PERSONALITY PERCEPTION IN INSTANT MESSENGER COMMUNICATION IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC AND PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

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Abstract: Personality perception accuracy after instant messenger communication and relation of content of messages to self- and stranger-perceived personality were examined in two cultures. Czech and Chinese subjects were paired into couples with a stranger and spoke with him or her through Windows Live Messenger (in the Czech Republic) or QQ (in China). After 30-40 minutes conversation they filled out Big Five questionnaires about their partner's personality and about themselves. In the Czech study, there was a correlation 0.39 between self-perceived and partner perceived extraversion. In the Chinese study, correlations between self-perception and partner-perception of a subject's personality were 0.49 for neuroticism, 0.38 for extraversion, 0.35 for openness to experience, and 0.28 for agreeableness. Possible reasons for Chinese higher personality perception accuracy can be higher proneness to "dialectical thinking" or higher experience with using online communication for social sharing and perceiving.

Key words: personality perception accuracy, cues for personality perception, Big Five, social perception, computer mediated communication

When people meet a stranger they form an impression about him or her. This impression can be accurate and fit with the stranger's personality, or it can be inaccurate and the perceiver will form a non-fitting impression about the stranger. The problem of when and how people get an accurate opinion about a stranger's personality has received considerable attention from social and personality psychologists. Research covers which per-

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sonality traits can be best judged, in what circumstances, or which cues mediate this personality perception in different environments. Research about personality perception accuracy often assumes that results are universally valid for all cultures. The aim of the present research is to show that accuracy of personality perception is not universal and depends on cultural context, which is shown in the two studies of person perception accuracy following Instant Messenger (IM) communication in two cultures. The first study was conducted in the Czech Republic with Windows Live Messenger and the second study in China with QQ.

Person perception accuracy tends not to be high across various contexts. A meta-analytical study by Connelly and Ones (2010) found average personality perception accuracy (measured as a correlation between self and stranger's rating) to be .10 for neuroticism, .27 for extraversion, .16 for openness, .12 for agreeableness, and .18 for conscientiousness. There have been several studies that researched person perception accuracy on the Internet. For example, correlation between observers' rating of the personality of web site authors and their own self-rating found by Vazire and Gosling (2004) was .42 for openness to experience, .35 for conscientiousness, .31 for agreeableness, .26 for extraversion, and .21 for neuroticism.

Instant messenger – which was chosen as the environment for examining the accuracy of person perception in this study – is a software used for real time text-based communication on the Internet. For example, Windows Live Messenger (MSN), ICQ, or QQ are such instant messenger programs. The most important characteristics of IM communication are its lack of communication cues such as facial expression, tone of voice, or perception of social status from the clothing of the communication partner. This means that people have to use the text on the screen as almost the only cue to help them get an impression about their communication partner. Emoticons (:-),:( ), the partner's arrangement of communication environment (chosen photo, color, and font of the written text) or the partner's speed of writing are only poor substitutes for face-to-face communication cues. This information then helps people to form an impression about the writer. For example, people using more emoticons in emails were found to be more liked by their readers (Byron, Baldridge, 2007). Impressions made through the perception of these cues may not be correct, but they may be correct as well, because writing style in online communication is also connected with the writer's personality. In Holtgraves' (2011) research about cell phone text messages, a higher number of emoticons written by a subject correlated with the subject's neuroticism and (for female subjects) the total amount of text written by the subject correlated with the subject's extraversion.

Correlation between self and communication partner's view of one's personality after IM conversation was assessed by Rouse and Haass (2003). Their subjects first had talked about whatever they wanted, then they shared their opinions about the ideal campus and school and finally they filled out Big Five questionnaires about themselves and their communication partner. Person perception accuracy found by Rouse and Haas was .40 for conscientiousness, .04 for extraversion, .00 for agreeableness, -.06 for openness, and -.08 for neuroticism.

Despite the large body of research showing that person perception accuracy depends on who perceives it, the research com-

paring accuracy of personality judgment in different cultures seems to be neglected. Low personality perception accuracy in IM communication found by Rouse and Haas (2003) might be characteristic only for the American culture. It might be higher in different language environments. Grammar covers different aspects of life in different languages. Some languages may offer a higher variety of cues in an online environment than English does. For example, Korean grammar is deeply connected with societal norms, e.g., it has three (or more if distinguished more deeply) levels of speech, according to the status and relationship of the communication partners and the status of and the relationship with the people about whom they speak. In Korean it is more polite to address people by their personal names or by the titles of their profession than to address them by pronouns. In polite speech, it is not allowed to use personal pronouns to speak about the person whose status deserves politeness. Lee, Kim, Seo, and Chung (2007) found a correlation between the subject's openness to experience and the number of personal pronouns in an essay written by the subject, which can be interpreted that the more open subjects wrote essays that followed the rules of Korean language and society to a lesser degree. This example shows how personality can be connected with grammar characteristics in languages with complex grammars. These kinds of cues may enrich online text communication and allow the perceiver to judge the writer's personality more accurately. Therefore, we designed a research project with similar design as Rouse and Haas and conducted it in the Czech Republic to find if accuracy of judgment about a stranger's personality in IM communication will be different from that found in studies in the United States. We also considered some possible cues in communication – emoticons, question marks, and length of messages – and examined their role in expression and perception of personality in IM communication. Later, we conducted another study in the People's Republic of China.

STUDY 1

METHOD

Participants

Czech sample. Fifty-six subjects were students in an undergraduate course at a large Czech university and volunteers who replied to an advertisement in the university information system or were asked by the first author to participate in this research. They were separated into two groups, so people in one group were strangers to people in the other group. Subjects in the first group (15 women, 13 men, age $M = 22.0$, $SD = 2.4$) were mostly psychology students participating in research instead of attending classes. Subjects in the second group (15 women, 13 men, age $M = 24.9$, $SD = 3.5$) were mostly volunteers from the department of psychology (students of other majors and recent graduates). All participants were Czech native speakers.

Measures

Inventory of adjectives – revised (IPJ-R). IPJ-R (Hřebíčková, Urbánek, Čermák, 2000) is a Czech questionnaire for measuring Big Five personality traits. IPJ-R contains 60 pairs of adjectives. Subjects answered using a 6-point Likert type scale. Cronbach's alphas of these scales were from .88 to .92.

Counted characteristics of written communication. We counted some characteristics of text written by subjects while communicating through IM. These characteristics were frequency of emoticons and question marks (?) and average length of message (number of written characters divided by number of messages). The number of emoticons and number of question marks were divided by the total number of characters in the text written by the subject to produce frequencies. Usage of frequencies instead of numbers of these characteristics allows for control for different numbers of text written by different participants.

Characteristics of Written Communication Computed by Morphological Analyzer

Other four characteristics of text written by a participant were computed by morphological analyzer of Czech text ajka (Sedláček, Smrž, 2001) and morphological desambiguator of Czech text (Šmerk, 2008). These characteristics were frequency of first, second, and third person word forms (pronouns and verbs in first, second and third person) and ratio (number of adjectives + number of adverbs) / (number of nouns + number of verbs). This characteristic means how concrete the text is – more adjectives or adverbs as compared to nouns and verbs means more details in the text. To produce frequencies, the number of word forms in first, second, and third person was divided by the total number of characters in the text written by the subject.

Procedure

Each group of subjects sat in one computer room together with two administrators. Participants were randomly assigned to pairs with a same sex partner from the other group. Each respondent received a same sex communication partner in the second room, who was a stranger to him or her. Both partners were told the goal was to talk to each other for 30 minutes using Windows Live Messenger and to form an impression about their partner's personality. Messenger accounts were created just for this occasion and contained no photos or other information about the participants. After the conversation they completed an IPJ-R questionnaire about their partner and then about themselves. Conversations between the subjects were saved and used for computation of the text's characteristics referred to above.

RESULTS

Only extraversion was judged accurately by the writers' communication partners. The correlation between a subject's self perception and their partner's perception of the subject's extraversion was 0.39 ($p < .01$, see Table 1). Frequency of emoticons in the text correlated positively with self-perceived neuroticism ($r = .48$, $p < .001$), extraversion ($r = .28$, $p < .05$) and negatively with self-perceived conscientiousness ($r = -.30$, $p < .05$). Frequency of emoticons also correlated with partner-perceived extraversion ($r = .33$, $p < .05$), openness to experience ($r = .37$, $p < .01$) and close to significance was the correlation with partner-perceived agreeableness ($r = .23$, $p < .09$). Correlation between frequency of question marks and partner-perceived neuroticism ($r = .26$, $p < .06$) was close to significance. Self-perceived neuroticism correlated positively with frequency of second person word forms ($r = .27$, $p <. 05$) and negatively with frequency of third person word forms

($r = -.49$, $p < .001$), which correlated positively with self-perceived agreeableness ($r = .30$, $p < .05$). Significant correlations were also found between the average length of a message and partner-perceived openness ($r = .38$, $p < .01$) and agreeableness ($r = .35$, $p < .05$). Correlation with partner-perceived extraversion ($r = .23$, $p < .1$) was close to significance. The ratio (number of adjectives + number of adverbs) / (number of nouns + number of verbs) correlated with partner-perceived openness ($r = .28$, $p < .05$), agreeableness ($r = .33$, $p < .01$) and conscientiousness ($r = .26$, $p < .05$, see Table 1).

Table 1. Study 1: Intraclass correlation between self- and partner's view of subject's personality and Pearson correlations (r) among self- and partner's view of subject's personality and some characteristics of text written by the subject

	Intraclass correlation between self- and partner's view of subject's personality									
	Ne	Ex	Op	Ag	Co					
	-.06	**.39****	-.14	-.12	.10					
	Self-view (Pearson r)					Partner-view (Pearson r)				
	Ne	Ex	Op	Ag	Co	Ne	Ex	Op	Ag	Co
frequency of emoticons	**.48*****	**.28***	-.13	-.11	**-.30***	-.03	**.33***	**.37****	.23^{+}	.14
frequency of question marks	.06	.12	.05	-.02	.00	.26^{+}	.03	-.18	-.17	-.05
average length of message	.21	-.15	-.06	-.13	.01	-.21	.23^{+}	**.38****	**.35***	.19
frequency of 1st person word forms	.07	.01	-.24^{+}	.01	.01	-.02	.24^{+}	.25^{+}	**.36****	.18
frequency of 2nd person word forms	**.27***	.14	.04	.04	-.13	.07	.01	.10	.10	.04
frequency of 3rd person word forms	**-.49*****	.09	.22	**.30***	.12	.26^{+}	-.25^{+}	**-.37****	**-.44*****	-.09
(number of Adjectives + adverbs) / (number of nouns + verbs)	.06	-.16	-.01	-.06	.10	-.15	.13	**.28***	**.33****	**.26***

Note: Ne = Neuroticism; Ex = Extraversion; Op = Openness to Experience; Ag = Agreeableness; Co = Conscientiousness.

$^{+}$ $p < .1$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

DISCUSSION

The person perception accuracy in judging a stranger's personality following IM communication was not better in the Czech Republic sample than in Rouse and Haas' (2003) American study. While Americans were able to judge with some accuracy only conscientiousness, the Czechs judged accurately only extraversion. The accuracy found in extraversion is consistent with previous research on the topic of personality perception accuracy. Extraversion is a Big Five dimension and it is easy to judge by strangers (Vazire, 2010; Connolly et al., 2007). Also, individuals need the shortest time to form an opinion about the other's extraversion (Kenny et al., 1994).

Neuroticism was found to be the personality dimension most connected to the style of writing. Subjects scoring higher in neuroticism used higher frequency of second person word forms and emoticons, and lower frequency of third person word forms. Cuperman and Ickes (2009) found that neuroticism is connected with watching a partner and adapting to his or her speech in face-to-face communication. Greater frequency of second person word forms may have the same meaning in IM communication – less emotionally stable people may want to check the state of the partner, so they may write messages more often addressed to him or her. Smaller frequency of third person word forms can be connected with less emotionally stable subjects unwilling to start a conversation about some new topic, since they do not know what will be the partner's reaction to this new topic.

The connections found between the perception of a partner's personality and properties of written messages could be interpreted as having a positive or negative opinion about a partner. Big Five dimensions (with the exception of extraversion) have a positive and negative pole (it is better to be intelligent, kind, emotionally stable, and disciplined than to be chaotic, stupid, ugly, and depressed). The subjects possibly formed their opinions in the following manner: "I have a good (bad) feeling from the conversation – let's give him or her positive (negative) evaluation" and they gave better evaluation to partners with whom they had a more pleasant conversation. Therefore, the correlations between partner perceptions of personality and the written text content could be explained by the ability of such text to be pleasant or unpleasant for the partner. Text, which contains shorter messages, and fewer number of adverbs and adjectives (which means fewer details) may show that the partner is not willing much to reveal or share his or her thoughts. Such short messages are disliked, so a partner is evaluated more negatively on the Big Five scale.

STUDY 2

METHOD

Participants

All 46 subjects were students of the Department of Psychology at a medium-sized university in central China. Twenty subjects were men and 26 subjects were women, mean age 22.0 years, SD = 1.7. All subjects were Chinese native speakers.

Measures

National Character Survey (NCS). The NCS was originally created by A. Terracciano

et al. (2005) to measure the Big Five personality traits to conduct research about national stereotypes. The NCS contains 30 pairs of adjectives. The Cantonese version was translated into Mandarin by a Mandarin/Cantonese bilingual speaker and then checked by a third author. We used the same 6-point Likert type scale as in study 1. Cronbach's alphas of these five scales were from .64 to .75.

Counted Characteristics of Written Communication

The following were counted: Average length of message, frequency of emoticons and question marks (?, MA = 吗, if MA and ? were together, we counted only one. If the character MA had no question meaning, it was not counted), frequency of Chinese characters HEI (嘿, signals better or closer relationship, politeness), YE (也. means also), DE (的, this character connects adjective or attribute with the word, so it can be considered as number of adjectives), EN (恩 or 嗯, signals approval, agreement with someone), LE (了, has many meanings, one of them being to indicate to the listener that the speaker said all he or she wanted to say) and BA (吧, this character is used at the end of a sentence to indicate suggestion or to make the sentence (usually imperative) more soft and polite). The number of emoticons, number of question marks and numbers of Chinese characters were divided by the total number of characters in the text written by the subject to produce frequencies.

Procedure

The procedure was similar to Study 1. Data gathering took place over four sessions in two small computer rooms. After arrival at the computer room the participant was asked if all the people in the second room were strangers to him or her (the department is large, so students did not know all the others there). Because QQ is the most popular messenger service in China, we decided to use it instead of Windows Live Messenger. Potential abuse of QQ is more controlled than in the case of Windows Live Messenger, so it is not so easy to make blank accounts. QQ is very common among university students, so nearly everyone has a QQ account; we therefore decided students would use their own accounts. Participants in one room received the QQ number of their partner's account and then added them to their QQ account. After communicating with the same sex partner for 30 minutes they completed an NCS about their partner's personality and then about themselves. The participants received a small gift for participation in the project.

RESULTS

Correlations between self- and partner view of personality were significant for four out of five Big Five dimensions: Extraversion ($r = .38$, $p < .01$), neuroticism ($r = .49$, $p < .001$), openness to experience ($r = .35$, $p < .01$), and agreeableness ($r = .28$, $p < .05$). Close to significance was also the correlation between self-perception and their partner's perception of the subject's conscientiousness ($r = .23$, $p < .07$, see Table 2).

There was correlation between frequency of emoticons and partner-perceived openness ($r = .30$, $p < .05$). Correlation between frequency of emoticons and self-perceived conscientiousness was close to significance ($r = .28$, $p < .07$). Negative correlations between frequency of question marks and both self- ($r = -.27$, $p < .07$) and partner ($r = -.27$, $p < .08$) perceived openness were close

Table 2 . Study 2: Intraclass correlation between self- and partner's view of subject's personality and Pearson correlations (r) among self- and partner's view of subject's personality and some characteristics of text written by the subject

	Intraclass correlation between self- and partner's view of subject's personality									
	Ne	Ex	Op	Ag	Co					
	.49* **	**.38** **	**.35** **	**.28***	.23^{+}					
	Self-view (Pearson r)					Partner-view (Pearson r)				
	Ne	Ex	Op	Ag	Co	Ne	Ex	Op	Ag	Co
frequency of emoticons	-.23	-.16	.19	.05	.28^{+}	-.22	.14	**.30***	-.03	.08
frequency of question marks	.17	-.11	-.27^{+}	-.05	-.01	.09	-.22	-.27^{+}	-.10	-.13
average length of message	-.09	.20	.05	.14	.02	-.04	.28^{+}	.11	.13	**.31***
frequency of character HEI	.10	.10	**.30***	.14	.07	-.14	.17	**.54** **	.17	.14
YE	-.28^{+}	.20	-.11	.11	.21	-.12	.01	.13	.22	.12
DE	-.27^{+}	.25	.22	-.20	.19	-.15	.14	.11	.06	.24
EN	-.08	-.01	.06	**.32***	.12	.04	-.19	**.31***	.20	.01
LE	-.03	-.08	.10	.01	.00	-.13	**-.27**$^{+}$	**-.38** **	-.12	-.12
BA	.13	-.21	-.11	.10	-.10	.19	**-.40** **	.00	-.10	-.17

Note: Ne = Neuroticism; Ex = Extraversion; Op = Openness to Experience; Ag = Agreeableness; Co = Conscientiousness.

$^{+}$ p < .1, * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

to significance. There was also a significant correlation between average length of message and partner-perceived conscientiousness (r = .31, p < .05). Correlation with partner-perceived extraversion (r = .28, p < .06) was close to significance (see Table 2).

DISCUSSION

As compared with Rouse and Haas' (2003) study, the results revealed much better judgment of a stranger's personality. Correlations between perception of a partner's personality following IM conversation and this partner's self-perception in the Chinese sample were larger than 0.2 and significant or close to significance for all Big Five dimensions of personality.

Negative correlations (which were close to significance) between neuroticism and characters DE and YE could mean that more neurotic Chinese people tend to add fewer details to their speech (since main usage of DE character is the adjective construction and the meaning of YE character is "also" or "too"). Lesser usage of DE and YE characters could be interpreted as not revealing unnecessary information. This can be ex-

plained that more neurotic Chinese are more afraid about the partner's reaction to their own so they do not express it. This interpretation is equivalent to our interpretation of smaller frequency of third person word forms found in the text written by more neurotic Czech subjects.

More open participants wrote more HEI characters. This can be interpreted that people more open to experience are quicker in accepting a stranger as a closer person – so they start to use the HEI to signal a closer relationship. Agreeableness was connected with greater frequency of the EN characters, which means that more agreeable participants want to show approval or understanding of their communication partner more often.

Subjects writing more LE and BA characters and shorter messages were perceived as less extraverted, subjects writing more LE characters also as less open. The BA character is used when suggesting to a second person to do something. The LE character was often used by the participants at the end of a sentence – in this position it has the meaning of "I have said what I wanted – now you should react", which prompts the partner to do something. It seems that this prompting may enhance a less favorable perception of the partner in the Chinese sample.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Chinese were found better than Czechs (or Americans in Rouse and Haas' study) in judging a stranger's personality following an IM conversation. Several reasons for the better ability of the Chinese in judging personality of strangers through IM communication are considered. Young Chinese tend to use QQ as one of the main ways of communication – so IM communication is probably more prevalent among young Chinese than in the Czech Republic. The Chinese are also more used to sharing information (as compared to expressing themselves) in online networks as compared to Americans, so they more often comment on others' online behavior than do Americans (Qiu, Lin, Leung, 2013). If such a difference exists also among Chinese and Czechs, the Chinese would be more experienced in watching others, because they more often comment on information, which others shared about themselves – and this may result in a more accurate perception of others' behavior and judgment about personality.

Differences in the self-other perception correlations might also be caused by differences in self-judgment accuracy. Heine and Lehman (1999) found that Japanese have a larger discrepancy between real self and ideal self than Canadians. This means that Canadians consider themselves closer to the ideal, but Japanese think they are less close to the ideal. If strangers perceive people more realistically than people perceive themselves (which should be tested in both Czech and Chinese environments), and if Czech participants think about themselves as more ideal than the Chinese do, the Czechs' self-perception can be farther from the strangers' perceptions than the self-perception of Chinese participants.

People in individualistic cultures tend to make quicker opinions about people's traits from their behavior than people in collectivistic cultures (Church et al., 2005). This is because people in collectivistic cultures think about others as more defined by situation, society and relationships than by their own internal attributes (Markus, Kitayama, 1998).

The concepts of individualism and collectivism are challengeable (Fiske, 2002), and so is the East-West division in cross-cultural psychology. However, if we consider that there could be a difference in the speed of forming a first opinion between Czechs and Chinese, the Czechs may tend to make more perception errors when assigning traits to a perceived person more quickly. This may lead to less accurate perception of a stranger's personality in the Czech sample than in the Chinese sample.

Better agreement between self and other perception in the Chinese sample may be caused by a larger tendency of Chinese people to think about themselves and others in more contradictory terms ("I am lazy and sometimes diligent."; Spencer-Rodgers et al., 2010). Because Chinese are used to thinking about people in more different ways, they can be better perceivers of both self and others.

There may also be involvement of perception biases in the Czech sample, as shown by the higher number of significant correlations between partner-view of personality and the three characteristics of messages that we have checked. While Chinese are not so prone to use cues like emoticons to make an impression about a stranger, Czechs use these cues more often and are more prone to make mistakes. A smaller presence of biases may be another reason for better person perception accuracy in the Chinese sample. Linkov (2011) found that Czechs tend to perceive themselves as less conscientious and more neurotic than others, but such difference was not found for any Big Five dimension in the Chinese sample. This means that Chinese do not have the tendency to think about themselves as higher as or lower than others in some Big Five dimensions. Linkov also found that Czechs think that a likeable partner has a similar level of extraversion, agreeableness, and openness to experience as themselves. But Chinese do not have the tendency to perceive likeable person as similar to themselves in any of the Big Five dimensions (Linkov, 2011), so Chinese electronic communication does not contain this bias present in a Czech communication environment.

Because Big Five questionnaires in both countries used the same 6-point Likert scale, we tried to compute an average standard deviation in response to the questions of the Big Five questionnaire for describing oneself and a partner in the Czech Republic and China. There was a lower average standard deviation for other-description items (mean of SDs 1.09, $s = 0.145$, $n = 60$) than for self-description items (mean of SDs 1.14, $s = 0.228$, $n = 60$, $t = 2.01$, $p < .05$) for the Czech sample, and for the Chinese sample (mean of SDs of self-description 1.146, $s = 0.200$; mean of SDs of other-description 1.147, $s = 0.201$, $n = 30$, $t = -0.058$, $p = .96$). Czechs describe others with less variability than they describe themselves, but for the Chinese the variability of self-description is similar to the variability of other-description. This supports the view that there are fewer biases present in Chinese perception of others, which may lead to better accuracy of perception.

Another reason for better person perception accuracy in China would be if the Chinese responded more moderately in the questionnaires and described themselves with less variability than the Czechs, so it would be easier to guess the Chinese self-description. But as stated in the previous paragraph, there was no difference between average standard deviation in self-description in the

Big Five questionnaire in either country ($t = -0.05$, $p = .96$).

The differences between Chinese and Czechs may also come from differences in the collection of samples and the methods used. All participants in the Chinese sample were from the same environment – School of Psychology, but participants in the Czech sample (and Rouse and Haas's [2003] subjects in the United States) were from various environments. So it was easier for Chinese subjects to empathize with their partners, which may lead to better judgment about their personality.

The comparison of Czech and Chinese samples might also be affected by methods used in both samples. Since we did not aim to compare mean scores, we decided to use questionnaires which were successfully used before in both countries and which are in similar formats; therefore, the differences might be caused by different personality measures. Even people in the same community might "develop slightly different personal connotations for socially shared symbols" (Uher, 2013, p. 13). Differences in perceiving oneself and others rise with cultural differences among people, because "the knowledge that constructs of self- and other-perception reflect also depends on the context of the particular semiotic system in which it is encoded" (p. 22). Comparison between two cultures is meaningful if the construct used for comparison is meaningful for individuals in both cultures. Big Five dimensions – used for comparison in our article – were confirmed to exist in the Czech language (Hřebíčková, 2011), but the openness to experience was found to incorporate different connotations in the Chinese language than it incorporates in English (Cheung et al., 2008). Cheung, van de Vijver and Leong (2011) conclude that "openness is not an inherently distinct structure in the implicit theory and taxonomy of personality in the Chinese culture" (p. 598). Openness might be, therefore, not a suitable dimension for the comparison of person perception between Czech and Chinese cultures.

Usage of Emoticons and Message Length

Correlations between the chosen cues and self- and partner perception of the writer's personality showed two different directions when compared across cultures. First, average length of message played a similar role in both cultures. Both, Czech and Chinese subjects perceived a person writing longer messages to be more favorable: Czechs as more open and agreeable and Chinese as more conscientious. A person writing shorter messages behaves more "harshly" towards the communication partner, as compared to a person writing longer messages. And a partner perceives such a person as less favorable.

Second, for emoticons, their role in expressing and perceiving personality was different in the Czech and Chinese samples. Czechs writing more emoticons were more conscientious while Chinese writing more emoticons were (non-significantly) less conscientious. This result may be interpreted that emoticons are a more standard part of electronic communication in China, but a less standard part in the Czech Republic. Since the writing of emoticons is not so common in the Czech environment, more conscientious people write fewer emoticons. Since emoticons are standard in a Chinese environment, more conscientious Chinese may be prone to use more emoticons while aiming to write a more appro-

priate text. Differences in the connection between self-perceived personality and the number of written emoticons between the Czechs and the Chinese could be, therefore, explained in a way that emoticons can tell less about the personality of an author in China, since they are not so special and do not carry information about the author. While usage of emoticons is connected with higher extraversion and neuroticism among Czechs, there is no such connection among the Chinese.

CONCLUSION

It is accurate to say that the ability to judge strangers following online IM communication seems not to be a psychological universal (Norenzayan, Heine, 2005). People in some cultures (e.g., China) judge strangers better than people in other cultures (e.g., the Czech Republic). We offered some possible explanations for this difference, such as differences in "dialectical reasoning" style (Spencer-Rodgers et al., 2010), self-enhancement (Heine, Lehman, 1999), or quickness of forming opinions (Church et al., 2005). These explanations are, however, offered according to the East-West division in cross-cultural psychological research, which is based on the challengeable assumption that cultures geographically close or having a common part of history with one another should be similar and interchangeable for the purpose of psychological research (see Linkov, 2013). Differences in "dialectical reasoning" or self-enhancement between the Czech Republic and People's Republic of China have never been examined, and the suggested explanations need to be empirically tested by further research.

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