

## **Employees' Perception of Their Superior Conduct**

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**Abstract** - This paper investigates and characterizes the employees' perception of their superior's managers, more precisely, of the direct superior. The term "conduct" represents the way of behaving, behavior, and the notion of "perception" refers to perspective, point of view towards something.

**Keywords:** Leadership, Management, Leader's behavior, Manager's behavior, Human resources management (HR).

### I. INTRODUCTION

Perception, although subjective, is important. This is the basis of thoughts, attitudes and behaviors towards something. In a corporate environment, these aspects are essential for the proper functioning of the company, for maintaining employee unity to achieve the company's goals and vision. The conduct of the superior and especially the way it is perceived by subordinates is undoubtedly a defining factor for the efficiency of subordinates.

The present study focuses on the relationship between subordinate and superior and can be a tool for companies to correctly evaluate employees with management positions (who have other employees subordinated), employees' perception of the superior being directly correlated with his legitimacy [6]. We also believe that this study will be personally useful to me as a future human resources specialist.

Another aspect we would like to mention is that the concepts of management and leadership are embedded in the notion of superiority. Although there are differences between the two concepts (the leader is the one who creates the vision, focusing on long-term results, inspires, takes risks, while the manager focuses on the present, on medium and short-term results, seek orders, limiting risks), in common language the two notions tend to be interchangeable. For laymen, both the leader and manager are the superior. Therefore, to avoid possible confusion, we will target the two dimensions.

In the present study, we consider the demographic characteristics of the subordinate and superior, but also the impact of other entities external to the subordinate to superior relationship, which can influence perception, but which are part of the company (work colleagues, hierarchical superior of the superior), aspects directly related to the behavioral dimensions of the superior (behavior, integrity, reward, feedback), its features and the traits desired by subordinates in a superior.

### II. CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### *2.1 The importance of perception towards the superior*

It has been proven that there is a directly proportional relationship between an employee's perception of the company, his superior, his work and his results [7], [13], [15], being also a measure of developing the quality of life of work: "Employees' perception (of the job, department, manager, organization) has been widely recommended as a method of improving the quality of life of work" [21]. Therefore, the behavior of the superior is a vital aspect for the life of the subordinate in the company [14], [13], [22]. Thus, it is necessary for the perception towards his conduct to be a positive one, which brings benefits: "The perception of employees can positively influence the productivity of the organization, when they are willing and devoted to the organization's goals" [21]. Otherwise, undesirable repercussions may occur: "the perception of the illegitimacy of the role of the superior can harm labor relations, hinder productivity and cause dysfunction" [6].

#### *2.2 Entities that influence the perception of the superior*

We must bear in mind that the formation of an opinion, a perception towards something or someone, is a complex process, which presents both internal and external influences. As [6] stated "Subordinates'

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perception of how entitled the superior is in his role can come from several sources, such as the fairness of the process used to place the superior in his role, defamation and direct observation.” Therefore, it is imperative to consider both the external personalities of the subordinate-superior relationship, as well as the dimensions and characteristics of the latter.

### 2.2.1 External entities

There are several studies that have demonstrated the influence that others can have on us. Whether it is one of the superior's seniors or a co-worker, the effect is the same: taking over attitudes, perceptions through the phenomenon of social contagion or through the tendency of a group to reach consensus [16], [3]. However, the present study considers only the co-workers, respectively the superior's superior, because they are directly involved in the subordinate-superior relationship, being able to exert a strong influence. That's why we're not targeting family and friends. However, there is a possibility that they are part of the company.

In addition to natural persons, legal entities may also be considered. More precisely, the company to which the employee belongs, because through association with the company or by putting into practice the company's decisions, the perception towards the superior undergoes changes: “Further, Costigan, Ilter and Berman (1998) argue that employees' trust in management is based on the results of organizational decisions made by top managers and less on direct experience with actions, words and their character.

Therefore, employee trust in management is interpreted through the policies and practices of the organization” [14].

### 2.2.2 Superior

There are several aspects that can influence the perception towards the superior: the organization of the schedule and work tasks, the control of their fulfillment, the leadership style, his clothing, the language used, preconceptions, etc. However, since the present study considers conduct, we will only consider the behavioral dimensions of the superior.

a) The behavior of the superior is one of the most important factors influencing perception. It is important for an employee to be treated appropriately, so that he has a positive perception towards his superior and, implicitly, to have satisfaction, confidence, commitment [19].

b) Behavioral integrity of the superior. Concept that has a direct connection with behavior; A more simplistic construct than trust or justice. It is usually measured by the concordance between one's actions and one's words [23]. It is an essential aspect of any relationship, but it is even more important in a corporate environment, where a degree of integrity can affect the individual's life in the company: “(...) there are plenty of theories and ample empirical evidence suggesting that employees' perception of their managers' BI (Behavioral Integrity) will influence their attitudes toward the job, as well as other outcomes” [20].

c) Reward. Proper behavior on the part of the superior in terms of offering reward and punishment may lead to him being perceived as a fair superior or not. In addition, it can reduce job ambiguity, creating a clear picture of what the superior wants from employees [19]. In addition to results related to employee productivity, the effects of appropriate reward behavior can also be cognitive or behavioral, which can have long-term consequences: ‘... there is also evidence that the manner in which the leader administers rewards and punishments internally affects the employee's cognitive processes, which subsequently influence attitudes and behavior” [19].

d) Feedback provided by superior. For the employee, feedback is one of the most useful means of finding out how effective he is, what he can improve or what he is good at. But it can also be a reason to change the subordinate-superior relationship, especially for the younger generation: “Employees report various reasons why their relationship with their superior can lead to a negative turn, such as not receiving the feedback they need to know to perform, not receiving the recognition they deserve and not receiving the necessary training. According to McCullum (2009), these problems usually stem from young employees, who are accustomed for many years to receiving feedback and training from parents and teachers. For the young employee, sometimes a simple ‘thank you’ or ‘good job’ from the supervisor can make huge progress towards job satisfaction” [16]. That's why it's important to give feedback in an appropriate, positive manner.

Regarding the last two dimensions, we considered them because they are direct consequences of behavior, respectively because they can be influenced by the way the superior behaves. For example, feedback can be carried out in a calm, constructive manner, or it can be highlighted by offensive, destructive behavior. Whereas the offering of reward may be rather a consequence of the superior's desire to please himself [1].

### 2.3 Traits of the superior

The importance of the superior's traits for the present study lies in the fact that they can best describe his behavior. For example, an incompetent superior will act in an incompetent way, while a competent one will act according to this characteristic/label. Also, these traits have a high influence on the perception of the superior by subordinates. In 2002, Furnham conducted a study on employee perceptions of colleagues, superiors and subordinates. The aim was to determine the most desirable characteristics for each category specified above. Although there were psycho-temperamental traits universally desired by the three groups – honesty, competence – there were, of course, specific traits. In the case of the superior, Furnham concise that: “The most desirable characteristics of the superior include future-oriented, animation, impartiality” [9].

In addition to psychological characteristics, there is a possibility that socio-demographic characteristics also have an impact on behavior and perception; people being more willing to positively perceive people in the

same group than those outside the group or to act in a certain way depending on where they come from [25], [11], [10], [2], [26]. However, it is not excluded that the opposite will happen in another study conducted by Furnham, in terms of gender and age, it was observed that, in general, participants do not show a propensity towards male or female superiors, respectively young or old superiors.

However, there is also the possibility of concealment by respondents, as gender or age discrimination is prohibited [9].

#### 2.4 Typologies of the superior

In addition to appropriate traits, it is necessary for superiors to use an appropriate leadership style (or at least be aware of their own leadership style). Therefore, it is important to consider behavioral theories, such as the Blake-Mouton model; model that targets the dynamics of interactions within a team and demonstrates its usefulness when continuous quality development is targeted [18].

Also known as the *Management Grid*, it presents two dimensions of a leader or manager: those concerned with people and those concerned with results [1]. Depending on the position on the graph formed by the two aspects, we find five classifications: Populist, Motivator, Passive, Assertive, Administrator. These typologies depend on the personality of the superior and his seniority in work [12]. The use of one of the taxonomies depends on both the superior and the subordinates he has under his leadership. A passive can be more effective when the team they manage is more experienced, while an assertive would be suitable for giving instructions to inexperienced employees.

#### 2.5 The effects of the perception of the superior's conduct

A positive perception of the subordinate towards the superior can enhance the retention and loyalty of the employee. Increasing results and improving the employee's working life are other examples. It can also lead to a valuable relationship between the two; a relationship based on respect and trust, leading to beneficial results and behaviors: comfort, positive attitude, commitment [24] and increased productivity [21].

On the other hand, an employee's positive perception of his superior can be beneficial to the firm, representing a method of measuring the legitimacy of superiors: "Companies can observe the perception towards the legitimacy of the superior's role by monitoring feelings towards the superior through employee surveys or evaluations. (...) Understanding these perceptions can enable firms to increase efficiency by better matching their control system with their culture of legitimacy" [6].

The employee's perception of the superior's conduct is an important aspect, after which we can guide ourselves in making predictions about the employee's future in the company or about his behavior: "(...) it is perception rather than reality that influences attitudes and then employee behavior" [20]. Therefore, by

studying the perspective towards the superior, by analyzing the factors that influence the perception, respectively the features of the superior and the demographic characteristics of the subordinate, results can be obtained that can be considered in improving the employee's working life or even represent the basis for a training program for superiors.

### III. METHODOLOGIES

#### 3.1 Methodological Design

Because we aimed for the data to be as representative as possible, it was necessary to get as many answers as possible from as many respondents as possible. Therefore, we used the method of sociological inquiry, having the questionnaire as a research tool. For the first questions we used Likert scales from 1 (None) to 6 (Totally).

For questions regarding personal opinion regarding the behavioral dimensions of the superior, we used a Likert scale from 1 (Very small measure) to 5 (Very large extent), respectively a scale from 1 (Totally untrue) to 5 (Total true), for the types of superior. As for the latter, we built them starting from the set of characteristics of the typologies of the Management Grid, found in [12]. We were also inspired to produce the questionnaire by Furnham's study [9]. We did not use all the traits used by the British researcher, because the study of the distinguished also targets the ideal characteristics desired in coworkers and subordinates, not just superiors. Thus, we created a set of 15 characteristics, of which we asked respondents to choose only 5 and order them according to importance. We also gave them the opportunity to give answers that are not among those we proposed.

Another aspect we would like to mention is that when we mention external agents or external entities that influence perception, actually we refer to the natural and legal persons mentioned within the concept and theoretically who are external to the subordinate-superior relationship, but who can influence the perception of the former towards the conduct of the latter (work colleagues, superior of the superior and company). By the same principle, when we speak of "others", we mean colleagues and work and the superior of the superior taken as a whole, together.

#### 3.2 Objectives and assumptions

As mentioned in the introduction, we want this paper to be a tool through which companies can properly evaluate employees in management positions, to develop appropriate strategies to improve the quality of life of employees. Therefore, to achieve this, we pursued the following goals ( $G_n$ ) considering the following assumptions ( $A_n$ ):

G1. Identifying how people outside the subordinate-superior relationship, who can influence the perception of the former towards the conduct of the latter (others, the company or the superior) influence the

most the perception of employees towards the conduct of the superior.

G2. Discover how the three behavioral dimensions of the superior (integrity, reward, feedback) influence the perspective of subordinates towards the superior's conduct.

G3. Capturing the characteristics of the ideal superior, as considered by the employees.

G4. Identifying the link between adopting a specific managerial style and subordinates' perception of the superior's conduct.

G5. Identification of differences in perception of employees towards superiors (depending on their socio-demographic characteristics).

A1. There is a statistically significant correlation between co-workers' perception of their superior's behavior and their individual perception of their supervisor's behavior.

A2. There is a significant link between the perceived behavioral integrity of the superior and the employees' perception of their conduct.

A3. There are similarities between the characteristics of the ideal superior identified with previous studies.

A4. There is a statistically significant link between the managerial styles adopted and the employee's perception of the superior's conduct.

A5. There are statistically significant differences between male and female employees in subordinates' perception of superior's behavior.

### 3.3 Data collection and limitations

To collect the data, we used the snowball method. Initially, we sent the questionnaire to several acquaintances for completion and asked them to forward it to others. After a period of time, we sent it (through the Politehnica University's email platform) to other students, with the specification that it targets only people who have a superior, with the request to send it further for completion. Data collection extended for approximately 1 month (February 2023).

The main limitation of this work concerns data collection. However, we tried to overcome this impediment by weighing up when there were significant discrepancies, such as in the case of gender and age of employees.

Another limitation of the work is that perception is very subjective. Thus, various problems may arise in the evaluation of conduct, such as recent effects, halo effect, contrast error or similarity, which can distort the reality.

## IV. RESULTS

Following the data gathering, we obtained 316 respondents, aged between 18 and 62. The average is 25.52 years, while the median and mode are 21 and 20 years, respectively (60 respondents), which means that most of the people who responded to the questionnaire are young people. Of these, 79.7% (N=252) are female, while only 19% (N=60) are male. Also, 64.2% (N=203) come from urban areas, and 35.4% (N=112) fall into rural areas. As for the distribution by level of education, it ranges from secondary education to post-graduate studies. However, most respondents say they have completed 12 classes (61.4%, N=194 respondents). This is a natural result, given that half of the respondents are under the age of 21 (see Table 1).

As for the respondents' superiors, as claimed by the respondents to the questionnaire, they are aged between 18 and 76 years, most of them being 40 years old (median=40). Most are male (N=167, mean=52.8%) and come from urban areas (N=185, mean=74.2%).

Table 1: Descriptive analysis on socio-demographic traits of respondents and their superiors

<b>Subordinates</b>			
	Variable	Number	%
Age	18-24 years	240	73.6
	25-34 years	38	11.7
	35-49 years	38	11.6
	50-64 years	10	3.1
	Over 65 years old	0	0
Sex	Masculine	60	18.99
	Feminine	252	79.75
Medium	Rural	112	35.44
	Urban	203	64.24
Education	Secondary education	194	61.93
	Higher education	108	34.18
	Other studies	14	4.43
<b>Higher</b>			
	Variable	Number	%
Age	18-24 years	9	2.85
	25-34 years	68	21.52
	35-49 years	222	70.25
	50-64 years	26	8.23
	Over 65 years old	1	0.32
Sex	Masculine	156	49.37
	Feminine	142	44.94
Medium	Rural	62	25.94
	Urban	177	74.06
Education	Secondary education	26	11.11
	Higher education	202	86.32
	Other studies	6	2.56



In terms of education level, 63.9% of them graduated from higher education (N=202), 8.2% high school education (N=26), and 26% of respondents did not know or did not want to disclose the level of education of the higher (N=82). The remaining 1.9% graduated from other categories of studies (gymnasium school, post-secondary or technical school of foremen, etc.) (see Table 1).

To verify the first hypothesis, we made a bivariate correlation between employees' perception of the superior's behavior and entities external to the subordinate-superior relationship that can influence the perception of the former towards the latter's behavior, respectively the behavioral dimensions of the superior, which revealed to me that there are statistically significant strong correlations between all the variables mentioned (Sig.<0.001). Unsurprisingly, the superior shows the strongest correlation among the people who can influence the employee's perception of his conduct (R=0.83), followed by his work colleagues (R=0.39), the superior's superior (R=0.17), respectively the company (R=0.28) (see Table 2).

Regarding the dimensions of the superior, the one that showed the highest degree of correlation with the employee's perception of the superior's conduct was integrity, with a value that tends to be very strong (R=0.81), followed the superior provides feedback (R=0.72) and rewards (R=0.63). Based on studies conducted by [19], and [16], we expected there to be a statistically significant link between perception of superior's conduct and reward or feedback. Initially, we didn't think they would have such a strong correlation. Also, we believed that they would register an average correlation, with values between 0.40–0.50. Instead, they exhibit an average correlation level that tends to be strong (see Table 2).

We also wanted to compare the correlation levels between the mentioned variables and the employee's perception of the superior with correlation levels of the same variables as the employee's general perception of the superior. Following the analysis, we found out that there is a statistically significant correlation between the mentioned variables and the general perception (Sig.<0.003), but also that the aspects related to the superior have a lower correlation with the general perception towards him: behavior (R=0.61), the superior himself (R=0.59), behavioral integrity (R=0.54), the way he gives feedback (R=0.49), how they offer rewards (R=0.44). On the other hand, persons external to the subordinate-superior relationship show a higher degree of correlation with the general perception of the employee towards the person to whom he is subordinate than with that regarding his conduct: work colleagues (R=0.49), superior of the superior (R=0.20), company (R=0.39) (see Table 2). From these data we can deduce that the superior influences more easily the perception of his behavior than the general perception of himself. In contrast, co-workers can more easily alter their overall perception of their supervisor than their perception of their superior's behavior (R=0.492) (see Table 3).

Table 2: Correlation between entities outside the subordinate-superior relationship, the behavioral dimensions of the superior and the employee's perception of the superior's conduct

Variable	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Superior	0.832	0.000
Integrity	0.811	0.000
Feedback	0.721	0.000
Co-workers	0.637	0.000
Reward	0.392	0.000
Company	0.282	0.000
Superior of the superior	0.173	0.002

Table 3: Correlation between entities outside the subordinate-superior relationship, the behavioral dimensions of the superior and the general perception of the employee towards the superior

Variable	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Behavior	0.612	0.000
Superior	0.590	0.000
Integrity	0.546	0.000
Feedback	0.496	0.000
Co-workers	0.492	0.000
Reward	0.441	0.000
Company	0.393	0.000
Superior of the superior	0.202	0.002

We continued the analysis by performing a regression in which the dependent variable is the employee's perception of the superior's conduct, and the independent one is the superior. According to the ANOVA table, the developed model is statistically relevant (Sig.<0.01). In the Model Summary tables, we found that 69.1% of the total variation in employee perception of superior's conduct can be explained by superior's perception (adjusted R square=0.69). In the last table, the coefficients, we find the value of the constant (B=0.44) and that of the coefficient (B=0.222). Both the value of the constant and the coefficient are statistically relevant (Sig.<0.05). Another aspect that shows us the relevance is the Lower Bound/Upper Bound intervals, which do not record the value 0, even in the case of the constant (Lower Bound=0.222; Upper Bound=0.704), nor in the case of the coefficient (Lower Bound=0.206; Upper Bound=0.239). Thus, we can calculate the perception towards the conduct of the superior by the formula:  $0.440+0.222*\text{perception}$  towards the superior (see Tables 4a, 4b, 4c).

We also noticed that there are differences between the perception of respondents with higher education and those with secondary education, in terms of total variation. More specifically, the fact that employees with tertiary education (adjusted R square=0.764) show higher values than those with secondary education (adjusted R square=0.633) regarding the percentage in which the total variation in employees' perception of the superior's conduct is influenced by the superior (see Tables 5a and 5b). This difference can be explained by the fact that occupations requiring a lower

level of qualification do not require the cultivation of a special relationship with the superior. There are also differences depending on age, from which it appears that employees aged 25-34 years (adjusted R square=0.805) and 35-49 years (adjusted R square=0.775) are more influential in terms of changing the perception of the superior's conduct than those aged 18-24 years (adjusted R square=0.642) and 50-64 (adjusted R square=0.586) years (see Tables 6a, 6b, 6c, 6d). The fact that young people want to stand out at the beginning of their careers, adopting more consistent proactive behavior than older employees is an explanation of this difference on the age variable.

Table 4a: Regression between the superior and the employee's perception of his conduct \*)

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Ajusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.832a	.692	.691	.601
a. Predictors: (Constant), apreciere_sup				

\*) The "apreciere\_sup" refers to the appreciation of the superior by the employees.

Table 4b: Regression between the superior and the employee's perception of his conduct \*)

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Say.
1	Re-gres-sion	254.827	1	254.827	704.889	.000b
	Resid-ual	113.515	314	.362		
	Total	368.342	315			
a. Dependent Variable: Behavior. To what extent do you assess your superior's behavior?						
b. Predictors: (Constant), apreciere_sup						

\*) The "apreciere\_sup" refers to the appreciation of the superior by the employees.

Table 4c: Regression between the superior and the employee's perception of his conduct \*)

Model		Unstand-ardized Coefficients		Stand-ardized Coefficients	t	Say.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Con-stant)	.440	.134		3.276	.001
	apreci-ere_sup	.222	.008	.832	26.550	.000
a. Dependent Variable: behavior. To what extent do you assess your superior's behavior?						

\*) The "apreciere\_sup" refers to the appreciation of the superior by the employees.

Table 5a: Regression between the superior and the perception of employees with secondary education towards his conduct \*)

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Ajusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.796b	.633	.631	.613
a. studii_ang_C1 = 1 Secondary education				
b. Predictors: (Constant), apreciere_sup				
c. Dependent Variable: Behavior. To what extent do you assess your superior's behavior?				

\*) The "apreciere\_sup" refers to the appreciation of the superior by the employees and the "studii\_ang\_C1" refers about the education level of the employees.

Table 5b: Regression between higher and higher education employees' perception of their conduct \*)

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Ajusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.875b	.766	.764	.590
a. studii_ang_C1 = 2 Higher educations				
b. Predictors: (Constant), apreciere_sup				
c. Dependent Variable: Behavior. To what extent do you assess your superior's behavior?				

\*) The "apreciere\_sup" refers to the appreciation of the superior by the employees and the "studii\_ang\_C1" refers to the education level of the employees.

Table 6a: Regressions between the superior and the employee's perception of his conduct, depending on the age of respondents \*)

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Ajusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.816b	.665	.642	.641
a. varsta_ang_C1 = 1 18-24 years				
b. Predictors: (Constant), apreciere_sup				

\*) The "apreciere\_sup" refers to the appreciation of the superior by the employees and the "varsta\_ang\_C1" refers to the age of the employees.

Table 6b: Regressions between the superior and the employee's perception of his conduct, depending on the age of respondents \*)

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Ajusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.899b	.808	.805	.565
a. varsta_ang_C1 = 2 25-34 years				
b. Predictors: (Constant), apreciere_sup				

\*) The "apreciere\_sup" refers to the appreciation of the superior by the employees and the "varsta\_ang\_C1" refers to the age of the employees.

Table 6c: Regressions between the superior and the employee's perception of his conduct, depending on the age of respondents \*)

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Ajusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.881b	.777	.775	.542
a. varsta_ang_C1 = 3 35-49 years				
b. Predictors: (Constant), apreciere_sup				

\*) The "apreciere\_sup" refers to the appreciation of the superior by the employees and the "varsta\_ang\_C1" refers to the age of the employees.

Table 6d: Regressions between the superior and the employee's perception of his conduct, depending on the age of respondents \*)

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Ajusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.769b	.591	.586	.613
a. varsta_ang_C1 = 4 50-64 years				
b. Predictors: (Constant), apreciere_sup				

\*) The "apreciere\_sup" refers to the appreciation of the superior by the employees and the "varsta\_ang\_C1" refers to the age of the employees.

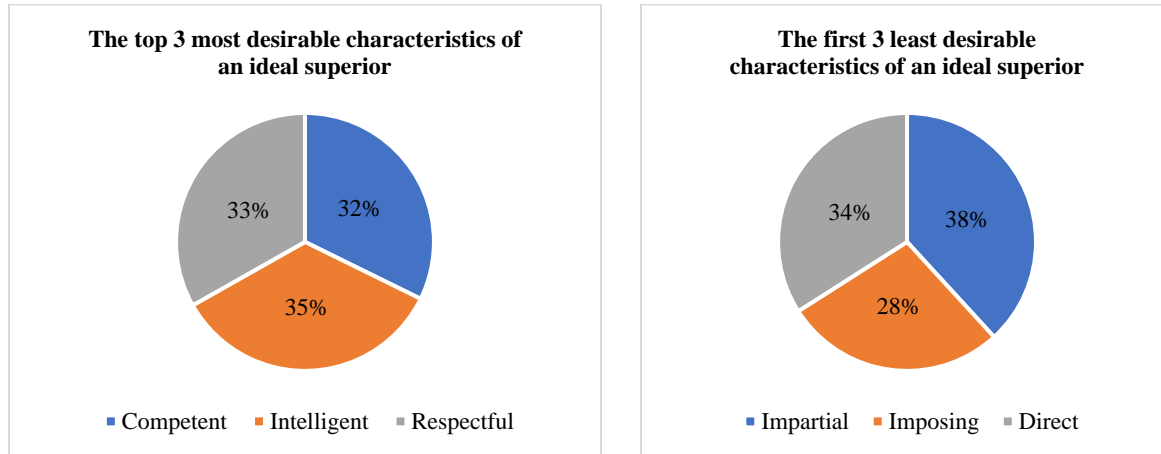


Fig. 1. Research results - Chart 1 and Chart 2

To check the third hypothesis, we conducted a frequency analysis on all characteristics of an ideal superior. Depending on how often they were chosen by respondents, the top three places are occupied by intelligence (N=152), respectful behavior (N=146) and competence (N=142) (see Chart 1). At the opposite pole, in the last places, are the imposing character (N=40), the tendency to be direct with subordinates (N=49) and impartiality (N=55) (see Chart 2).

Following a weighted average, we were also able to get a ranking based on how important those traits are for respondents. Thus, in the first three places we found competence (mean=3.85), intelligence (mean=3.54), respectfulness (mean=3.15). In contrast, the top three least important desirable traits in an ideal superior are ambition (mean=2.47), tendency to be direct (mean=2.51), and determined behavior (mean=2.58). As can be seen, the most common traits, but also the most desired, are those related to professionalism or skills that allow the superior to achieve performance at work (intelligence, competence). Over time, characteristics aimed at sociability are less desirable, except for respectfulness.

One aspect we would like to mention is that we did not consider the variable "other" in our analyses, because it was chosen by very few respondents (N=6). However, we noticed that among other traits that employees would like in an ideal superior, which are not among the options proposed by me, respondents mentioned characteristics related to sociability ("open", "empathetic"), competence at work ("punctuality", "to

know the field very well"), but also religiosity ("faith in Jesus").

Regarding the verification of the fourth hypothesis, we calculated the average of typologies; to find out what type of behavior is most common in superiors. Thus, we found out that one perceives most often a behavior specific to the motivator (m=3.78), followed by that characteristic of the accommodating (m=3.58), administrator (*status quo*) (m=3.41), the indifferent (Indifferent) (m=2.90) and the authoritarian (dictatorial) (m=2.56).

After that, we made a correlation between them and the perception of employees towards the superior. Following the analysis, we obtained that there is a correlation between the subordinate's perception of the superior's conduct and his typology (Sig.<0.01). The strength of correlations is small with respect to the following typologies: accommodating, indifferent, authoritarian and administrator. As for the motivator, although we expected it to show a lower correlation level than the accommodator and administrator, it shows the highest degree of correlation (R=0.551). Also, all correlations show positive values, except for those aimed at the indifferent and the dictator, which have negative values. This means that there is an inversely proportional correlation between employees' perception of their superior and these typologies. In other words, the less the superior behaves in an indifferent or authoritarian way, the more positive the perception towards them (see Table 7).

Next, we performed a regression where the independent variable is the employee's perception of adopting a behavior specific to the motivator's typology by the superior, and the dependent one is the subordinates' perception of the superior's conduct, as a result of which, only 36.9% of the total variation in perception towards the superior's conduct can be explained by his adoption of a behavior specific to the motivator's typology (adjusted R square=0.369). The percentage is statistically significant according to materiality (Sig<0.01) (see Tables 8a, 8b).

After that, we checked whether there were differences between the percentages of total change, depending on the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents. Thus, we found that there are differences between male (adjusted R square=0.466) and female (adjusted R square=0.341) respondents (see Tables 9a and 9b). In other words, men would appreciate a motivating superior more than women. One explanation is that, unlike men, women are more motivated to excel in artistic fields [17]. This could also manifest itself in adult life, causing women to rate a motivating superior less than their male counterparts because the nature of their jobs does not coincide with that on which they were motivated from childhood. Also, as in the case of regression between the superior's perception of the subordinate's behavior towards the conduct of the person to whom he is subordinated, there are differences between subordinates aged between 25-34 years (adjusted R square=0.443), respectively 35-49 years (adjusted R square=0.466) and young (adjusted R square=0.297) and older (adjusted R square=0.349) (see Tables 10a, 10b, 10c, 10d). The reason could be like the one that explains that young and old people are not equally influenced by their perception of their superior's behavior. In terms of background and employee studies, they did not register significant differences (Tables 9a, 9b, 10a, 10b).

Table 7: Correlation between the employee's perception of the superior's conduct and the typologies of the Grid

Variable	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Motivator	0.551	0.000
Accommodating	0.285	0.000
Administrator (status quo)	0.267	0.000
Indifferent	-0.303	0.000
Dictator	-0.314	0.000

Table 8a: Regression between the superior's adoption of the motivator's typology and the employee's perception of his conduct \*)

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Ajusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.609a	.371	.369	.857
a. Predictors: (Constant), motivant_C1				
b. Dependent Variable: Behavior. To what extent do you assess your superior's behavior?				

\*) The "motivant\_C1" refers to the appreciation of the superior by the employees about motivation.

Table 8b: Regression between the superior's adoption of the motivator's typology and the employee's perception of his conduct \*)

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	128.761	1	128.761	175.238	.000b
	Residual	218.229	297	.735		
	Total	346.990	298			
a. Dependent Variable: Behavior. To what extent do you assess your superior's behavior?						
b. Predictors: (Constant), motivant_C1						

\*) The "motivant\_C1" refers to the appreciation of the superior by the employees about motivation.

Table 9a: Regressions between superiors and male employees' perception of their conduct \*)

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Ajusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.685b	.470	.466	.825
a. sex_ang What is your gender? = 1 Male				
b. Predictors: (Constant), motivant_C1				
c. Dependent Variable: Behavior. To what extent do you assess your superior's behavior?				

\*) The "motivant\_C1" refers to the appreciation of the superior by the employees about motivation and the "sex\_ang" refers about the gender of the employees.

Table 9b: Regressions between the superior and the perception of female employees towards their conduct \*)

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.588b	.345	.341	.869
a. sex_ang What is your gender? = 2 Female				
b. Predictors: (Constant), motivant_C1				
c. Dependent Variable: Behavior. To what extent do you assess your superior's behavior?				

\*) The "motivant\_C1" refers to the appreciation of the superior by the employees about motivation and the "sex\_ang" refers about the gender of the employees.

Table 10a: Regressions between the superior and the employee's perception of his conduct, depending on the age of respondents \*)

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Ajusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.587b	.344	.297	.907
a. varsta_ang_C1 = 1 15-24 years				
b. Predictors: (Constant), motivant_C1				

\*) The "motivant\_C1" refers to the appreciation of the superior by the employees about motivation and the "varsta\_ang\_C1" refers to the age of the employees.



Table 10b: Regressions between the superior and the employee's perception of his conduct, depending on the age of respondents \*)

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Ajusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.672b	.452	.443	.913
a. varsta_ang_C1 = 2 25-34 years				
b. Predictors: (Constant), motivant_C1				

\*) The "motivant\_C1" refers to the appreciation of the superior by the employees about motivation and the "varsta\_ang\_C1" refers to the age of the employees.

Table 10c: Regressions between the superior and the employee's perception of his conduct, depending on the age of respondents \*)

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Ajusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.685b	.470	.466	.837
a. varsta_ang_C1 = 3 35-49 years				
b. Predictors: (Constant), motivant_C1				

\*) The "motivant\_C1" refers to the appreciation of the superior by the employees about motivation and the "varsta\_ang\_C1" refers to the age of the employees.

Table 10d: Regressions between the superior and the employee's perception of his conduct, depending on the age of respondents \*)

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Ajusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.598b	.357	.349	.800
a. varsta_ang_C1 = 4 50-64 years				
b. Predictors: (Constant), motivant_C1				

\*) The "motivant\_C1" refers to the appreciation of the superior by the employees about motivation and the "varsta\_ang\_C1" refers to the age of the employees.

We also wanted to find out if there is a statistically significant link between the socio-demographic characteristics of the superior and the employees' perception of adopting these typologies. Therefore, we conducted a T-test, which provided me with the fact that there is a link between subordinates' perception of the adoption of an authoritarian style by superiors regarding gender, according to the value of materiality threshold (Sig.(2-tailed) = 0.021) and the interval Lower Bounds (0.209)–Upper Bounds (2.669), which does not register the value 0. Continuing the interpretation, based on differences between averages, we note that male superiors (mean=15.95) are perceived as more authoritative than their female counterparts (mean=14.51) (see Tables 11a and 11b). One possible explanation is that men can be considered tougher, while women are considered gentler, more pleasant. In addition, we found a statistically significant link between the perception of subordinates towards the adoption of an authoritarian style by superiors and the superior's environment of origin, because the materiality

threshold does not exceed the value 0.05 (Sig.(2-tailed) = 0.44), and the value 0 is not found in the range Lower Bounds (0.40)–Upper Bounds (3.178). Also, according to the average, superiors in rural areas (mean=16.37) are perceived as more authoritarian than those in urban areas (mean=14.76) (see Tables 12a and 12b). One possible reason is that the importance of a leadership position may differ between those in rural and urban areas. This would mean that rural superiors may be more task-centric than employee-centric when they reach such positions.

Table 11a: T-test between male and female superiors according to the adoption of a dictator-specific typology \*)

Group Statistics					
	sex_sup	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
	What is the gender of your superior?				
Asertive	1 Male	167	15.95	5.854	.453
	2 Female	149	14.51	5.216	.427

\*) The "sex\_sup" refers about the gender of the superior.

Table 11b: T-test between male and female superiors according to the adoption of a dictator-specific typology

Independent Samples Test						
T-test for Equality of Means						
		Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Asertive	Equal variances assumed	.022	1.443	.627	.209	2.677
	Equal variances not assumed	.021	1.443	.623	.217	2.669

Table 12a: T-test between village and city superiors according to the adoption of a dictator-specific typology \*)

Group Statistics					
	mediu_sup	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
	What is your superior's background?				
Asertive	1 Rural	64	16.37	6.066	.756
	2 Urban	185	14.76	5.301	.390

\*) The "mediu\_sup" refers to the environment of provenance of the superior.

Table 12b: T-test between village and city superiors according to the adoption of a dictator-specific typology

Independent Samples Test						
T-test for Equality of Means						
		Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Dif- ference	Std. Error Dif- ference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lo- wer	Up- per
A S E R T I V E	Equal vari- ances as- sumes	.044	1.609	.797	.040	3.178
	Equal vari- ances not as- sumes	.061	1.609	.850	-. .078	3.296

To test the latter hypothesis, we performed the T-tests and ANOVA analyses between the social-demographic traits of respondents, respectively superiors and the perception of the latter's conduct. However, we did not obtain statistically significant differences between the perception of the superior's conduct and the sociodemographic characteristics of the superior, respectively of the respondents.

## V. CONCLUSIONS AND FINAL REMARKS

At the beginning of the research, we considered that the superior will be the one who most strongly influences the perception of his behavior, while people external to the subordinate-superior relationship will have little influence. The data obtained confirms this hypothesis for me. However, we noticed that the perception of coworkers towards the superior shows a higher correlation with the general perception of respondents towards him, than with the perception towards his conduct. One possible explanation is that, as a rule, the way someone behaves is less interpretable; especially in the workplace, which is a formal environment, requiring the most concise interaction, leaving no room for interpretation, so that the activity is carried out in an appropriate manner, according to the required requirements. This could explain why behavioral integrity shows such a high correlation with the subordinate's perception of the superior's conduct. Instead, the image we form towards someone is rather psychological in nature, which can occur when it meets the opinions of others towards that person.

Regarding the most desirable traits of an ideal superior, an interesting aspect is the characteristic of respectfulness. However, instead of respondents' answers being found in extremities, they are positioned homogeneously on the 5 answer options (with a slight tendency to increase). In other words, respectfulness is the

universally desired characteristic in a superior, regardless of its importance.

Also, regarding the desired characteristics in a superior, as mentioned in the objectives and hypothesis's part, we expected to notice similarities with Furnham's study in 2002. However, we found out that there are rather differences between our study and that of the British researcher. For example, although they were rated as some of the most desirable characteristics in the psychologist's study, honesty and openness changed rank low in my rankings. Another example is that impartiality was among the most desirable traits in a superior in Furnham's study [9], but in our own, it ranks third among the most undesirable traits. There is a possibility that these differences are explained because of a difference in methodological approaches between me and the British researcher. However, we believe that these differences are explained rather because of the 20-year difference between our study and Furnham's study. In addition, it is not excluded that these differences also have a cultural bias explanation, because our study was conducted in Romania, while the one in 2002 was conducted in the UK. On the other hand, we also recorded similarities. Competence is among the most desirable characteristics, and animation is one of the characteristics of the motivator typology, which is the most appreciated of the typologies of the Management Grid.

In fact, if we were to achieve an ideal model of superior, according to the data obtained, it would be motivating, intelligent, competent and respectful. In other words, someone we perceive we can rely on, who helps us evolve at work without becoming arrogant. On the other hand, someone authoritarian, imposing, impartial and direct (a person who continually criticizes all his subordinates) is not the most desirable superior.

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