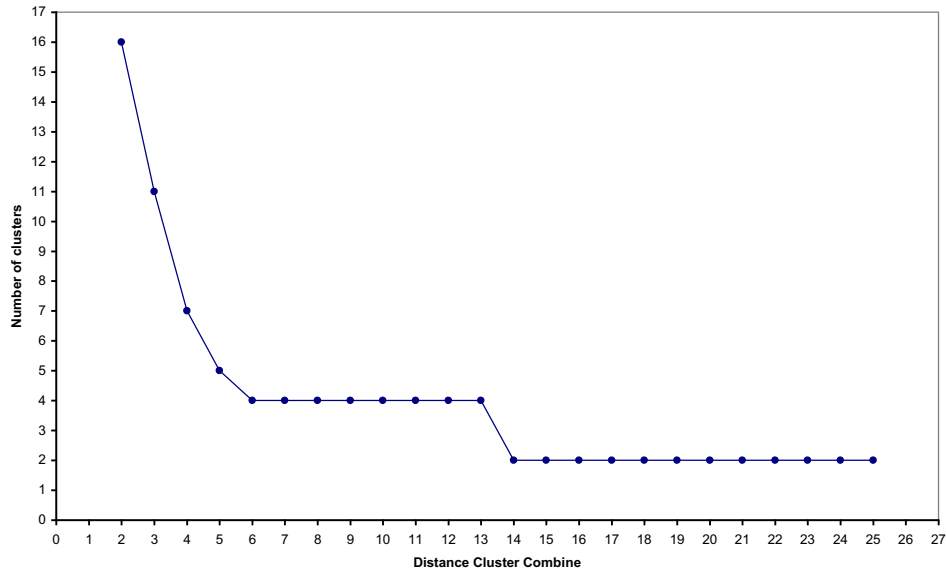
Study 2
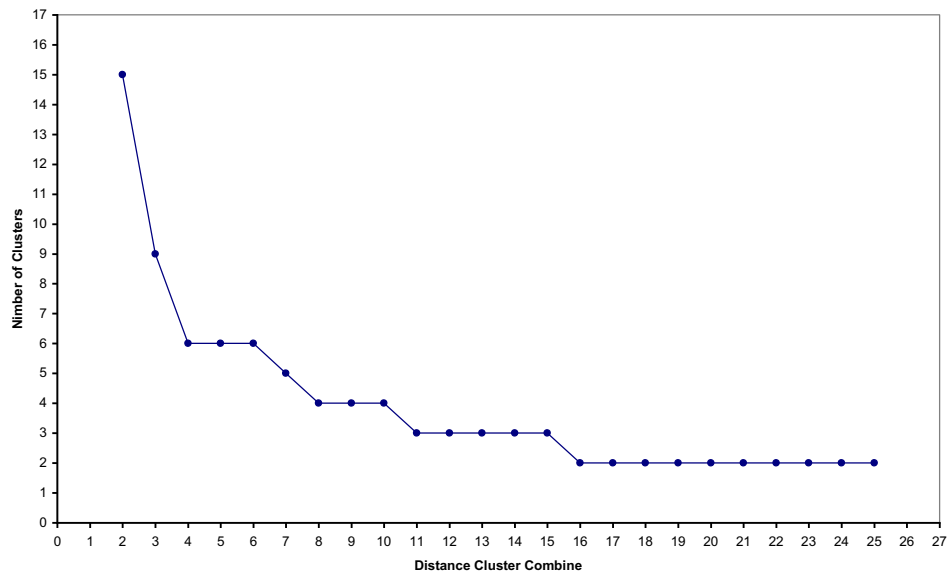
Fig. 1. Plot of number of clusters versus distance cluster combine.

The results showed that four of the eight potential emotion regulation styles were in fact used by this group of employees.

These styles vary with regard to the consequences for workplace attitudes associated with them. Thus, the *flexible* and *authentic* styles are associated with more positive consequences and this finding can likely be attributed to the increased use of reappraisal and natural emotion expression as emotion regulation strategies within these styles (Cossette, 2014; Cossette & Hess, 2012). By contrast, the *non-regulators* and the *suppressors* are associated with more negative consequences. Overall, these findings fit with emotional labour theory (Grandey, 2000), but add important elements. Specifically, even though both the authentic and the suppressing styles involve the use of reappraisal to comparable degrees, the resulting consequences for work satisfaction are quite different. In the same vein, both the *flexible* and the *suppressing styles* are characterized by use of suppression, but again the consequences for work satisfaction are different. This suggests that it is not the use or lack of use of one specific strategy that entrains these consequences but

rather it is the combination of strategies into a style that has more or less positive consequences.

Yet, a somewhat different result emerged for the motivational variables. Only the *suppressing style* was linked to lower integrated and identified motivation. There was no difference as a function of style for external regulation, but the means (see Table 4) are quite high. By contrast the means for introjected motivation are quite low. In all, this pattern seems to suggest that independent of emotion regulation style, the employees in this study felt external pressure to show positive emotions, or alternatively do so because of integrated or identified values of customer service, but not because they would feel culpable for not doing so.

6.5. Limits of this study

The motivation to show positive emotions is linked to the organizational display rule to serve with a smile, but does not measure the second aspect of this rule, which is to suppress negative
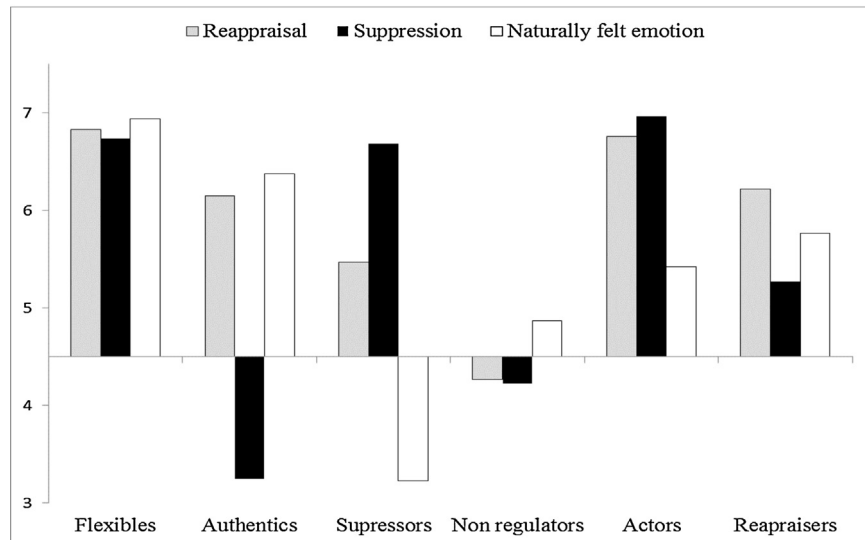
Study 1
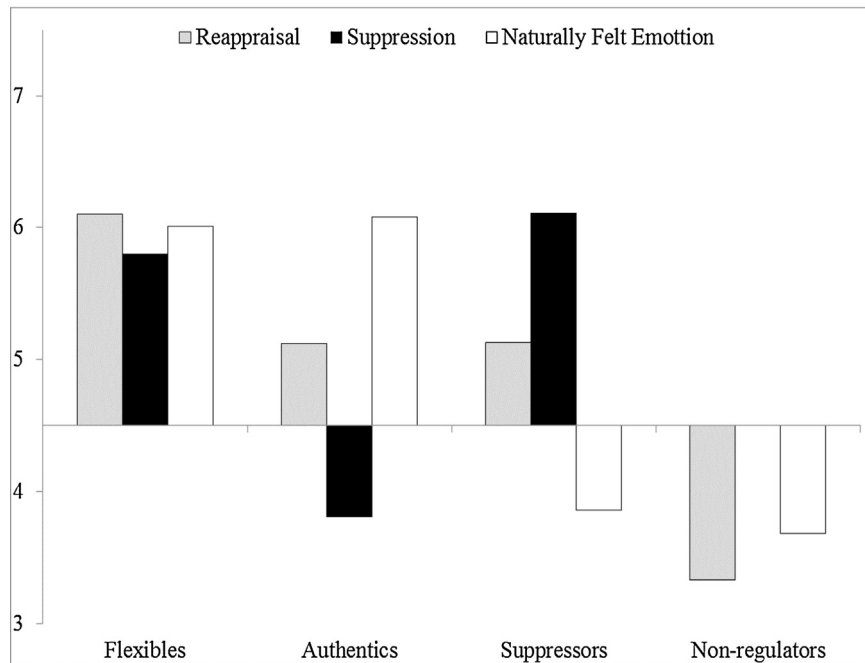
Study 2

Fig. 2. Levels of naturally felt emotion, reappraisal and emotion suppression as a function of emotion regulation style.

emotions (Diefendorff & Croyle, 2008) when interacting with clients. Further, the sample consisted mainly of students who worked part-time, thus, their motivations, attitudes and emotion regulation strategies may differ from those of other employees. This may also explain why only four different styles were found. We therefore investigated emotion regulation styles in a second, more homogenous, sample of employees.

7. Study 2

Study 2 aimed to replicate Study 1 while addressing its limitations. In this sense, we also modified the motivational measure by focusing on the necessity of suppressing negative emotions. As mentioned above, customer service agents need in fact to do both, express positive emotions and suppress negative emotions

(Hochschild, 1983). Specifically, when a company demands that its employees show positive emotions when in fact they feel negative emotions, the result is emotional dissonance (the difference between what a person feels and what the person expresses) or inauthenticity (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002). This points to the usefulness of assessing motivation to suppress negative emotions when considering emotion regulation styles.

7.1. Method

7.1.1. Participants

A total of 195 customer service agents from two call centres participated in Study 2. Employees from the first call centre ($n_1 = 65$, 41.3% men, mean age = 31.4 years, SD = 10.8) received calls from customers in the banking sector, whereas the employees from

Table 4
Univariate ANOVAs results, partial η^2, means and standard deviations for the outcome variables as a function of emotion regulation style.

Study 1

Variable	Flexibles	Authentics	Suppressors	Non-regulators	ANOVA $F(3,143)$	Partial η^2
Job satisfaction	4.77[a] (1.45)	4.69[a] (1.68)	3.92[b] (1.55)	3.58[b] (1.20)	3.847[*]	.075
Affective commitment	3.92[a] (1.41)	4.02[a] (1.51)	3.48[a] (1.42)	3.52[a] (1.45)	1.246	.025
Intention to quit	3.88[a] (1.60)	4.27[a] (1.93)	4.19[a] (1.61)	5.10[a] (.85)	1.842	.037
External motivation	5.55[a] (1.19)	5.27[a] (1.11)	5.03[a] (1.23)	5.05[a] (0.95)	1.570	.032
Introjected motivation	4.38[a] (1.45)	3.87[a] (1.52)	3.67[a] (1.53)	3.64[a] (1.36)	1.930	.039
Identified motivation	6.35[a] (0.69)	6.33[a] (0.80)	5.72[b] (1.21)	6.17[a,b] (0.68)	4.346[**]	.084
Integrated motivation	5.83[a] (0.97)	5.87[a] (1.00)	5.30[a] (1.19)	5.81[b] (0.75)	2.544[†]	.051

Study 2

Variable	Flexibles	Authentics	Suppressors	Non-regulators	Actors	Reappraisers	ANOVA $F(3,143)$	Partial η^2
Job satisfaction	6.01[c] (0.90)	5.17[b] (1.63)	3.85[a] (2.03)	4.20[a] (1.56)	5.22[c] (1.61)	5.28[c] (1.38)	8.203[***]	.178
Affective commitment	5.70[b] (1.11)	5.22[b] (1.22)	3.98[a] (1.86)	3.99[a] (1.40)	4.93[b] (1.27)	4.98[b] (1.35)	7.365[***]	.163
Intention to quit	2.41[a] (1.80)	2.56[a] (1.83)	3.36[a] (2.16)	3.49[a] (1.78)	2.63[a] (1.78)	2.72[a] (1.68)	1.601	.041
External motivation	6.34[b] (0.89)	5.73[a] (1.04)	5.88[a,b] (1.15)	5.83[a,b] (0.82)	6.32[a,b] (0.84)	5.79[a] (1.02)	2.795[*]	.069
Introjected motivation	6.36[a,b] (1.45)	6.20[a,b] (0.98)	5.78[a] (1.10)	5.71[a] (1.23)	6.50[b] (0.58)	5.93[a,b] (1.16)	2.962[*]	.073
Integrated motivation	6.36[b,c] (0.86)	6.47[c] (0.50)	6.17[b,c] (0.71)	5.26[a] (1.11)	6.43[b,c] (0.62)	5.97[b] (0.96)	7.939[***]	.174

[†] $p < .10$; [*] $p < .05$; [**] $p < .01$.
Different letters indicate a significant difference ($p < .05$) on post-hoc tests.

the second call centre ($n_2 = 130$, 63.3% men, mean age = 30.3 years, SD = 9.0) made calls to clients in the telecommunications sector. Mean organizational tenure was 3.4 years (SD = 3.3) and 1.8 years (SD = 1.5) respectively. The majority of respondents had a college or university degree (centre 1: high school or less: 20.5%, college: 49.2%, university: 24.6%, other: 6.2%; centre 2: high school or less: 11.6%, college: 37.2%, university: 47.3%, other: 3.9%).

7.1.2. Procedure

Employees at the two organizations were invited to participate in the survey on their own time. In order to assure anonymity and confidentiality of the data, participants were asked to respond to the questionnaire without indicating their name and to enclose the completed questionnaire in an envelope to be deposited in a sealed box identified by the university logo.

7.1.3. Measures
7.1.3.1. Emotion regulation strategies and work attitudes. The same measures as for Study 1 were used. The alpha coefficients are shown in Table 2.

7.1.3.2. Motivation to suppress negative emotions. The scales used in Study 1 were modified to describe identified, integrated, introjected as well as external motivations for the motivation to suppress negative emotions. Sample items are: "I find it satisfying to be able to feel my emotions without letting them interfere with my work" (integrated), "It is important for me to not hurt my clients with my negative emotions" (identified), "Expressing negative emotions would hurt the clients, and I would blame myself for doing it" (introjected), "Managers expect that I show self-control when I interact with the clients" (external). Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted on these items. Table 3 shows the items which were retained after all items which did not load on the expected factor or which loaded on more than one factor were removed. Unfortunately, only one item could be retained for the subscale measuring identified motivation, even though we relaxed the requirements for item saturation compared to Study 1 (see limits of this study below). We therefore eliminated this subscale. However, because this is a new measure and the solution with three subscales had adequate fit, $\chi^2_{(51)} = 107.4$, $p < .001$, $C_{min}/dl = 2.10$, GFI = .92, CFI = .90, RMSEA = .076, we retained the motivation measure. The alpha coefficients are shown in Table 2.

7.2. Results and discussion

As for Study 1, we conducted a cluster analysis using Ward's method with squared Euclidian distance, to assess emotion regulation styles. Fig. 1 shows that a six-cluster solution is the best option, as the four, three and two cluster solutions all are less homogenous. As can be seen below, this solution corresponds well to the postulated emotion regulation styles. This ease of interpretation is another criterion for retaining this solution over the others (Aldenderfer & Blashfield, 1984; Hair & Black, 2000). Following this, a *K Mean cluster* classification was performed (differing from Study 1) as this method is particularly useful in the case of relatively homogenous clusters and samples sizes around 200 (Clatworthy et al., 2007). As for the clusters identified in Study 1, we compared the mean for each strategy within a style cluster to the grand mean across all clusters ($M_{appraisal} = 5.60$; SD = 1.12; $M_{suppression} = 5.11$; SD = 1.45; $M_{natural\ expression} = 5.14$; SD = 1.30) to describe the cluster on a theoretical level (Hair & Black, 2000). Fig. 2 shows the means for the three emotion regulation strategies for each of the six style clusters. The first four clusters replicate well those found in Study 1. Thus, again a *flexible* style ($n = 41$) with a high level of use of all strategies emerged ($M_{reappraisal} = 6.33$; SD = 0.75; $t_{(40)} = 6.2$, $p < .001$; $M_{natural\ expression} = 6.44$; SD = 0.49; $t_{(40)} = 17.1$, $p < .001$; $M_{suppression} = 6.24$; SD = 0.57; $t_{(40)} = 12.7$, $p < .001$). Also, we found again an *authentic* style ($n = 26$) which was characterized by a higher than average level of natural expression combined with ($M = 5.87$; SD = 0.88; $t_{(25)} = 4.2$, $p < .001$) an average level of reappraisal ($M = 5.65$; SD = 0.70 $t_{(25)} = 0.3$, $p = .732$) and a lower than average level of suppression ($M = 2.74$; SD = 0.77 $t_{(25)} = -15.7$, $p < .001$). A third cluster corresponded to the *suppressors* ($n = 22$), in which employees used predominately suppression ($M = 6.18$; SD = 0.73; $t_{(21)} = 6.9$, $p < .001$) and comparatively little reappraisal ($M = 4.97$; SD = 0.82; $t_{(21)} = -3.6$, $p = .002$) and very rarely natural emotion expression ($M = 2.73$; SD = 0.92; $t_{(21)} = -12.3$, $p < .001$). Finally, as in Study 1, a group of *non-regulators* ($n = 24$) emerged, which was characterized by a low level of use of any strategy ($M_{reappraisal} = 3.77$; SD = 0.92; $t_{(23)} = -9.8$, $p < .001$; $M_{suppression} = 3.72$; SD = 0.90; $t_{(23)} = -7.6$, $p < .001$; $M_{natural\ expression} = 4.37$; SD = 1.05; $t_{(23)} = -3.6$ $p = .002$).

In addition, two further styles emerged. One was interpreted as the *reappraisers* and was characterized by a moderate use of both reappraisal ($M = 5.72$; SD = 0.83; $t_{(23)} = 1.1$, $p = .295$) and natural emotion expression ($M = 5.26$; SD = 0.66; $t_{(23)} = 1.3$, $p = .186$)

combined with relatively little use of suppression ($M = 4.77$; SD = 0.54; $t_{(23)} = -4.4$, $p < .001$). Even though the members of this cluster did not use reappraisal more than the mean of all respondents, we chose this appellation because as can be seen in Fig. 2, reappraisal was used quite frequently across the whole sample making it difficult to find significant differences due to ceiling effects, and more importantly, because for this group only, the mean for reappraisal was higher than the mean for natural emotion expression ($t_{(50)} = 2.9$; $p = .006$).

The last cluster includes *actors* as it was characterized by a reduced use of natural emotion expression ($M = 4.92$; SD = 0.44; $t_{(30)} = -2.7$, $p = .010$) combined with a higher level of both reappraisal ($M = 6.26$; SD = 0.68; $t_{(30)} = 5.4$, $p < .001$) and suppression ($M = 6.46$ SD = 0.49; $t_{(30)} = 15.3$, $p < .001$).

As in Study 1, a MANOVA was conducted to assess the effects of the styles on work attitudes and the motivational variables (see Table 4). The results suggest differences in these dependent variables as a function of emotion regulation style, $F(6,188) = 10.011$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .188$.

Post-hoc tests showed significant differences for job satisfaction and affective commitment ($ps < .05$), but no differences for intention to quit. As in Study 1, the mean job satisfaction and affective commitment is lowest for the *suppressors* and the *non-regulators*, which did not differ, and significantly higher for the *authentics* and *flexibles*. The two new styles, *reappraisers* and *actors*, did not differ from the *authentics* and the *flexibles*. Thus, as in Study 1, more positive consequences emerge for the styles that include reappraisal and natural emotion expression. Also as in Study 1, suppression is not negative per se as it did not have a negative impact when combined with reappraisal or natural emotion expression.

As regards the motivational variables, we should first note that all means were relatively high (external: $M = 6.00$, SD = 0.99; introjected: $M = 6.10$; SD = 1.05 and integrated: $M = 6.13$; SD = 0.91). Overall, external motivation was lower for the *authentics* and the *reappraisers* than for the *flexibles*, whereas the other styles did not differ from each other. The *actors* were higher on introjected motivation than the *suppressors* and the *non-regulators*, which were also lower on integrated motivation. The *authentics* in turn were highest on integrated motivation. Overall, this pattern of results is rather complex and does not present a coherent picture.

8. General discussion

Inspirited by Sutton's (2004) finding that teachers report using more than one emotion regulation strategy, the present research had the goal to study how emotion regulation strategies are combined by employees in the customer service domain to regulate their emotions and give service with a smile. In fact, previous research has largely ignored this issue. In fact, only one study (van Middendorp et al., 2005) has addressed this issue systematically, but in the context of pain regulation.

We found that emotion regulation strategies are combined into distinct emotion regulation styles. Specifically, the three classic emotion regulation strategies, reappraisal (or deep acting), suppression (surface acting) and naturally felt emotion (Diefendorff et al., 2005) can be logically combined into eight different styles (see Table 1). Of these, six were found to be used by employees in the customer service sector, four of these across two studies.

9. Why combine strategies?

Before describing the styles proper, it is first important to consider the impact of combining strategies. Table 2 shows the intercorrelations between the three emotion regulation strategies across the two studies. When considering these strategies

individually, the pattern of correlation is often contradictory. Thus, deep acting and surface acting sometimes correlate positively (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003; Goldberg & Grandey, 2007; Grandey, 2003) and at other times negatively or even not at all (Cossette & Hess, 2012; Diefendorff et al., 2005; Gosserand & Diefendorff, 2005). These contradictory findings can be explained when considering styles instead of isolated strategies. Thus, among the styles replicating across both studies, both the *flexibles* and the *authentics* include reappraisal and naturally felt emotion as strategies. In fact, these two strategies have been previously found to correlate positively (Diefendorff et al., 2005; Cossette & Hess, 2012). At the same time, these studies suggest a negative correlation between naturally felt emotion and surface acting, yet the *flexible* style combines these strategies. That is, even though a consideration of the strategies alone suggests that employees who prefer natural emotion expression or antecedent based emotion regulation do not take recourse to suppression (Grandey, 2000; Gross, 1998), our findings suggest that there is indeed a subgroup of individuals who do just that. And, in fact, these employees seem to have particularly good outcomes with regard to job satisfaction and affective commitment.

Overall, the percentage of employees who report using at least two strategies is 67% in Study 1 and 50% in Study 2, which is in accordance with Sutton's (2004) findings that a majority of individuals uses at least two strategies for emotion regulation at work.

Yet, as suggested by the research on emotion regulation cited above, surface acting or emotion suppression (Studies 1 and 2) and reappraisal (Study 2) do seem to appear for some employees the only strategy used (*suppressors* and *reappraisers*). However, the percentage who do so is lower than for combined strategies. One style found in both studies describes employees who do not report using any of the emotion regulation strategies (*non-regulators*). It is interesting to speculate why this is the case. On one hand it is possible that these employees use another strategy, for example, emotion simulation (Grandey, 2000). Alternatively, it is possible that these employees are so detached from their work, that they do not experience negative emotions while interacting with customers. The high level of external motivation and low levels of more self-determined motivations found for this group hint at this possibility.

While four styles emerged in Study 1, six emerged in Study 2. One likely reason for this difference is the difference in samples. The participants in Study 1 were predominantly students who worked part-time, a group for whom their work likely is not at the centre of their identity. By contrast, the participants of Study 2 were employees for whom their job constitutes an important aspect of their identity. Yet, specifically, the style labelled *actors*, which emerged only in Study 2, has been described in Arlie Hochschild's original work (1983) as linked to role-play, with the suggestion that employees are invested in this role. Hence it is not unlikely that this style would be more likely adopted by employees who are indeed invested in their work rather than those who consider this a passing stage in their career.

Two styles did not emerge in either study, the *natural expressers* who use only naturally felt emotion, and the *responses regulators* who combine surface acting and naturally felt emotion. However, it can be argued that these styles are quite unlikely for customer service jobs. It is indeed unlikely that in a context which presents a high incidence of toxic service interactions (see Mann, 1999) employees would happen to only experience natural emotions which conform to organizational display rules, as this would require a level of inner peace that would be most unusual.

As regards the combination of surface acting and naturally felt emotion, this can also be considered unusual. As noted above, these two strategies generally have been found to correlate negatively (Diefendorff et al., 2005; Cossette & Hess, 2012). They also assume very different approaches to emotion regulation in that natural expression assumes an employee whose social skills guide

interactions into forms which correspond to the organizational display rules, whereas suppression is usually considered a belated reaction to a suddenly developing emotional crisis. One possibility for these strategies to be used together could be a situation where prolonged interactions with customers that are known are occasionally intermixed with short irrelevant interactions (such as changing money, see Morris & Feldman, 1996), which would however not be a profile typically found in call centres.

10. Consequences of emotion regulation styles

The *flexible* and *authentic styles* were associated with higher job satisfaction in both studies and with higher affective commitment in Study 2. These positive effects are likely due to the fact that reappraisal and naturally felt emotion is part of these styles as these strategies have been linked previously to higher job satisfaction (Cossette & Hess, 2012). As mentioned above, the *flexible* style is a very interesting case as it also includes the use of suppression, which is generally associated with lack of satisfaction and emotional disengagement (Hülsheger & Schewe, 2011) and even intention to quit (Chau, Dahling, Levy, & Diefendorff, 2009). As such, this finding is of particular interest, because it shows that styles are not simply an agglomeration of strategies but rather represent a way to approach work place challenges with regard to emotion regulation. The use of suppression as one part of an emotion regulation "tool box" is therefore quite different from the exclusive or predominant use of this strategy because the underlying motivation differs. The *flexible* style was associated with relatively more self-determined forms of motivation in both studies suggesting that employees endorse the necessity to regulate their emotions and hence do not suffer as much from emotional dissonance when using suppression as one of possible means to that end. By contrast the suppressing style, which includes only suppression has less positive effects.

It is interesting to note that when the three strategies are considered separately (see Table 2) they tend to correlate in expected directions (see e.g., Hülsheger & Schewe, 2011) with intentions to quit, yet, when the strategies are combined into styles these associations vanish. This seems to suggest that this first observation is an artifact of averaging over very different styles. When the strategies are considered in the actual combinations they occur in, their consequences are in fact quite different. Again, this may be explained by the fact, that the use of a strategy within a given style may be motivated differently for different styles and the consequences on work attitudes are based on an employees global stance towards their job of which emotion regulation styles may be a consequence as much as a cause.

11. Motivation to regulate emotions and emotion regulation styles

One of the question we asked was whether motivation to regulate emotions either by showing positive emotions or by suppressing negative emotions is linked to the use of specific styles. Overall, the results point somewhat in the direction that especially the *flexible* and *authentic* styles are associated with more self-determined motivation whereas the suppressing and non-regulated styles are more likely to be linked to external motivation, but the results are far from homogeneous within and between studies. There are several likely reasons for these somewhat disjointed findings. First, both studies only considered one side of the organizational display rule expressed in "service with a smile." Service with a smile demands the motivation to express positive emotions which was assessed in Study 1 as well as the frequent suppression of negative emotions when they occur, which was assessed in

Study 2. Thus, neither study used a motivational measure that truly captures the actual emotion regulation task, which is to do both at the same time. Further, and more importantly, self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) conceives of an individual's motivation as situated on a continuum. Thus, it is obvious for example, that people are motivated to work because they need money (external motivation) but they also may have fun solving problems (intrinsic motivation, Gagné & Deci, 2005) and it would be wrong to link only the one or the other to their outcomes at work. One problem in the context of emotion regulation is the absence of a theoretical viable intrinsic motivation to suppress or express emotions in line with an organizational demand, as by definition intrinsic motivation cannot be demand driven. It is therefore not possible to adopt the continuum approach to the current situation. In some ways, the present research supports the continuum approach by showing that individual motivations cannot fully capture the complexity of motivational processes as they occur in complex settings with divergent demands such as the workplace. Overall, however, the use of the motivational measure, for all its inadequacy, provides a strong hint that underlying motivation to conform to organizational display rules should be assessed in future research, ideally by developing a scale that encompasses both aspects of the display rules and by developing a new continuum measure that can be used in the absence of intrinsic motivation.

12. Limitations of this study and future research

The present research contributes to our understanding of emotion regulation at work by showing that emotion regulation is most often not restricted to the blind application of one strategy to all contexts but rather consists of using different regulation tools together. However, the present research presents some limitations. First, as all studies based on cross-sectional questionnaires, there is the issue of common method variance, which may inflate estimates of associations. However, as this bias uniformly increases correlations between measures, it mostly makes it more difficult to discern heterogeneous clusters, but should not bias the clusters that emerge nonetheless. As common method variance may also attenuate differences between groups, the results of the analyses of variance should be considered conservative estimates.

In future studies, it may therefore be interesting to measure styles at one time and outcomes at a different time. Yet, as mentioned above, it is possible that styles and outcomes have a reciprocal relationship, which would not be captured in such a design. Alternatively, different methods (for example, interviews or supervisor evaluations) could be used to assess outcomes.

In addition, as we created clusters of employees based on the styles they naturally use, we employed a correlational design, which does not allow causal inferences. However, it should be noted that there are theoretical reasons to assume a reciprocal relationship between our variables (see above) hence this issue is of less relevance for this initial research style. Future research could use measurements at several time points and use structural equation modelling to capture the complex interrelations of variables. In all, the present research provides first evidence for the usefulness of considering emotion regulation styles rather than isolated strategies and point to exiting future research in this domain.

Disclosure of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest concerning this article.

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