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MASTER IN HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

The relationship between Supervisor Feedback Environment and Job Satisfaction. The mediating role of Job Clarity and Leader-Member exchange.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine how the supervisor's feedback environment studied through seven dimensions has an impact on job satisfaction. It also explores the relationships that the role clarity and the leader-member exchange develop with both the supervisor feedback environment and job satisfaction and the existence of mediating role between them.

A sample of 213 employees in a private company across Greece was used and data were collected with the use of online structured questionnaires and subsequently analyzed by Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) using "SmartPLS 4.0.0".

The results showed that the supervisor feedback environment influences positively directly job satisfaction. In addition, it was found that the supervisor feedback environment positively influences the role clarity and the leader-member exchange. Similarly, the role clarity positive affects job satisfaction and leader member exchange has marginal positive affect on job satisfaction. Finally, it was observed that leader member exchange has patial mediating role between the supervisor feedback environment and job satisfaction.

Key words: Supervisor feedback environment, Role clarity, Leader member exchange, Job satisfaction

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INTRODUCTION

The importance of feedback for individual and organizational performance is well established (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). More recent studies of the feedback environment have abandoned typologies of available feedback information and have put more emphasis on the development of an organisational environment that is supportive of feedback interactions and processes in an organization (Levy & Williams, 2004).

Feedback is a subset of information available to individuals in their work environment that denotes how well individuals are meeting various goals, involves information about how their behavior are perceived and evaluated by relevant others (Ashford & Cummings, 1983). Another definition of feedback denotes that it is information that is given to persons regarding the quantity or quality of their past performance (Prue & Fairbank, 1981). Feedback includes referent information which indicate the type of behaviors are most appropriate for achieving the desired goal and appraisal information which give the information as to how the behavior is being perceived and evaluated by others (Greller & Herold, 1975). Feedback is considered an informal process by which employees receive day-to-day assessments of their work (Farr, 1993; Kingsley-Westerman, Reno & Heuett, 2018). Feedback environment researchers stressed that employees have continuous access to performance-related information from a variety of sources, that different cues can serve as feedback information, and that available feedback is affected by a range of factors other than an objective performance episode (Ashford, 1993).

One of the primary definitions presents that feedback is a special case of the general communication process in which some sender (source) conveys a message to a recipient (Ilgen, Fisher & Taylor, 1979). As a source we are able to say that people get information from (a) organizational and supervisory communications, (b) individuals not in a formal hierarchical relationship (usually co-workers but conceivably others outside the organization, such as clients), and from (c) the process of performing the task (task or self-feedback) (Prue & Fairbank, 1981) but the highest levels of consistent

effects were associated with the delivery by supervisors/managers and researchers (86%) (Alvero, Bucklin & Austin, 2001).

Original feedback sources as potential sources of information in working environments amongst others can be differentiated into supervisor, co-worker, or self-feedback (Greller & Herold, 1975). The study of Ilgen, Fisher & Taylor (1979) shed light on the psychological process of feedback and emphases on those aspects of feedback that influence (a) the way it is perceived, (b) its acceptance by the recipient, and (c) the willingness of the recipient to respond to the feedback. Moreover, the study of Ashford and Cumming (1983) shows off the two-way relationship of feedback introducing the feedback seeking behavior. This study explains that when individuals experience uncertainty about either the appropriate behavior for achieving a goal or how those behaviors may be evaluated within a work setting, they will be motivated to seek feedback. Individuals embody and act in light of three types of broad goal orientations that influence how they approach and interpret feedback-related situations; learning, performance-prove, and performance-avoid goal orientation (Payne, Youngcourt & Beaubien, 2007; Seijts et al., 2004; VandeWalle, 1997).

In line with numerous researchers this study chose to focus on the supervisor part of the feedback environment because the supervisor's role offers more opportunities for organizational intervention. Leader support will be used to refer to specific supportive behaviors displayed by supervisors or leaders. Support includes elements of emotional, instrumental and structural support (Bowling et al., 2004).

The theory that emphasizes the importance of perceived organizational support through feedback from supervisors is organizational support theory (OST). According to the OST, employees develop global beliefs and perceptions of organizational support concerning the extent to which the organization cares about their well-being and values their contribution (Eisenberger et al., 1986). When supervisors feel supported by the organization, they tend to respond by providing support to subordinates (Shanock & Eisenberger, 2006) and this perceived supervisor support relates to subordinate outcomes the same way organizational support does, such that subordinates respond to it with increased performance and commitment (Eisenberger et al., 2002).

Kluger and DeNisi in 1996 conducted a very important meta-analysis where central assumption of feedback intervention theory is that feedback interventions

change the locus of attention among three general and hierarchically organized levels of control: task learning, task motivation, and meta-tasks (including self-related) processes. The results suggest that feedback intervention effectiveness decreases as attention moves up the hierarchy closer to the self and away from the task. However, one major advantage is that performance feedback intervention has been reported to be less expensive to implement than other productivity enhancement technique (Prue & Fairbank, 1981). Feedback differs from performance appraisals which are often a formal meeting in which the employee's performance, issues related to the employee, and goals are discussed (Gordon & Miller, 2011; Kingsley-Westerman, Reno & Heuett, 2018)

The fact that there are lots of definitions about the term feedback make some researchers skeptical. Peterson (1982) advised, ''Much ambiguity would be eliminated if behavior analysts no longer used the term 'feedback.' It is not a new principle of behavior and does not refer to a specific procedure; it at best has simply become professional slang'' (p. 102). Our opinion is that feedback is critical in new business world with a lot of deep affects.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Supervisor Feedback Environment

Only after we have a means for assessing the feedback environment will we be able to ask questions concerning how people use the information available, whether people pay differential attention to sources, whether people respond differently to information from different sources, and how different attempts at restructuring jobs or changing management systems or processes will impact information availability and utilization (Herold & Parsons, 1985). Supervisor feedback is a form of managerial intervention for decreasing uncertainty and clarifying roles and goals in an organization (Moynihan and Pandey, 2007; Lee, 2019; Bak, 2020). The four basic feedback mechanisms have been used in the OBM literature are verbal, written, mechanical, and self-recorded (Prue & Fairbank, 1981). Ilgen, Fischer and Taylor (1979) already

mentioned the source as the possible most important influence factor on feedback acceptance.

The empirical study of Steelman, Levy and Snell (2004) showed that employees in a favorable feedback environment were more motivated to use feedback, were more satisfied with the provided feedback, and sought feedback more frequently. If supervisors or coworkers regularly provide constructive feedback to an individual, feedback that allows an individual to attain more social and tangible benefits, according to social exchange theory he/she is more likely to understand the benefits of the relationship and repay the group with increased attachment (Blau, 1964; Young & Steelman, 2014). Also, numerous studies tried to explore the mechanisms of feedback environment. According to Norris-Watts and Levy (2004) the relationship between the feedback environment and the employee's organisational citizenship behaviors was partially mediated by affective commitment. Moreover, the relationship between the feedback environment and employee morale is mediated by perceptions of employee politics (Rosen, Levy & Hall, 2006; Anseel & Lievens, 2007).

2.1.1. Supervisor Availability

Supervisor source availability is operationalized as the perceived amount of contact an employee has with his or her supervisor and the ease with which feedback can be obtained (Steelman, Levy & Snell, 2004). According to Butler (1991) availability is one of the ten different conditions that trust can be based along with integrity, openness, loyalty, promise fulfillment, competence, fairness, discreteness, receptivity, and reliability. As an example, being physically present with an open door (availability) is one way to engender trust.

2.1.2. Supervisor Credibility

Credible leaders are those who challenge the process (search for opportunities, experiment and take risk), inspire a shared vision (envision the future, enlist others), enable others to act (foster trusting relationships, strengthen others), model the way (set good examples, plan small wins), encourage the Heart (recognize individual

accomplishment, celebrate group success) (Kouzes & Posner,1988; Gabris & Ihrke, 2000). Source credibility (Perloff, 2003; Kingsley-Westerman, Reno and Heuett, 2018) consists of three dimensions: expertise, trustworthiness, and goodwill. In two recent investigations, perceived supervisor credibility was found to correlate significantly with subordinate satisfaction with immediate supervision (Falcione, 1973; Falcione, 1976). When supervisors take the time to explain the reasoning behind changes, when they share ideas with employees, when they exhibit trust in their subordinates, and when they delegate power and authority, employees perceive them as credible leaders and these leaders are perceived as agents of change, as persons willing to take risks, and as persons who learn by doing (Gabris & Ihrke, 2000). Thus, the more motivated supe Feedback provided by the high- (vs. low-) credible source led to higher perceived feedback accuracy and feedback satisfaction (Bannister, 1986; Lechermeier & Fassnacht, 2018).

2.1.3. Feedback Quality

Since the day-to-day interactions that employees have with other members of the target group shape the content of information used in the identification process, it is essential that this interaction consist of high-quality feedback and communication as manifested in a favorable feedback environment. If the feedback environment is advantageous, feedback will be perceived as "information" to improve one's fit with the target group rather than as an "evaluation." This does not mean that a favorable feedback environment does not give out negative feedback, but rather that the feedback is delivered in a way that does not cause rejection or defensiveness (Steelman and Rutkowski, 2004). High-quality feedback is specific, is consistent across time, and provides information on the specific goal-related behaviors and processes that result in performance outcomes (London, 2003; Steelman, Levy & Snell, 2004). Empirical evidence indicates that feedback high in quality augmented with supplemental information pertaining to the task, strategies, and appropriate task behaviors influences subsequent performance in a positive, monotonic way (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996).

2.1.4. Feedback Delivery

Subordinates who feel supported by their supervisor attribute it in part to the organization as a whole and perceived supervisor support leads to greater subordinate POS (Eisenberger et al., 2002). In most cases confidential private feedback based on a comparison of workers' performance with baseline levels, or a predetermined standard avoids the competition and aversiveness that could be unintended side effects of public feedback (Prue & Fairbank, 1981).

2.1.5. Favorable and Unfavorable feedback

One of the most important aspects of a feedback message is probably its sign, that is, whether it is positive or negative. The receipt of positive feedback frequently conveys the message that performance is "on target" and that the individual is meeting standards (Podsakoff & Farh, 1989). Positive feedback (vs. negative feedback) received higher ratings of message content quality and led to higher feedback acceptance (Morran, Stockton & Robison, 1985; Lechermeier & Fassnacht, 2018). When the performance assessments may be negative (e.g., their performances are below the acceptable level), employees may not accept the results to defend their self-esteem (Lee, 2019). Papousek, Paechter and Lackner (2011) examined receiver stress reactions to negative feedback and the results indicate that negative performance-related feedback may prolong psychophysiological responses to stressful conditions, when the feedback is inconsistent with the domain-specific self-concept. Managers need training in how to give negative feedback and make it constructive, managers do not explain the performance rating process, and managers are not rewarded for developing subordinates (London, 1997; Steelman, Levy & Snell, 2004). Negative feedback from a high- credible source led to higher motivation to use the feedback (Steelman & Rutkowski ,2004a; Lechermeier & Fassnacht, 2018).

2.1.6. Feedback Seeking

Feedback-seeking behavior can be defined as the conscious devotion of effort towards determining the correctness and adequacy of one's behaviors for attaining valued goals (Ashford, 1986). Employees seek feedback either by directly asking their supervisors for feedback (inquiry) or by observing their environments and others for cues that might serve as feedback information (monitoring) (Ashford & Cumming, 1983). According to Tuckey, Brewer and Williamson (2002) three are the main motives in the feedback seeking process : (a) the desire for useful information (Ashford & Cummings, 1983), (b) the desire to protect one's ego and self-esteem from the threat of negative feedback (Ashford & Cummings, 1983) and (c) the desire to control the impressions others form of us, involving both defensive impression management (to avoid creating an unfavorable image) and assertive impression management (to enhance our public image) (Morrison & Bies, 1991).

Ashford, De Stobbeleir and Nujella in 2016 noticed several remarkable shifts in feedback seeking behavior. First, there has been a shift from a focus on studying the antecedents of feedback seeking to an examination of the potential outcomes associated with it. Second, there are signs of a shift from studying feedback seeking as a predominantly adaptive strategy to an understanding of how it may also stimulate creativity or be part of a leadership style. Finally in what is perhaps the most radical shift, feedback seeking is no longer studied solely as an individual resource, but also as a phenomenon that may impact team dynamics and even collective outcomes.

2.2. Role Clarity

A "role" is defined as a set of expectations or norms applied to the incumbent by others in the organization, and employees with high role clarity therefore possess a clearer understanding of their requirements (Banton, 1965; Whitaker, Dahling & Levy, 2007). In the limits of role dynamics (Kahn et al., 1964), scholars have frequently examined the concept of uncertainty through a lens of role clarity and its obverse, role

ambiguity. According to the role theory (Rizzo, House & Lirtzman, 1970), role clarity is defined as the degree to which required information is provided about how the employee is expected to perform his or her job. Bauer et al. (2007) have summarized that the most commonly investigated construct in the organizational socialization literature includes role clarity, task mastery/self-efficacy, and group integration/social acceptance. The studies of McDowall and Fletcher (2004), and Rousseau et al. (2004) suggest that role clarity is significantly and positively correlated with organizational citizenship behavior. Individuals who perceive that they are clear about their role are more likely to be engaged in doing more than their described job roles.

Role clarity is related to numerous positive organizational outcomes and practitioners for years have focused on interventions such as responsibility charting, role analysis, and role negotiation designed to remove sources of role ambiguity (Schaubroeck et al., 1993; Zheng et al.,2016). Role ambiguity has been defined as the degree to which clear information is lacking regarding a) the expectations associated with a role; b) methods of fulfilling known role expectations; and c) the consequences of role performance (Kahn et al., 1964). Sometimes role conflict can lead to creativity as individuals resolve differences and ambiguity can facilitate adaptation to changing circumstances and can contribute to administrative flexibility (Ortqvist & Wincent, 2006; Schulz, 2013). Today many people's roles entail solving unstructured problems and, for them, the effects of higher ambiguity levels are more important determinants of satisfaction than are conflicting role pressures.

2.3. Leader-Member Exchange

Leader-Member exchange (LMX) model describes the processes by which a leader and a member develop various behavioral interdependencies between their respective roles and dyads with higher quality interdependencies will demonstrate higher agreement than dyads with lower quality interdependencies (Graen & Schiemann, 1978). The LMX theory, which is based on the role theory and the social exchange theory, explains how supervisors and subordinates develop different types of relationships (Peng & Lin, 2016). LMX theory is concerned with dyadic relationships,

assumes that leaders differentiate among subordinates in the establishment of these relationships, and describes a role-making process that leads to the development of the relationships (Dienesch & Liden, 1986; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; House & Aditya, 1997; Brower, Schoorman & Tan, 2000). The result is relationships that can range from low LMX quality, which are characterized to exchanges that relate to the employment contract and are mainly task-orientated in nature, to high LMX quality, which are depictured by high trust, interaction, support, and rewards, resulting in employees and supervisors being loyal to one another and sharing mutual feelings of liking and respect (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). The benefits of high quality LMX relationships are numerous, including preferential treatment, increased job-related communication, differential allocation of formal and informal rewards, ample access to supervisors, and increased performance-related feedback (Dienesch & Liden, 1986; Elicker, Levy, & Hall, 2006; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). On the other hand, subordinates in low quality LMX relationships often experience the exact opposite; supervisors provide limited emotional support and trust and the subordinates receive few, if any, benefits outside the employment contract (Dienesch & Liden, 1986; Gerstner & Day, 1997).

Leader trust in subordinate (LTS) and subordinate trust in leader (STL) are likely to have a direct relationship with each other such that trusting actions of one element in the dyad are likely to be reciprocated by the other (Brower, Schoorman & Tan, 2000). Moreover, according to the same study in a dyadic leadership context, only the leader can assess the extent to which he or she trusts a particular subordinate. The subordinate may assess how much he or she believes the leader trusts in him/her, but his/her perception may not agree with the leader's report of his or her trust in the subordinate because it is based on perception, not actuality.

2.4. Job Satisfaction

According to Locke (1969) job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are a function of the perceived relationship between what one wants from one's job and what one perceives it as offering or entailing. There are three elements involved in the appraisal process (these elements are not experienced as separate during an emotional reaction

but may be isolated by a process of abstraction): 1) the perception of some aspect of the job; 2) an implicit or explicit value standard; and 3) a conscious or subconscious judgment of the relationship between (e.g., discrepancy between) one's perception(s) and one's value(s). More recent, according to Luthans in 2006 Job satisfaction has three dimensions, which are: (1) Job satisfaction is emotional response to work situation. Therefore, job satisfaction can be seen and predicted; (2) Job satisfaction is often determined by how well the achieved result fulfill or exceed expectation; (3) Job satisfaction represents several related attitudes.

Job satisfaction is a worker's sense of achievement and success on the job. It is generally perceived to be directly linked to productivity as well as to personal well-being. Job satisfaction implies doing a job one enjoys, doing it well and being rewarded for one's efforts. Job satisfaction further implies enthusiasm and happiness with one's work. Job satisfaction is the key ingredient that leads to recognition, income, promotion, and the achievement of other goals that lead to a feeling of fulfillment (Kaliski, 2007; Aziri, 2011). The importance of job satisfaction specially emerges to surface if had in mind the many negative consequences of job dissatisfaction such a lack of loyalty, increased absenteeism, increase number of accidents etc. (Aziri, 2011). Job satisfaction is often conceptualized as a global construct comprised of multiple facets including pay, promotions, coworkers, supervision, and the work itself (Kinicki et al., 2002; Zheng et al., 2016). More than one third of feedback interventions had negative effect on performance (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996).

2.5 Relationships and Hypotheses

2.5.1. FES and Role clarity- LMX model.

The important role of organizational support for feedback is consistent with and suggested by research showing how organizational support can enhance or detract from continuous learning (London & Smither, 1999). The widespread availability of effective coaching is likely to be a hallmark of organizations with a strong feedback culture. The coach may be a supervisor, mentor, an external (e.g., executive) coach, a

peer, or even a subordinate. Coaching is not a one-time, one-way relationship. Coaching may focus on improving skills, performance, development opportunities, and solving business problems over time (Kilburg, 1996; Witherspoon & White, 1997; London & Smither, 2002).

Training feedback sources to provide feedback high in quality may effectively curb misdirected or insufficient effort on part of those lacking a clear understanding of role expectations (Whitaker & Levy, 2012). Employee's' feelings of uncertainty are the primary determinant of desire for feedback (Ashford & Cummings, 1983). Uncertainty reduction theory predicts that people have an aversion to uncertainty and will gather information to reduce uncertainty feelings. When managers have the respect and admiration of their subordinates, they enjoy more degrees of freedom when attempting to get subordinates to perform needed tasks (Podsakoff & Schriesheim, 1985; Kacmar, Wayne & Wright, 1996)

Hypothesis 1. *Employee's perceptions of Supervisor Feedback Environment will positively associated with role clarity.*

Hypothesis 2. *Employee's perception of Supervisor Feedback Environment will positively associated with Leader-Member Exchange.*

2.5.2. The Relationship Between Role Clarity – LMX and Job Satisfaction.

Dysfunctional consequences of role conflict and ambiguity were tension, turnover, dissatisfactions, anxiety, and lower performance (Gross, 1958; Kahn et al., 1964; Schuler, Aldag & Brief, 1977). In the same line Rizzo, House and Lirtzman (1970) showed role ambiguity to be statistically significantly and negatively associated with satisfaction with advancement, social environment, job security, pay, recognition, autonomy. In operationalizing the job satisfaction, Hettiarachchi (2014) include the work responsibilities as one of the job satisfaction dimensions and found that job performance and the work responsibilities have a significant relation.

Sparr and Sonnentag in 2008 shed light on fairness perceptions of supervisor feedback, LMX and employee well-being at work. This research defines distributive justice as the fairness of the feedback content. Specially supports that a feedback

message will be perceived as fair if it properly reflects the employee's effort, performance, and results of work. Procedural fairness regarding to feedback refers to the process in which information was gathered that formed the feedback message. This process is considered as fair if it relies on accurate information, is free from bias and is based on adequate procedures. Moreover the same study refers that interpersonal feedback fairness depicts the way the feedback source treats the feedback recipient. Fair treatment is characterized by politeness and respectfulness. Finally, informational feedback fairness encompasses the sincerity of the communication and provision of adequate explanations of the feedback message.

Hypothesis 3. *Role clarity will be positively associated with job satisfaction.*

Hypothesis 4. *Leader-Member exchange will be positively associated with job satisfaction.*

2.5.3. The Mediating Role of Role Clarity and LMX.

People are generally motivated to learn about themselves, verify their self-image, and enhance their self-confidence (Baumeister, 1998; London & Smither, 2002). The individual's feedback orientation depends in part on the support and climate for learning. The more frequent the feedback and the closer it follows the behavior in question, the more likely it is to be accepted (Cederblom, 1982). According to Jong (2016), feedback helps employees perform their work more effectively, improves communication between supervisors and employees and influences how individuals perceive their competence and accomplishment, thus leading to enhanced motivation and satisfaction. A high level of credibility or ability attributed to the manager may in turn increase the subordinate's acceptance of the feedback provided by the manager (Ilgen, Fisher & Taylor, 1979). Also, if the feedback is accepted by the subordinate, behavior changes suggested by the manager to increase a subordinate's performance may be more likely to occur.

Social learning theory and control theory suggest that feedback sign affects an individual's satisfaction, goal setting, and performance through the feedback's effect on the individuals' perceptions of the discrepancies between his or her behavior and the behavior standards he or she is trying to attain (Podsakoff & Farh, 1989). The

subordinate's reaction to the supervisor's behavior always depends upon the relationship between the supervisory act as perceived by the subordinate and the expectations, values, and interpersonal skills of the subordinate (Likert, 1961; Locke, 1969). To relate feedback directly to behavior is very confusing. Results are contradictory and seldom straight-forward. (Ilgen, Fisher, & Taylor, 1979).

Employees with goal clarity through supervisor feedback will have greater work motivation (Moynihan & Pandey, 2007; Bak, 2020). Taylor, Fisher and Ilgen (1984) suggested that clear standards were an important intermediary between feedback and changes in performance. From this perspective, an employee with poorly understood behavioral standards could disregard important feedback because he or she does not recognize that it is relevant and useful, resulting in no improvements in performance. Moreover, when the feedback sign is negative, people choose to increase their effort, rather than lower the standard, when the goal is clear, when high commitment is secured for it, and when belief in eventual success is high (Bandura & Cervone, 1983; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996).

Previous research has shown that the acceptance of feedback depends on its perceived credibility (Ilgen, Fisher & Taylor, 1979) the effects of such feedback on satisfaction and performance should be greater for individuals who perceive that the feedback sender is a credible source than for those individuals who perceive the source to lack credibility (Podsakoff & Farh, 1989).

Gerstner and Day (1997) in their meta-analytic review of LMX theory demonstrated that the quality of LMX was a meaningful predictor of general job satisfaction and this line of reasoning on the interpersonal mechanism of leader–member exchange guides to the hypothesis that LMX will mediate the relationship between the feedback environment and job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 5. *Supervisor feedback environment will be positively associated with job satisfaction.*

Hypothesis 6. *Role clarity positively mediates the relationship between employee's perception of FES and job satisfaction.*

Hypothesis 7. *Leader-Member exchange positively mediates the relationship between employee's perception of FES and job satisfaction.*

3.METHOD

3.1. Sample And Procedure

For the purposes of our research, we developed an on-line questionnaire. The questions of the questionnaire are 53 in total and in each one the respondents were asked to answer a through Likert scale, referring to the extent in which they agree with each statement.

For this study 213 private employees in Greece area answered the questionnaire. The method is the convenience sampling which is defined as a method adopted by researchers where they collect market research data from a conveniently available pool of respondents. It is the most used sampling technique as it's incredibly prompt, uncomplicated, and economical. In many cases, members are readily approachable to be a part of the sampleς (Creswell, 2022). The female participants are 119 (55,9%) and the male 94 (44,1%.). Regarding the age of the participants 89(41,8%) are between 31and 40 years old, 78(36,6%) are between 41 and 50 years old, 26(12,12%) are between 18 and 30 years old and only 20(9,4%) are older than 51 years old. As for their experience in their today company 62(29,1%) of the responders have less than 5 years working experience, 26(12,12%) have 6 by 10 years of experience, 57(26,8) have 11 by 15 years of experience, 33(15,5%) have 16 by 20 years of experience and the rest of the responders held more than 21 years of working experience at the today company.

3.2. Measures

For all measures, participants provided responses on a Likert scale. Moreover, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted for all measures used in this paper (Maximum likelihood extraction method, promax rotation). During the EFA process the set of questions of the reflective variable supervisor credibility was removed from the model as the discriminant validity evaluation did not confirm that supervisor credibility has a strong relationship with all of its items. This can be seen below in

Figure 3., in "Two-Step Approached" model, where the supervisor feedback environment appears to be shaped by six instead of seven variables originally proposed.

3.2.1. Feedback Environment Scale

Supervisor feedback was measured using 32 items adapted from the feedback environment scale (FES) developed by Steelman et al. (2004). There are seven facets composing this dimension were assessed with 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Supervisor credibility is the first facet with five items (questions 2.01, 2.08, 2.15, 2.22, 2.29) and a sample of them is "My supervisor is generally familiar with my performance on the job.". Feedback quality has five items (questions 2.02, 2.09, 2.16, 2.23, 2.30) and a sample of them is "My supervisor gives me useful feedback about my job performance.". The Cronbach's alpha for feedback quality is 0,831. Feedback delivery includes also five items (questions 2.03, 2.10, 2.17, 2.24, 2.31) and a sample of them is "My supervisor is supportive when giving me feedback about my job performance.". The Cronbach's alpha for feedback delivery is 0,704. Favorable feedback has four items (questions 2.04, 2.11, 2.18, 2.25) and a sample of them is "When I do a good job at work, my supervisor praises my performance.". The Cronbach's alpha for favorable feedback is 0,847. Unfavorable feedback has four items (questions 2.05, 2.12, 2.19, 2.26) and a sample of them is "My supervisor tells me when my work performance does not meet organizational standards.". The Cronbach's alpha for unfavorable feedback is 0,702. Supervisor availability has five items, (questions 2.06, 2.13, 2.20, 2.27, 2.32) and a sample of them is "My supervisor is usually available when I want performance information.". The Cronbach's alpha for supervisor availability is 0,752. Finally, feedback seeking has four items (questions 2.07, 2.14, 2.21, 2.28) and a sample is "When I ask for performance feedback, my supervisor generally does not give me the information right away.". The Cronbach's alpha for feedback is 0,726.

3.2.2. Role Clarity

We used Sawyer's (1992) 10-item measure of role clarity to assess the degree of clarity with which employees understood their position which was rated on a 6-point Likert type scale ranging from "very uncertain" to "very certain". The scale measures two facets. The first is clarity of goal (5 items, questions 3.01, 3.03, 3.05, 3.07, 3.09), the Cronbach's alpha for goal clarity is 0,83. The second is clarity of processes (5 items, questions 3.02, 3.04, 3.06, 3.08, 3.10), the Cronbach's alpha for feedback is 0,809. The resulting questionnaire asked respondents to indicate how certain or clear they were about each aspect of their work. The response scale was revised to 6 points with anchors ranging from 1 (very uncertain) to 6 (very certain). Sample items include "I am…about my duties and responsibilities." and "I am … about how to divide my time among the tasks required of my job."

3.2.3. Leader Member Exchange

We used the 7-item LMX scale (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995) for measuring leader – member exchange. Participants answered on 5-point Likert type scale with question-specific labels from "not at all" to "very good" (questions 4.01-4.07). Sample items are ''How well does your supervisor understand your work-related problems and needs?" and "Regardless of how much formal authority he/she has built into his/ her position, what are the chances that your supervisor would use his/ her power to help you solve problems in your work?". Cronbach's alpha is 0,903.

3.2.4. Job Satisfaction

We used 3-item Job Satisfaction scale (Ang et al., 2013) for measuring job satisfaction. Participants answered on 5-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" (questions 5.01-5.03). Sample items include "All in all, I am satisfied with my job" and "In general, I do not like my job". Cronbach's Alpha here is 0,923.

3.3. Control Variables

For this paper some individual – level variables were controlled, such as gender ("male", "female"), age ("18-30", "31-40", "41-50", "51 and older"), years of working experience at the current company ("1-5","6-10", "11-15","16-20", "21 and more). According to the analysis, however, none of the demographic variables had any effect on our model. This is why the reported results do not include any demographic variables.
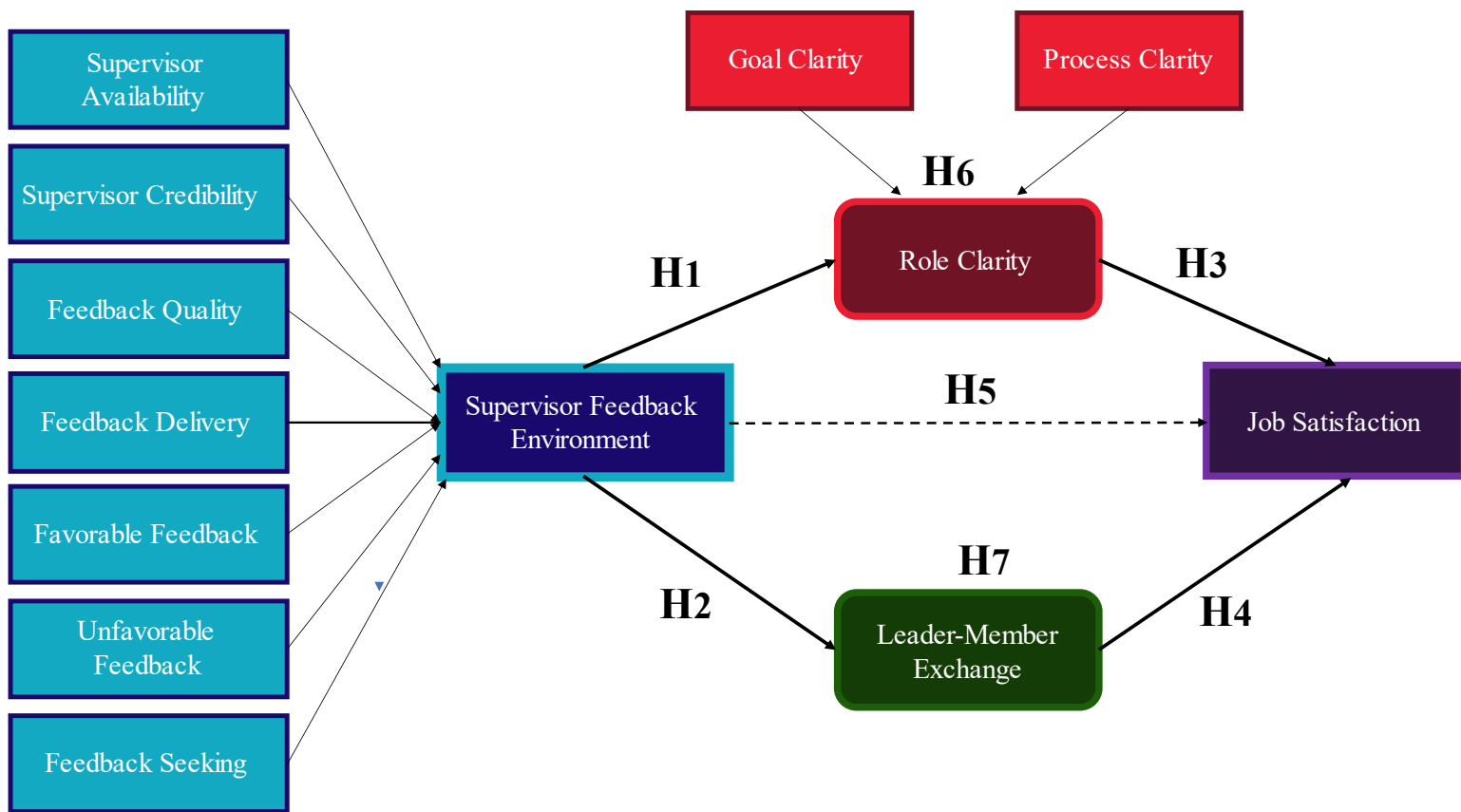
Figure 1. The Proposed model.

Figure 1. illustrates the initial proposed model. Supervisor feedback environment is a formative variable consisting of seven reflective variables. The seven reflective are supervisor availability, supervisor credibility, feedback quality, feedback delivery, favorable feedback, unfavorable feedback and feedback seeking. Each reflective variable consists of sets of four or five similar questions. This model essentially

explores the relationship between supervisor feedback environment and job satisfaction. This is pursued by looking both direct and indirect relationships. Role clarity and LMX are studied as mediators. Role clarity is also a second formative variable consisting of two reflective variables, goal clarity and process clarity. Goal clarity and process clarity consists of set of five similar questions.

3.4 Statistical Analysis

For the needs of the study, "Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)" was applied with the "SmartPLS 4" (Ringle, Wende, Becker, 2014) software. The PLS path modeling method was developed by Wold in 1992 and the PLS algorithm is essentially a sequence of regressions in terms of weight vectors (Henseler et al., 2009).

PLS-SEM is constantly increasing its utility in many fields of research, and it enables the user to include hierarchical component models. PLS-SEM has experienced increasing dissemination in a variety of fields the last years with nonnormal data, small sample sizes and the use of formative indicators being the most prominent reasons for its application. Recent methodological research has extended PLS-SEM's methodological toolbox to accommodate complex model structures or handle data inadequacies such as heterogeneity (Hair, 2014). PLS-SEM can include hierarchical component models, which are comprised by formative and reflective constructs, which was essential element in the research. The proposed model is presented in Figure 1. Specifically, Supervisor Feedback Environment is treated as a "reflective-formative" component and includes Supervisor Availability, Supervisor Credibility, Feedback Quality, Supervisor Delivery, Favorable Feedback, Unfavorable Feedback and Feedback Seeking. Role Clarity also is treated as a "reflective-formative" and consists of Goal Clarity and Process Clarity.
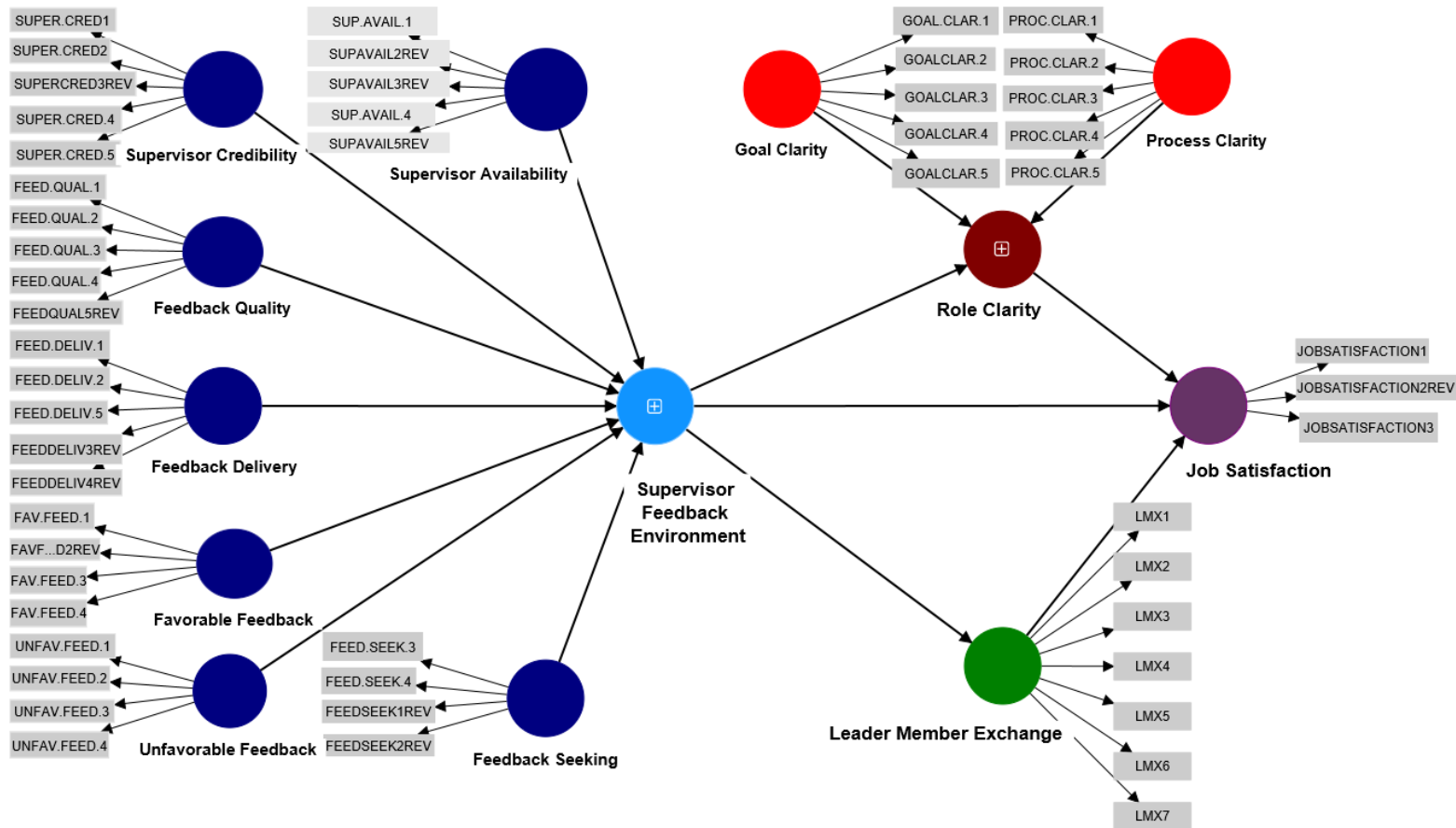
Figure 2. Proposed model on Smart PLS.

The "repeated indicators approach" was followed with (formative) measurement mode (Becker, Klein and Wetzels, 2012) in combination with the "two-step approach" (Hair et al., 2014). Figure 3 depicts the final model.

3.5 Assessment of the Measurement Model

As is seen in figure 2, contains both reflective and formative indicators. When assessing reflective outer models, researchers should verify both the reliability and validity through the use of an "individual indicator reliability", "composite reliability (CR)", and "Average Variance Extracted (AVE)". Table 1 presents all factor loadings are above 0.5 threshold, while the AVE and CR scored were above the threshold of 0.50 and 0.70, respectively. The AVE is the grand mean value of the squared loadings of a set of indicators (Hair et al., 2014) and is equivalent to the communality of a

Table 1. Construct Reliability and Validity.

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
FAVORABLE FEEDBACK	0.847	0.858	0.897	0.686
FEEDBACK DELIVERY	0.704	0.712	0.834	0.627
FEEDBACK QUALITY	0.831	0.831	0.922	0.856
FEEDBACK SEEKING	0.726	0.747	0.878	0.783
GOAL CLARITY	0.837	0.838	0.925	0.860
JOB SATISFACTION	0.923	0.927	0.963	0.929
LMX	0.903	0.914	0.929	0.723
PROCESS CLARITY	0.809	0.816	0.875	0.637
SUPERVISOR AVAILABILITY	0.752	0.757	0.843	0.573
UNFAVORABLE FEEDBACK	0.702	0.709	0.833	0.625

construct. Cronbach's alpha reliability (Cronbach, 1951) is one of the most widely used measures of reliability in the social and organizational sciences. Cronbach's alpha reliability describes the reliability of a sum (or average) of q measurements where the q measurements may represent q raters, occasions, alternative forms, or questionnaire/test items. The results of the construct validity of the test will give a better understanding of the quality measures used but significant and good reliability coefficient does not guarantee an accurately measured construct (Hair et al., 2010). The results of Table 1 ensure the reliability and validity of our model and permit us to examine the Discriminant validity.

Discriminant validity represents the extent to which the construct is empirically

Table 2. Discriminant Validity, Heterotrait- Monotrait ratio (HTMT).

	FAVORABLE FEEDBACK	FEEDBACK DELIVERY	FEEDBACK QUALITY	FEEDBACK SEEKING	GOAL CLARITY	JOB SATISFACTION	LMX	PROCESS CLARITY	SUPERVISOR AVAILABILITY	UNFAVORABLE FEEDBACK
FAVORABLE FEEDBACK	0.828									
FEEDBACK DELIVERY	0.635	0.792								
FEEDBACK QUALITY	0.698	0.633	0.925							
FEEDBACK SEEKING	0.474	0.607	0.438	0.885						
GOAL CLARITY	0.328	0.341	0.305	0.253	0.927					
JOB SATISFACTION	0.461	0.430	0.500	0.280	0.426	0.964				
LMX	0.695	0.680	0.677	0.490	0.419	0.535	0.850			
PROCESS CLARITY	0.288	0.300	0.352	0.159	0.710	0.433	0.400	0.798		
SUPERVISOR AVAILABILITY	0.704	0.632	0.630	0.615	0.411	0.437	0.683	0.360	0.757	
UNFAVORABLE FEEDBACK	0.457	0.274	0.451	0.267	0.260	0.205	0.399	0.226	0.482	0.791

distinct from other constructs or, in other words, the construct measures what it is intended to measure. Discriminant validity ensures that a construct measure is

empirically unique and represents phenomena of interest that other measures in a structural equation model do not capture (Hair et al., 2010). Regarding Discriminant Validity, the study followed the criteria of Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio which is available in Smart PLS. The discriminant validity can be evaluated by using cross-loading of indicator.According to Henseler, Ringle and Sarstedt in 2015 two standard approaches to assessing the discriminant validity in variance-based SEM—the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the assessment of cross-loadings—have an unacceptably low sensitivity, which means that they are largely unable to detect a lack of discriminant
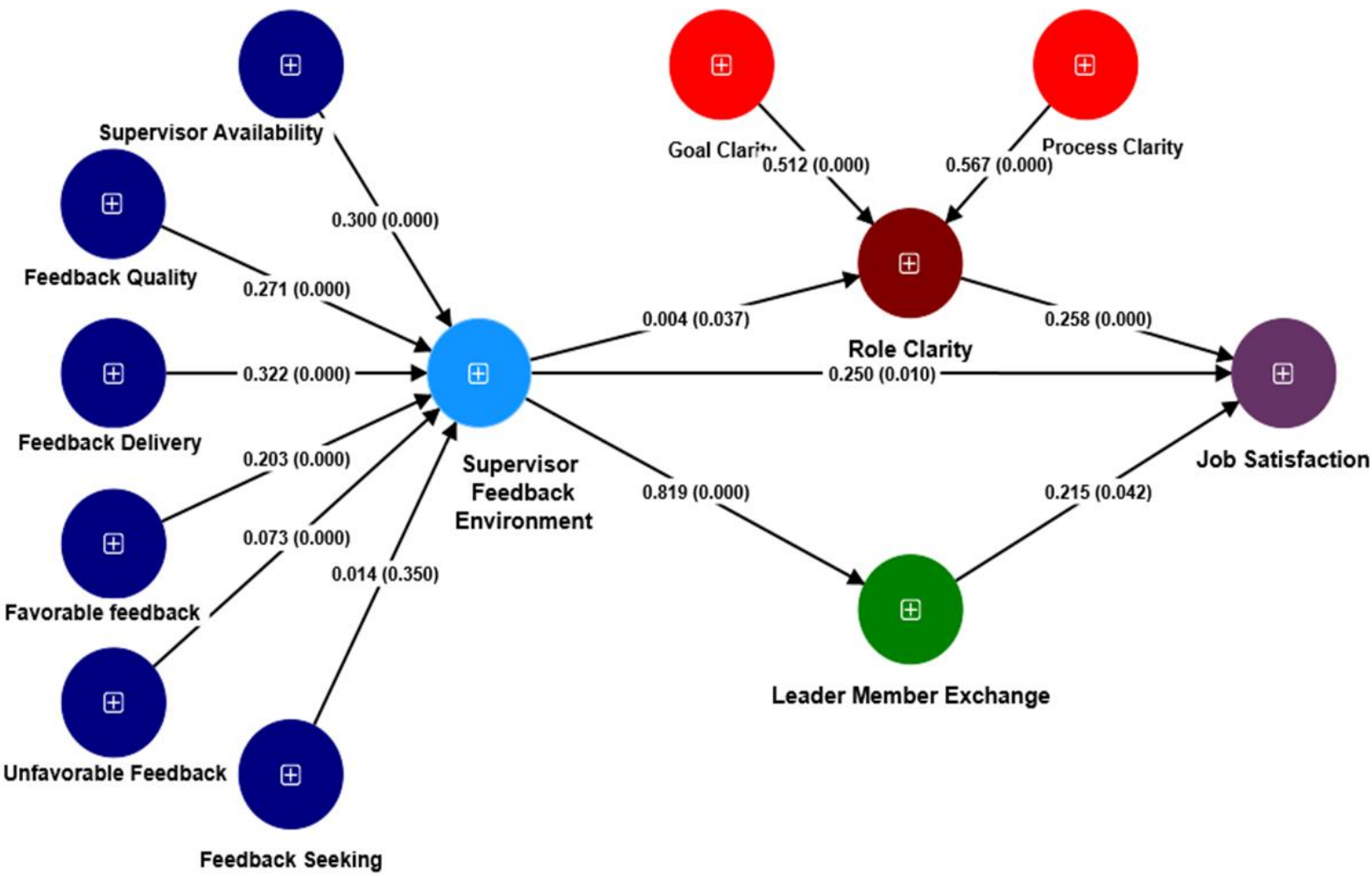
Figure 3. The "Two-Step Approach" model.

validity. As a solution to this critical issue in the same study Henseler, Ringle and Sarstedt present new HTMT criteria, which are based on a comparison of the heterotrait-heteromethod correlations and the monotrait-heteromethod correlations, identify a lack of discriminant validity effectively, as evidenced by their high sensitivity rates.

If all the HTMT values are below 0.85, discriminant validity is achieved. In our model we see three numbers a little more than 0,85 but Smart PLS indicates that they are acceptable. Table 2 reveal that there is Discriminant Validity. Considering these this tables it is safe to say that the model is both reliable and valid. The next step is to test the Hypotheses, through "Two -Step Approach Model, as seen in Figure 3.

3.6 Assessment of Two-Step Approach Model and Results

In analyzing the structural model (Figure 3), the bootstrapping procedure was applied (5000 randomly drawn samples). Table 4 and Figure 3 show the path coefficient along with their significance levels.

According to the statistical Table 3. of path coefficients Supervisor Feedback Environment influences positively Role Clarity ($\beta=0.004$, $p<0.05$) providing that Hypothesis 1 is supported. In the same way Supervisor Feedback Environment influences positively Leader-Member Exchange ($\beta=0.819$, $p<0.01$) providing that Hypothesis 2 is supported.

Table 3. and Figure 3. also reveal that Role Clarity influences positively Job Satisfaction ($\beta=0.258$, $p<0.01$) providing that Hypothesis 3 is supported. Likewise, Leader Member Exchange influences positively Job Satisfaction ($\beta=0.215$, $p<0.05$)

Table 3. Path Coefficients & P-Values.

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean(M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
Favorable feedback -> Supervisor _Feedback_Environment	0.203	0.203	0.020	10.401	0.000
Feedback Delivery -> Supervisor _Feedback_Environment	0.322	0.323	0.018	17.530	0.000
Feedback Quality -> Supervisor _Feedback_Environment	0.271	0.270	0.020	13.875	0.000
Feedback Seeking -> Supervisor _Feedback_Environment	0.014	0.014	0.015	0.935	0.350
Goal Clarity -> Role Clarity	0.512	0.512	0.015	33.881	0.000
Leader Member Exchange -> Job Satisfaction	0.215	0.214	0.105	2.035	0.042
Process Clarity -> Role Clarity	0.567	0.567	0.018	31.380	0.000
Role Clarity -> Job Satisfaction	0.258	0.260	0.070	3.704	0.000
Supervisor Availability -> Supervisor _Feedback_Environment	0.300	0.299	0.022	13.391	0.000
Supervisor _Feedback_Environment -> Job Satisfaction	0.250	0.250	0.097	2.581	0.010
Supervisor _Feedback_Environment -> Leader Member Exchange	0.819	0.819	0.022	37.660	0.000
Supervisor _Feedback_Environment -> Role Clarity	0.004	0.004	0.002	2.091	0.037
Unfavorable Feedback -> Supervisor _Feedback_Environment	0.073	0.074	0.013	5.652	0.000

supporting Hypothesis 4. Hypothesis 5 aims to test the statistical significance of the direct relationship between supervisor feedback environment and job satisfaction. Figure 3 and Table 3 confirm this relationship ($\beta=0.250$, p<0,05) and Hypothesis5 is supported. Furthermore, Hypothesis 6 proposed that Role Clarity mediates the relationship between Supervisor Feedback Environment and Job Satisfaction. Based on the process that is followed regarding mediation, the "indirect effects" between the "independent" and the "dependent" variables should be statistically significant (Zhao, Lynch and Chen, 2010, p. 204). These indirect relationships were calculated based on the "product of-coefficient ($\alpha\beta$)" approach (MacKinnon et al., 2002), via the bootstrap analysis (5.000 samples) option in SmartPLS. According to the Table 5, the indirect

Table 4. Specific Indirect Effects.

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
Supervisor _Feedback_Environment -> Role Clarity -> Job Satisfaction	0.001	0.001	0.001	1.778	0.075
Supervisor _Feedback_Environment -> Leader Member Exchange -> Job Satisfaction	0.335	0.334	0.060	5.550	0.000

effects between Supervisor Feedback Environment and Job Satisfaction ($\alpha\beta = 0.001$, p > 0.05) through Role Clarity aren't statically significant thus Hypothesis 6 is not supported. Hence the indirect effects between Supervisor Feedback Environment and Job Satisfaction ($\alpha\beta = 0.335$, p < 0.01) through Leader Member Exchange ware statically significant thus Hypothesis 7 is supported.

4. DISCUSSION OF THE ANALYSIS

Much of managerial success hinges on the ability to influence others and is interesting to explore why managers choose certain influence tactics over others. This is an important issue because the methods that supervisors use to get things done in an organization have important consequences for the culture of the organization and how people in the organization relate to one another. Thus, a company where most supervisors use pressure and persistence to get things done may attract and retain a very different type of workforce than an organization where managers gain support through rational persuasion and fact-based logic. Some supervisors inspire others to identify with a vision that reaches beyond their own self-interests, while other supervisors take a hands-off approach that essentially avoids leadership duties unless it is absolutely necessary (Bass, 1985; Cable & Judge, 2003).

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of the supervisor feedback on employee mood and specifically on job satisfaction. Many studies confirm that feedback is different from employee evaluation and has a character of constant communication aimed at improving work performance. In trying to shed light on the function of feedback we focus on the role clarity and the leader-member exchange and study whether they act as mediators in the relationship between Supervisor Feedback Environment and job satisfaction.

The first research hypothesis posits that Supervisor Feedback Environment has a positive effect on role clarity. Role clarity is the existence of clear and accurate information about one's duties and responsibilities in a particular role. An individual should be in a position to anticipate with a certain degree of accuracy the outcome that his actions will produce and be able to receive input from his environment about the expectations of his role (Rizzo, House & Lirtzman, 1970). The results of the survey confirmed the first research hypothesis as the statistical analysis of the findings revealed that the Supervisor feedback environment positively influences role clarity. It is worth mentioning that the relationship, although statistically significant, seems weak so further research should be done in the future.

The second hypothesis formulated in this paper concerns how the supervisor's feedback environment affects the leader-member exchange. High-exchange relationships are characterized by high-level of trust, liking, and respect, and they involve expectations of mutual exchange. Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) proposed that a leader should attempt to develop high-exchange relationships with as many subordinates as is feasible. The findings of the research reveal that the relation between Supervisor Feedback Environment and leader-member exchange is positive and very strongly statistically significant.

The third hypothesis in this study concerns how the role clarity affects the job satisfaction. The findings of the survey confirmed that role clarity an contribute to increased job satisfaction. These findings confirm findings of studies that have been conducted in the international literature reporting that role clarity is associated with increased levels of job satisfaction.

The fourth hypothesis in this study concerns how the leader-member exchange affects the job satisfaction. High quality relationships are associated with subordinates receiving increased access, communication, and rewards (Dienesch & Liden, 1986), all of which are related to elevated job satisfaction and performance (in the forms of task and contextual performance), and decreased turnover intentions (Gerstner & Day, 1997). The findings, although the level of the significance is low, confirm the positive relationship between leader-member exchange and job satisfaction which aligns with numerous other studies (Gerstner & Day, 1997; Epitropaki & Martin, 2005; Harris, Wheeler & Kacmar, 2009).

The fifth hypothesis in this study concerns how the supervisor feedback environment effects the job satisfaction. The finding of the survey confirmed that the supervisor feedback environment positively influences job satisfaction and same time reveal that there is a direct relationship between them. The effectiveness of feedback given by managers in performance appraisal processes is largely influenced by

situational factors and has important repercussions for employee performance and satisfaction (Adler, Skov & Salvemini, 1985).

The sixth research hypothesis formulated in this paper concerned whether role clarity haw important mediating role in the relationship between supervisor feedback environment end employee job satisfaction. The finding did not confirm that the role clarity has a mediating role in the relation between feedback and job satisfaction and perhaps more research should be done in the future on this issue.

The seventh and final hypothesis investigates whether the leader-member exchange has a mediating role in the relationship between supervisor feedback environment and job satisfaction. The results verify the existence of this mediating role and indeed because the direct relationship between feedback and job satisfaction is statistically significant, we can speak of partial mediation. Therefore, the leader-member exchange is partial mediator in the relationship between of supervisor feedback environment and job satisfaction.

5. PRACTICAL AND THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

This research can be an opportunity to redefine the role of the supervisor and the way he or she gives feedback in the context of running a business. Despite this important role of supervisory feedback, many supervisors are hesitant to provide feedback, especially difficult feedback, because such comments are often emotionally laden for both supervisee and supervisor or may address personality or personal concerns, which may cause supervisees to wonder if the feedback is even relevant to supervision (Hoffman et al., 2005; Ladany & Melincoff, 1999). In a large part of the organizations the manager seeks to give comprehensive feedback as part of evaluation. This is delicate issue and often not so obvious, but it is capable to create frictions in the daily working life and in the relationships that develop and the feelings that govern the working climate.

According to the finding of the research, supervisor feedback is strongly correlated with the leader-member-exchange. A higher quality leader member exchange is related to better performance, because in a high-quality employees tend to receive better social support, more resources, and more guidance for career development (Gerstner & Day, 1997; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Therefore, we can try to achieve high leader member exchange relationships which are more social in nature and characterized by reciprocity, support, and commitment reinforcing the feedback environment of supervisor. This in turn can be achieved by individually reinforcing the seven elements of the environment with actions. For example, we can implement single workplaces for supervisors and subordinates to increase the availability of the supervisor. Or systematic training can be given on how to communicate negative criticism to employees. The effects of negative feedback as destructive criticism has

been shown to increase conflict, lower self-efficacy, and negatively impact attitudes towards superiors and the performance appraisal process (Baron, 1988).

Finally because the issue of feedback has many psychosocial dimensions we cannot fail to mention the role of the supervisor as a leader. Employee management requires the development of the right skills to be effective. Individuals in positions of power play a key role in efficiency of employees, as their behavior and the way they manage and lead influences a plethora of characteristics in the workplace (Al-Hussami, Hammad & Alsoleihat, 2018). The human resources departments of organizations should move away from the tendency to promote to supervisors' individuals who perform their job duties well and focus on assigning such important positions to individuals who can deliver the desired results. This can happen through proper domain of talent management. Talent management is a deliberate and systematic effort by an organization to ensure leadership continuity in key positions and encourage individual advancement (Rothwell, 1994).

6. LIMITATIONS

The present research contains some limitations, that open further research in the future. The questionnaires were collected at a specific point in time reflecting the views of employees at that specific moment, while the procedure was not repeated.

An important limitation of the present study can be considered the small size of the sample in relation to the total population of employees in the private sector firms and the selection of the sample using convenience sampling. The small size along with the convenience sampling damages the external validity of the study to a significant extent as the sample cannot be considered representative of the population. A similar limitation concerns not only the size of the sample but also its origin. Ideally the sample should be as homogeneous as possible and this can be achieved by having employees from the same organization answer the questionnaire. If this is not feasible it will still be preferable that the employees answering the questionnaire come from the same industry, from the same size of company or from the same hierarchical level.

Another limitation of this survey is that the Feedback Environment of the Supervisor was assessed by a questionnaire completed by the employees. This limitation refers to the methodology is used end emphasize the fact that the use of questionnaires self-reporting (self-reported questionnaires) can carry the risk of bias (Doty&Glick, 1998).

Answers of the employees may include a lot of bias characteristics with the danger to underestimate or overestimate the reality.

In this paper we study the influence of the supervisor feedback environment on job satisfaction, but in the future more dimensions of the issue could be studied. It will be interesting to study in the future the influence of coworker feedback environment on job satisfaction. Also in a future study job satisfaction could be analyzed into individual components and the effect of feedback on each of them could be presented.

Due to the fact that the present findings have derived from the Greek private sector, future research should focus on observing alike concepts in different circumstances, since the results may have limited applicability to other industries or cultures.

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