Samoilenko E. S., Ananyeva K. I., Demidov A. A., Diveev D. A.
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Russian psychological journal, , Vol. 19, No. 2, 35-49. **doi:** 10.21702/rpj.2022.2.3

Research Article

UDC 159.99

https://doi.org/10.21702/rpj.2022.2.3

Dynamics of Subjective Assessments of Personal Characteristics of a Person in Various Perceptual Situations

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Annotation : **Introduction** . The relevance of the study is due to the need to study the patterns of perception of a person's personal characteristics observed in ecologically valid situations of his interaction with other people. The novelty of the study lies in the disclosure of the features of interpersonal perception, taking into account the context in which the observer perceives the person being evaluated. **Methods** . As a stimulus material, three scenarios of situations of interpersonal interaction were constructed and the corresponding video clips were filmed, in each of which the same sitter participated. The study involved 20 people randomly divided into two equal groups, one of which was presented with stimulus videos with sound, and the other without it. The task of the study participants was to assess the personal characteristics of the sitter on the 21 scale of the "Personal Differential" methodology. **Results** . The study revealed a significant influence of perceptual situations related to different areas of interpersonal interaction on the observer's subjective assessment of the personal characteristics of the person included in these situations. The dynamics of subjective assessments is partially marked by the factors "Strength", "Activity" and "Evaluation" of the personality differential, as well as by their separate scales. The presentation of video clips in formats with and without sound made it possible to identify common and various significant patterns of influence of the perceived situation of interpersonal interaction on the subjective assessment of the personal characteristics of the object of perception included in it. **The discussion of the results.** The results contribute to the understanding of the processes of social perception and, in particular, the dependence of the observer's subjective assessment of the personal characteristics of another person on the situations of interpersonal interaction in which he is perceived. The regularities discovered due to the applied methodical approach demonstrate the adequacy of using the ideas of J. Gibson's ecological approach for the study of perceptual situations.

Keywords: situation, perceptual situation, personal characteristics, interpersonal perception, conditions of perception, interpersonal assessments, appearance perception, personality differential, assessment bias, ecological approach

Highlights

- ecologically valid stimulus material was developed - video images of the sitter's behavior in various situations of everyday interpersonal interaction;
- the dependence of subjective assessments of the individual psychological characteristics of the sitter on the situations of interpersonal interaction in which he is included was revealed;
- general and different regularities in the dynamics of subjective assessments of the individual psychological characteristics of the sitter, perceived in video clips presented in formats with and without sound, were revealed .

Funding
The study was supported by the Russian Science Foundation, project No. 20-18-00516 "Ontological Foundations of Interpersonal Perception".

For citation
Samoilenko, E.S., Ananyeva, K.I., Demidov, A.A., and Diveev, D.A. (2022). Dynamics of subjective assessments of a person's personal characteristics in various perceptual situations. *Russian psychological journal, 19*(2), 35–49. https://doi.org/10.21702/rpj.2022.2.3

Introduction

In recent years, psychological studies of the perception of situations (for example, Funder , 2016; Rauthmann , Horstmann , Sherman , 2020; Horstmann, Rauthmann, Sherman , 2021) and patterns of interpersonal perception in relatively real situations of life have been intensively developed (Demidov, 2022; Graham, Gosling , Travis, 2015; Meagher, 2020). Such studies, in particular, involve the choice of a principle by which it is possible to differentiate situations that contribute to the manifestation and perception of certain personal characteristics. The choice can be based on different theoretical approaches: objective and subjective.

Within the framework of the objective approach, this or that taxonomy of situations in which a person finds himself is created on the basis of their objective characteristics, considered as clues (cues). Characteristics can describe who is next to this person; Where is he located; what objects surround it; what happens and when it happens , etc. (Horstmann, Rauthmann, Sherman, 2018).

The subjective approach to differentiating situations is focused on their interpretation by the people who perceive them (Horstmann, Rauthmann, Sherman, 2021). Accordingly, a situation is defined, for example, as "a combination of individually interpreted, implicit, and unique representations, as well as culturally shared, explicit, and general environmental representations that generate and constrain behavior" (Yang , Read , Miller , 2009, p. 1020) .

Several taxonomies of situations have been created in recent years (e.g. Brown et al., 2015; Horstmann, & Ziegler, 2017; Parrigon et al ., 2017; Rauthmann et al ., 2014; Rauthmann , Horstmann , Sherman , 2020; Yang , Read , Miller , 2009 and others). Comparison of intersections between different taxonomies made it possible to identify six general groups of situation dimensions, differentiated depending on how much they require compliance with the following conditions: overcoming external dangers or obstacles (threat); coping with internal negative states (stress), performing important or urgent tasks (tasks); the implementation of serious and demanding

information processing (processing); engaging in enjoyable and fun activities and interacting with other people (fun); performing routine and automated activities (mundane) (Rauthmann, Horstmann, Sherman, 2020).

As for the actual perception of the situation, the best known model describing this process includes five main components (Rauthmann et al., 2014): 1) objectively measurable situational cues, (for example, human behavior and interaction, objects, events and characteristics of the physical space); 2) current human processing of situational cues, which is carried out in the "bottom-up" and "top-down" directions and allows them to be evaluated and given meaning; 3) aspects of personality (character traits, knowledge, habits, social roles, mood, goals, etc.) that determine the constant and current interpretation of situational clues; 4) a psychological situation that implies its perception by at least one person and affects his behavior and actions in it; 5) the behavior of the person perceiving the situation. Thus, the model takes into account both the objective characteristics of the situation and its perceptual components, that is, how it is perceived by a person with a certain personality trait.

According to modern ideas, the real assessment of situational dimensions can be carried out from three different angles, reflecting the position of the subject evaluating the situation in relation to the situation assessed by him: the subject is located and acts inside the situation (in situ); occupies, being in it, a passive position (juxta situm); is not present in the situation, evaluating it from the outside (ex situ) (Horstmann, Rauthmann, Sherman, 2021).

The last of these perspectives was implemented in our study, aimed at studying how the perception and assessment by some subject (observer) of another person (object of perception) can change depending on the change in the situation of interpersonal interaction in which the latter is located and in which he is not included. observer. We studied the "object-situation" in the terminology of V.A. Barabanshchikov (Barabanshchikov, 2009) and proceeded from the fact that "the object of perception is always unique due to the uniqueness of each of the relationships between man and the world" (Demidov, 2006, p . 59). At the same time, we were interested in such situations that were examples of interpersonal interaction, differing in their potential significance for a certain category of people.

Accordingly, *the purpose of the study* was to develop and test a variant of the methodology for studying the dependence of the observer's subjective assessment of the personal characteristics of a person (sitter) on the type of interpersonal interaction situation in which the sitter is included, and which we designate as a perceptual situation from the observer's point of view.

To achieve this goal, it was necessary to solve the following *tasks* :

1. develop stimulus material, which is a video of perceptual situations of real interpersonal interaction and has a high degree of environmental validity;
2. develop and empirically test a procedure that makes it possible to identify changes in the subjective assessment of the sitter's personal characteristics depending on the type of perceptual situation;
3. to empirically study the dynamics of subjective assessments of the sitter's personal characteristics depending on the nature of the perceptual situation.

The theoretical hypothesis of the study was that the subjective assessment of a person's personal characteristics is dynamic and may depend on the nature of the situation of interpersonal interaction in which he is included, and the format of perception of these situations (with and without sound) will contribute to focusing on partially different aspects of the perceptual situation and

thus, it will reveal the variety of significant patterns of its influence on the subjective assessment of a person's personal characteristics.

The empirical hypotheses of the study were as follows:

1. There are significant differences between the average subjective assessments of the sitter's personal characteristics by the factors "Strength", "Activity" and "Evaluation" (according to the "Personality Differential" method) and individual factor scales, when perceived in video clips with sound, characterized by potentially different significance and emotionality for the sitter.
2. There are significant differences between the average subjective assessments of the sitter's personal characteristics by the factors "Strength", "Activity" and "Evaluation" (according to the "Personality Differential" method) and individual factor scales, when perceived in video clips without sound, characterized by potentially different significance and emotionality for the sitter .

The scientific significance of the study is to identify the dynamics of subjective assessments of a person's personal characteristics, due to his perception in different situations of interpersonal interaction, containing the so-called prompts (Rauthmann et al., 2014) and peculiar "opportunities" (affordances) (Gibson, 1988) provided for understanding of a person's personality.

The practical significance of the study lies in two aspects of the developed methodology. One of them concerns the use of environmentally valid stimulus material - videos of real situations of interaction between a young girl and communicative partners. It should be noted that this is only one of the aspects of ecological validity. As is known, the widespread understanding of this concept implies its association with three general dimensions of psychological research, concerning the context of its conduct, the stimulus material used in it, and the behavior of its participants (Schmuckler , 2001). In recent decades, the concept of ecological validity has been associated with very different aspects of psychological research: incentives, objectives and conditions of research, its plans and results, theories and paradigms, methods, phenomena and data (Holleman et al ., 2020). The practical significance of our study lies precisely in the construction of a stimulus material characterized by a sufficiently high ecological validity.

The second significant aspect of the developed methodology concerns the use of stimulus video recordings of situations of interpersonal interaction in two formats - with sound and without sound - which, from our point of view, provides new opportunities for identifying the diversity of those parameters that are likely to reveal the dynamics of subjective personality assessment.

Methods

Development of stimulus material

As a stimulus material, scenarios of situations of interpersonal interaction were constructed, operationalized through three video clips, each of which involved the same sitter (a young girl - an object of perception), whose personal characteristics were to be assessed by the study participants (observers). The duration of each video story was about 1 minute. Scenarios of video clips were constructed in such a way as to represent ecologically valid situations of interpersonal interaction in different spheres of life, potentially associated with varying degrees of their significance for the sitter included in these situations, which, in turn, could manifest itself in the characteristics of his non-verbal behavior and facial expressions .

The first video ("Checkpoint") is a scenario of passing through the checkpoint to the organization; the sitter presents his passport and answers several questions of the guard related to the

purpose of the visit. The interaction of the sitter with the guard, an official unknown person, is of a formalized structured nature and, accordingly, is devoid of special significance and emotionality. *The second video* ("Consulting") is a scenario of psychotherapeutic counseling; the sitter interacts with the psychotherapist about his personal problems, which makes communication more meaningful and emotionally charged for the sitter. *The third video* ("Exam") is the script for the oral exam; the sitter answers the teacher's questions. In this case, the situation is characterized by the greatest degree of emotional stress and subjective significance for the sitter, as it is associated with obtaining an examination grade and a possible negative result. These scenarios were considered by us as environmentally valid stimulus video material, as they reflected complete fragments of everyday situations relevant for interpersonal interaction of young people, from whose age category the sample of study participants was formed.

Each of the three video clips was presented to one group of participants in a format with sound, and to another group without sound. The use of two different formats was due to our assumption that these formats will help focus the attention of the study participants on different aspects of perceptual situations, characterized both by the speech statements of the sitters participating in it, and by their non-verbal behavior (gestures, postures, facial expressions).

Study participants

The main study involved 20 women (mean age M = 28.9, SD = 6.9), divided randomly into two equal groups, one of which was presented with stimulus videos with sound, and the other without it. All participants in the study were students of universities in Moscow.

Procedure

To analyze changes in the subjective assessment of the sitter's personal characteristics depending on the type of perceptual situation, a variant of the semantic differential methodology was used, adapted by the staff of the Psychoneurological Institute named after A. V. M. Bekhtereva - "Personal differential" (hereinafter - LD) (Bazhin, Etkind, 1983); This method allows you to study the attitude towards oneself and other people. The LD was formed by a representative sample of words in the modern Russian language that describe personality traits and characterize the poles of the three classical factors of the semantic differential to the greatest extent: Evaluation, Strength and Activity.

Three videos were presented to one group of participants with sound, the other - without sound. After the presentation of each of the three videos, the participants of the study assessed the personal characteristics of the sitter using 21 scales: charming - unattractive, weak - strong, talkative - silent, irresponsible - conscientious, stubborn - compliant, withdrawn - open, kind - selfish, dependent - independent, active - passive, callous - sympathetic, resolute - indecisive, lethargic - energetic, fair - unfair, relaxed - tense, fussy - calm, hostile - friendly, confident - insecure, unsociable - sociable, honest - insincere, dependent - independent, irritable - unflappable . Each scale had a 7-point rating scale - from -3 to +3. The extreme values of the scales characterize the strong or weak severity of personality traits; central ("0") - means that the evaluated features are absent in a person at all, or making a certain assessment causes difficulty. The order of presentation of videos for all subjects was fixed, from the first ("Checkpoint") to the third ("Exam").

Results

Analysis of the dynamics of subjective assessments by the observer of the personal characteristics of the sitter, depending on the nature of the perceptual situation, was carried out separately for each of the three video clips with sound and for the same video clips presented without sound. In relation to all of these videos, a pairwise comparison was carried out (situations "Checkpoint - Exam", "Checkpoint - Consulting" and "Exam - Consulting") of the average indicators of subjective assessments obtained, firstly, by the factors "Strength", "Activity" and "Score", and secondly, on each of the scales related to these factors. A nonparametric Wilcoxon test for linked samples was used.

Subjective assessments of the personality of the sitter perceived in video clips with sound

When presenting videos *with sound* , significant differences were found (at $p < 0.05$) between the average values of subjective assessments of the sitter's personality obtained by the "Activity" factor - between the situations "Checkpoint" (M = 0.66) and "Consulting" (M = 0.13); according to the "Evaluation" factor - between the situation "Consulting" (M = 1.6), on the one hand, and the situations "Pass" (M = 1.36) and "Exam" (M = 1.44), on the other hand .

Significant differences (at $p < 0.05$) were also found between the average values of subjective assessments obtained on a number of scales related to the factors "Strength", "Activity" and "Evaluation".

According to the "Strength" factor, significant differences were found between the average values of subjective assessments (at $p < 0.05$) on four of the seven scales (Figure 1): 1) between the videos "Checkpoint" and "Consulting" on the scale "dependent - independent"; the assessment changed polarity: the sitter was assessed as rather independent in the video clip "Checking through" (M = 0.20) and rather dependent in the video clip "Consulting" (-1.10); 2) between all three video clips compared in pairs on the "indecisive-decisive" scale; the assessment changed polarity: the sitter was rated as rather indecisive in the video "Exam" (M = -0.90), as rather resolute in the video "Checkpoint" (M = 0.60), and in the video "Consulting" the sitter was rated as indecisive or decisively caused difficulty (M = 0); 3) between all three video clips compared in pairs on a tense-relaxed scale; the evaluation reversed polarity: the sitter was rated as rather tense in the video "Exam" (M = -1.30) and rather relaxed in the videos "Checkpoint" (M = =0.20) and "Consulting" (M = =0.10); 4) between the videos "Checkpoint" and "Consulting" on the scale "uncertain-confident"; the assessment changed polarity: the sitter was assessed as rather insecure when perceiving the video clip "Consulting" (M = -1.30) and as rather confident when perceiving the video clip "Checkpoint" (M = 0.20).

According to the "Activity" factor, significant differences were found between the average values of subjective assessments (at $p < 0.05$) obtained on five of the seven scales (Figure 2): »; the assessment changed from a negative pole to a neutral assessment: the sitter was assessed as rather silent in the "Checkpoint" video (M = -0.70) and did not receive a qualitatively expressed assessment in the "Consulting" video (M = 0); 2) between the videos "Checkpoint" and "Exam" on the scale "passive-active"; the assessment changed polarity: the sitter was assessed as rather active in the video clip "Checkpoint" (M = 1.30) and rather passive in the video clip "Exam" (M = -0.10); 3) between all three video clips compared in pairs according to the "sluggish-energetic" scale; the assessment reversed polarity: the sitter was rated as rather sluggish in the videos "Consulting" (M = -0.60) and "Exam" (M = -0.80), but rather energetic in the video "Checkpoint" (M = 0.40);

4) between the videos "Checkpoint" and "Consulting" on the scale "unsociable - sociable"; the sitter was rated significantly more sociable in the video clip "Checkroom" (M = 0.80) than in the video clip "Consulting" (M = 0.20); 5) between all three video clips compared in pairs on a scale of "irritable - unperturbed"; the sitter was rated significantly more unflappable in the video clip "Checkroom" (M = 1.20) than in the video clips "Exam" (M = 0.80) and "Consulting" (M = 0.50).

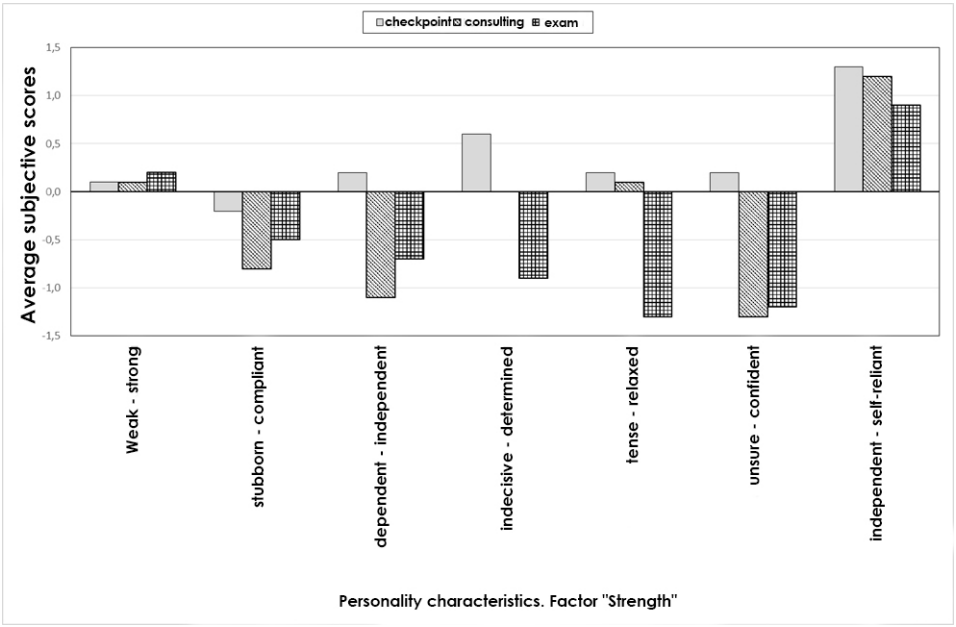

Figure 1. Average subjective assessments of the severity of the sitter's personal characteristics related to the "Strength" factor (video clips with sound)

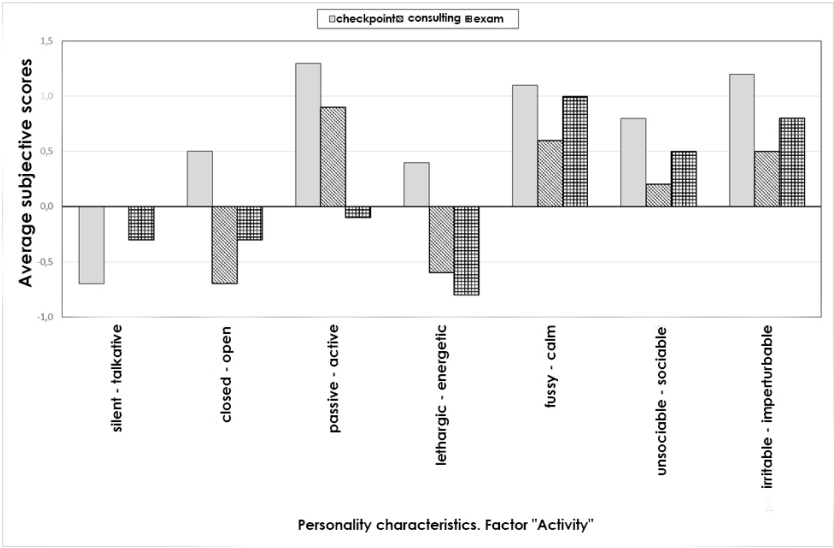

Figure 2. *Average subjective assessments of the personality characteristics of the sitter related to the "Activity" factor (video clips with sound)*

According to the "Evaluation" factor, significant differences were found between the average values of subjective assessments (at $p < 0.05$) on one of the seven scales (Figure 3) - the "insincere-honest" scale: the sitter was rated significantly more honest in the video clip "Consulting" ($M = 1.70$) than in the video clip "Checkpoint" ($M = 1.20$).

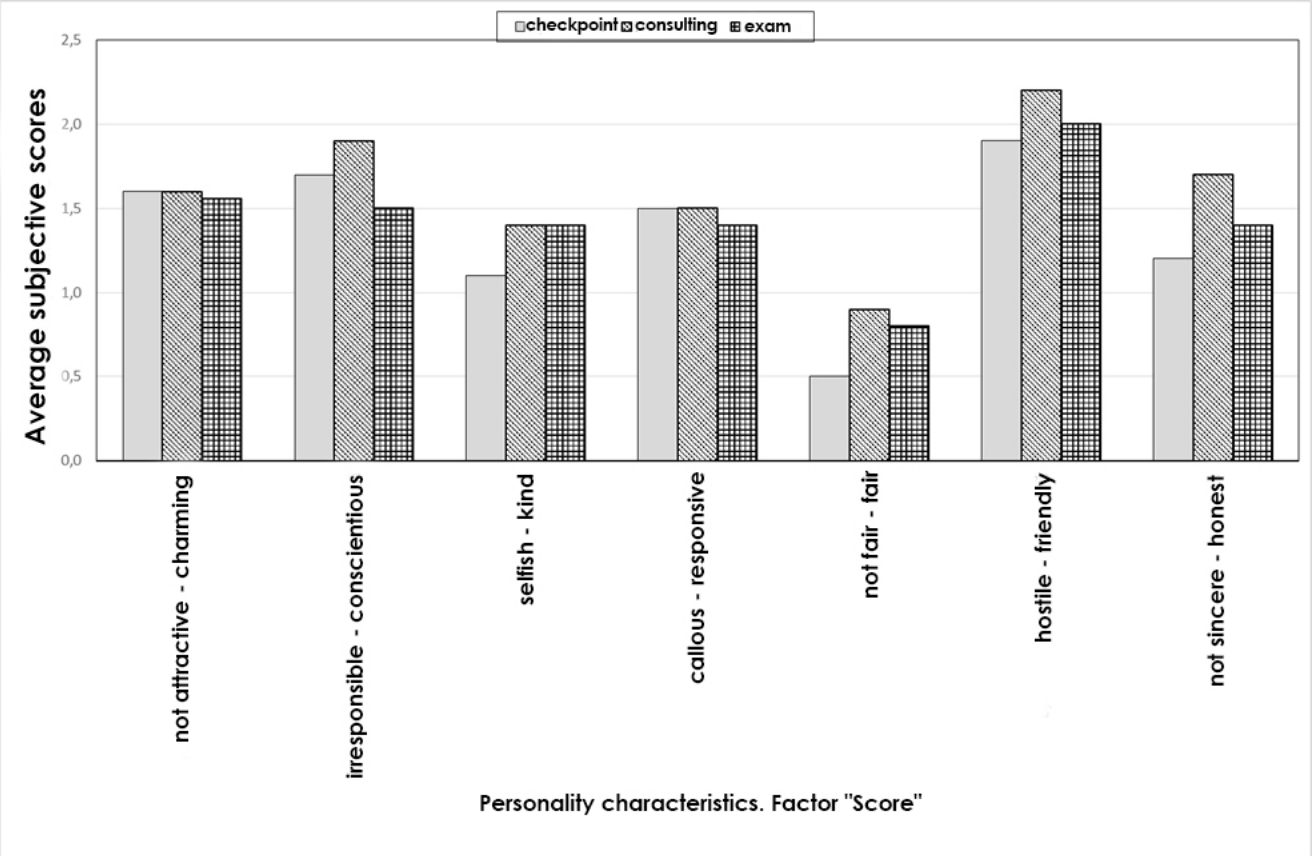

Figure 3. *Average subjective assessments of the severity of the sitter's personal characteristics related to the "Score" factor (video clips with sound)*

Subjective assessments of the personality of the sitter perceived in video clips without sound

When presenting videos *without sound* , significant differences were found (at $p < 0.05$) between the average values of the sitter's subjective assessments obtained by the factor "Strength" - between the situations "Checkpoint" ($M = 0.69$) and "Exam" ($M = -0.04$); according to the factor "Evaluation" - between the situations "Consulting" ($M = 0.46$) and "Exam" ($M = 0.86$).

Significant differences (at $p < 0.05$) were also found between the average values of subjective assessments obtained on a number of scales related to the factors "Strength", "Activity" and "Evaluation".

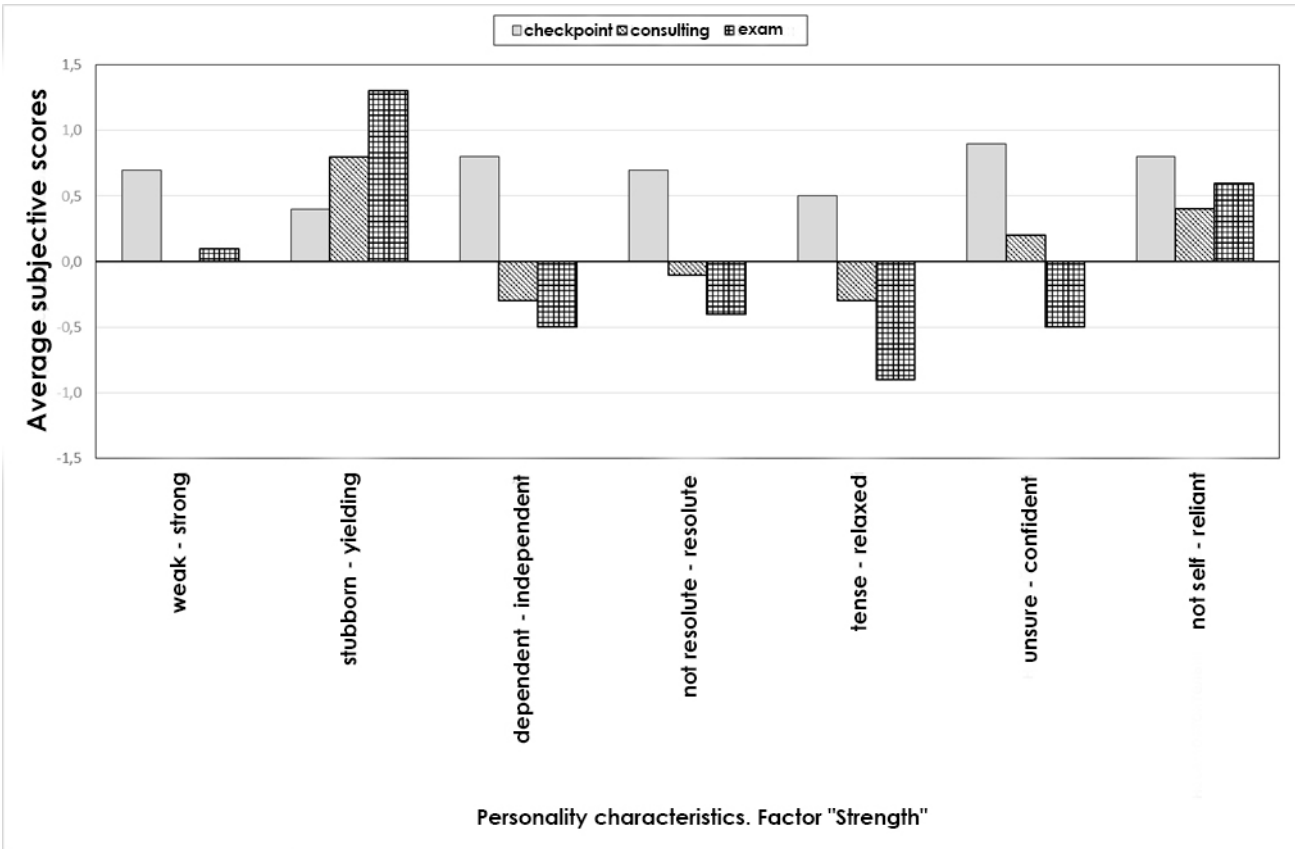

Figure 4. *Average subjective assessments of the severity of the sitter's personal characteristics related to the "Strength" factor (video clips without sound)*

According to the "Strength" factor, significant differences were found between the average values of subjective assessments (at $p < 0.05$) on five of the seven scales (Figure 4): 1) between the videos "Checkpoint" and "Exam" on the "stubborn–compliant" scale; the sitter was rated significantly more compliant in the "Exam" video (M = 1.30) than in the "Checkpoint" video (M = 0.40); 2) between all three video clips compared in pairs on the "dependent-independent" scale; the assessment changed polarity: the sitter was assessed as rather independent in the video clip "Checkpoint" (M = 0.80) and as rather dependent in the videos "Consulting" (M = -0.30) and "Exam" (M = -0.50); 3 *)* between the videos "Checkpoint" and "Exam" on the scale "indecisive - decisive"; the evaluation changed polarity: the sitter was rated as rather indecisive in the "Exam" video (M = -0.40) and as rather resolute in the "Checkpoint" video (M = 0.70); 4) between all three video clips compared in pairs on a tense-relaxed scale; the assessment changed polarity: the sitter was assessed as rather relaxed in the videos "Checkpoint" (M = 0.50), in contrast to the videos "Consulting" (M = -0.30) and "Exam" (M = -0.90), where it was rated as rather intense; 5) between the videos "Checkpoint" and "Exam" on the scale "unsure-confident"; the assessment changed polarity: the sitter was assessed as rather insecure when perceiving the video "Exam" (M = -0.50) and as rather confident when perceiving the video "Checkpoint" (M = 0.90).

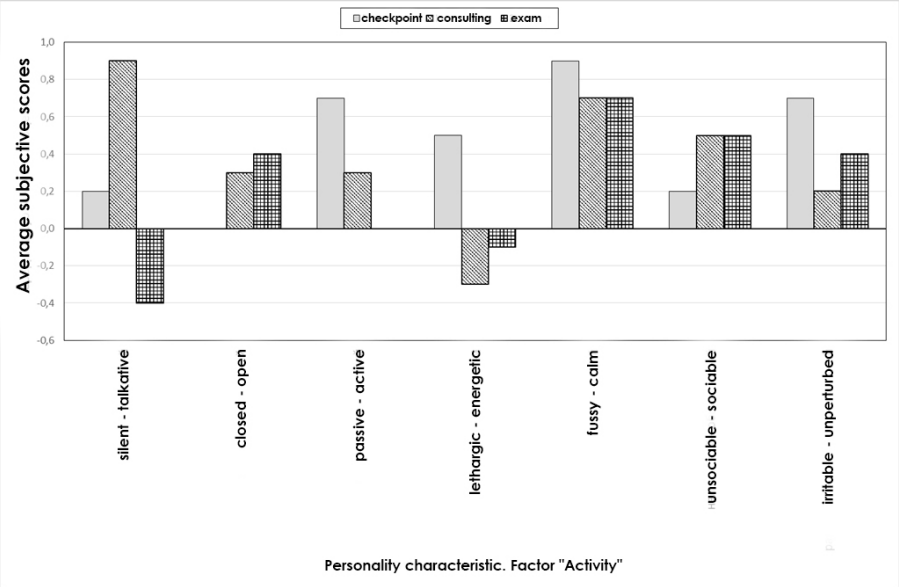

Figure 5. *Average subjective assessments of the severity of the sitter's personal characteristics related to the "Activity" factor (video clips without sound)*

According to the "Activity" factor, significant differences were found between the average values of subjective assessments (at $p < 0.05$) obtained only on one of the seven scales - the "silent-talkative" scale (Figure 5): the assessment changed polarity: the sitter was assessed as rather taciturn in the Exam video (M = -0.40) and as rather talkative in the Consulting video (M = 0.90).

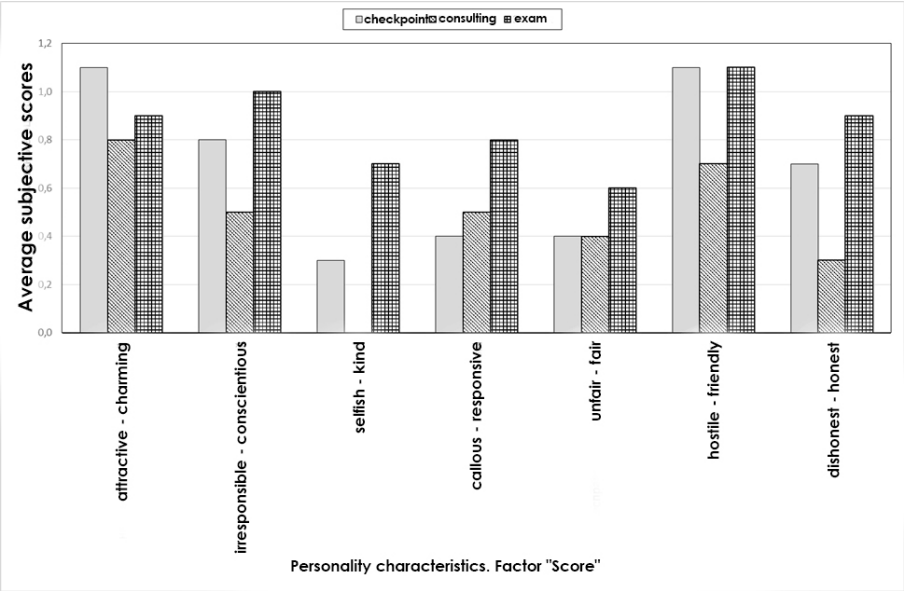

Figure 6**.** *Average subjective assessments of the severity of the personal characteristics of the object of perception, related to the "Score" factor (video clips without sound)*

As for the "Evaluation" factor, none of its scales revealed statistically significant differences between the average values of subjective assessments (Figure 6).

Discussion

In the conducted study, regularities were found in the dynamics of subjective assessments of the personal characteristics of the sitters, depending on the nature of the perceptual situation.

When presenting video clips with sound, a significant dynamics of the average indicators of subjective assessments of the sitter's personal characteristics was found: in terms of the "Activity" factor in general and in most of its scales; by the "Score" factor as a whole and by one of its scales; on separate scales of the "Strength" factor.

When presented with video clips without sound, a significant dynamics of the average indicators of subjective assessments of personal characteristics was found: in terms of the "Strength" factor in general and in most of its scales; by the "Score" factor as a whole and by one of its scales.

Comparison of regularities concerning the situations of perception of video clips with sound and without sound allows us to speak about the presence of common and different in the dynamics of subjective assessments of the sitter's personal characteristics.

Regarding the factors in general, the general pattern for perceptual situations with and without sound is a significant change in subjective assessments by the "Evaluation" factor, and the difference is that for video clips with sound, the dynamics of ratings was also noted by the "Activity" factor, and for video clips without sound - also by the "Strength" factor.

In the case of individual scales, the general patterns for perceptual situations with and without sound relate to significant dynamics on the four scales of the "Strength" factor ("stubborn-compliant", "dependent-independent", "indecisive-decisive", "tense-relaxed", " uncertain-confident") and on one scale of the factor "Activity" ("silent-talkative"). This allows us to speak about the "sensitivity" of these scales as tools that allow us to detect the dynamics of the subjective assessment of a person from one perceptual situation to another, regardless of whether the situation has a sound component.

Thus, the results of the study to a certain extent confirm the theoretical and empirical hypotheses, and also have theoretical and methodological significance.

These results support the idea that personality traits require situations that are relevant to them (Kenrick & Funder , 1988), and also correlate to some extent with the interactive model of personality (Endler , & Magnusson , 1976), according to which actual behavior is a function of continuous multidirectional interaction between a person and the situation with which he is faced. In our study, we managed to show how the actual behavior of the sitter, which changed depending on the situation in which he was, can serve as a guideline for changing the observer's subjective assessments of his personal characteristics.

As for the limitations of the study, they are primarily related to its sample, which included only students and only women. Thus, the generalization of the obtained results to the categories of people of a different age, social status and gender is impossible. However, as a positive point, we note the sufficient relevance of the stimulus material constructed by us to the sample of study participants, since the age of the girl appearing in the videos corresponded to the age of the study participants, and the types of interpersonal interaction in which she was involved were, we believe, quite natural and understandable to them.

Conclusion

1. Perceptual situations related to different spheres of interpersonal interaction and having potentially different degrees of significance and emotional involvement of a person in them significantly influenced the observer's subjective assessment of his personal characteristics. The dynamics of subjective assessments was partially marked by the general factors "Strength", "Activity" and "Evaluation", as well as by individual scales of the personality differential.
2. The dynamics of subjective assessments of personal characteristics was noted for situations of interpersonal interaction, perceived both in voiced format and without sound. The most "sensitive" to changes were the scales of the "Strength" factor.
3. Different versions of the procedure for presenting the same video clips in formats with and without sound contributed to the observer's focus on partially different aspects of the perceptual situation and thus made it possible to identify common and different significant patterns of its influence on the subjective assessment of the sitter's personal characteristics.

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Received: March 20, 2022
Revision received: May 20, 2022
Accepted: June 5, 2022

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Kristina Igorevna Ananyeva - participation in the development of the concept of the study, participation in the collection of empirical material, analysis of the data obtained and statistical processing of data, participation in writing the article, editing the article.

Alexander Alexandrovich Demidov - participation in the development of the research concept, literature review on the topic of the article, participation in writing the article, design of the final version of the article.

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Information about the conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.