The influence of assertiveness characteristics of raters on perceived assertiveness in others

Elise Heffelfinger Labe Sloan

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The Influence of Assertive Characteristics of Raters on Perceived Assertiveness in Others

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science at Virginia Commonwealth University.

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(10/2/82)
Table of Contents

List of Tables ........................................ iv
List of Figures ........................................ v
List of Appendices .................................... vi
Abstract .............................................. vii
Introduction ......................................... 1
  Variables in Perception ............................. 3
  Characteristics of the Decoder .................... 7
  Problems in Research ............................... 7
  Assertiveness ....................................... 9
  Impact Message Inventory ......................... 12
  Rationale and Hypotheses .......................... 17
Method .................................................. 20
  Subjects ............................................. 20
  Apparatus ......................................... 21
    Measures .......................................... 21
    Videotapes ...................................... 22
    Procedure ....................................... 23
Results ............................................... 25
Discussion .......................................... 42
Reference Notes ..................................... 49
References ........................................... 50
Appendices .......................................... 56
Vita ................................................... 68
List of Tables

Table
1. Newman-Keuls' Multiple-Range Test Comparison of Decoders' Ratings of Attractiveness of Encoders  29
2. Newman-Keuls' Multiple-Range Test Comparison of Male and Female Decoders' Ratings of Attractiveness of Encoders  30
3. Newman-Keuls' Multiple-Range Test Comparison of High and Low Assertive Decoders' Ratings of Attractiveness of Encoder  31
4. Newman-Keuls' Multiple-Range Test Comparison of Decoders' Assertiveness Ratings of Encoder  35
5. Newman-Keuls' Multiple-Range Test of IMI Cluster-score Friendly on Tape Means  38
6. Newman-Keuls' Multiple-Range Test of IMI Cluster-score Submissive on Tape Means  39
7. Newman-Keuls' Multiple-Range Test of IMI Cluster-score Dominant on Tape Means  40
List of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Mean Attractiveness Ratings of Encoders by Assertiveness of Rater</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Mean Attractiveness Ratings of Encoders by Sex of Rater.</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Mean Assertiveness Ratings of Encoders</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>IMI Cluster-scores, Mean Ratings by Cluster</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>IMI Cluster-scores, Mean Ratings by Tape</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Appendices

Appendix

A. Conflict Resolution Inventory  . . . . . . . . . . .  .56
B. Impact Message Inventory  . . . . . . . . . . .  .59
C. Global Rating of Assertiveness  . . . . . . . . . . .  .63
D. Global Rating of Attractiveness and Assertiveness  .  .64
E. Consent Form  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .  .65
F. Roleplay Scripts for Videotapes  . . . . . . . . . . .  .66
Abstract

The present study examined the perceptions of assertiveness, limited to the situation of ability to refuse requests, by assertive and nonassertive subjects as they rated assertive and nonassertive encoders. Gender differences were also assessed. Subjects were 40 Caucasian male and female undergraduate General Psychology students at a large urban university. Within each gender group there were 10 high-assertive and 10 low-assertive subjects as determined by their scores on the second part of the Conflict Resolution Inventory. The subjects rated videotaped assertive and unassertive encoders on an attractiveness scale, assertiveness scale, and on the Impact Message Inventory, (an interpersonal assessment instrument).

Results indicated that the assertiveness of the encoders was perceived accurately; however, neither the assertiveness nor gender of the decoders produced significant differences in their ratings. The IMI cluster-scores of Dominance and Submission produced significant differences between the assertive male and female encoders and the unassertive male and female encoders. The cluster Friendly was significantly different between the assertive female and the unassertive male and female. The Hostile cluster was not significantly different. The male assertive encoder was also perceived as significantly more dominant than the female assertive encoder.

The assertive female encoder was rated significantly lower in attractiveness than all other encoders and the high-assertive raters rated the assertive female lower in attractiveness than all other ratings. The unassertive female was rated more attractive.
Introduction

People watching appears to be a universal pastime. Within this broad phenomena is an area of research labeled person perception. Person perception refers to the attribution of psychological characteristics of traits, intentions, and emotions to other persons by rating, describing, or predicting their behavior (Shrauger & Altrocchi, 1964; Taguiri, 1958). Person perception is synonymous with interpersonal perception, social perception, judging and decoding accuracy, and a host of other terms (Nelson, 1980).

Warr and Knapper (1968) conceptualize the perception of people in terms of three components: attributive, expectancy, and affective. The first component refers to the attribution of certain characteristics to the stimulus person by classifying and comparing input information. The act of perception involves the process of categorization (Bruner, Goodnow, & Austin, 1956; Sarbin, Taft, & Bailey, 1960), and the stimulus is defined by the number of dimensions that characterize it as well as by the degree or amount of each dimension (Bieri, Atkins, Briar, Leaman, Miller, & Tripodi, 1966). The perceiver compares the stimulus to other forms of stimuli and continually forms frames of reference (Sherif & Hovland, 1961). In the attributive component of the perceptual process inputs are discriminated and classified and the data is then recoded and organized.

The second component refers to the set of expectancies which the
perceiver assumes about the characteristics which have just been attributed to the stimulus. In other words, the perceiver places the stimulus person in a role based on the expectancies which he assumes about the characteristics he perceives. The expectancies associated with the role also tend to extend beyond the limits of the event or situation in which the stimulus was perceived. The perceiver may then form predictions associated with the influences and intentions which the stimulus person may have. The last component is the affective response of the perceiver to the stimulus. The assumed intentions and behavioral impacts of the stimulus affect the perceiver's emotional state and response. Thus the perceiver is emotionally aroused by the stimulus.

In the process of perception the initial selection of certain information is influenced by several factors. Warr and Knapper (1968) delineate these as: 1) the characteristics of the stimulus person; 2) the present social, physical, and behavioral context; 3) the stored stimulus information from memory and previous experiences; and 4) the characteristics of the perceiver, both stable and transitory. Similarly Taguiri (1958) identified three components influencing person perception: 1) the stimulus person's attributes; 2) the situational interaction, and 3) the perceiver's characteristics.

The study of person perception has at times been divided into accuracy and process issues. Process research related to situational context has studied areas such as the nature of judgements of assumed similarity without concern for accuracy (Fiedler, 1958, 1964), and verbal and nonverbal aspects of communication (Obitz & Oziel, 1972; Powell & O'Neal, 1976). The majority of the work in person perception, how-
ever, has concentrated on the effect of perceiver characteristics on perception. The present study is within the realm of research. This study will attempt to isolate a particular characteristic of the perceiver in order to identify its influence upon the perception of the same characteristic in a stimulus person. Following is a review of perceptual variables and the influence of the characteristic of the perceiver upon the process of perception.¹

Variables in Perception

The perceiver, or decoder's ability to accurately perceive another has been debated between general trait theory versus a component theory of accuracy in perception. As early as 1933 Vernon studied the accuracy of self-raters, friend-raters, and stranger-raters. Accurate self-raters were found to have a good sense of humor, high abstract intelligence, and moderate artistic ability. In contrast, accurate friend-raters were somewhat introverted, less intelligent, and more artistic. The accurate stranger-raters were rated as withdrawn, intelligent, and artistic. These results seem to refute accuracy in perception as a general trait.

In 1938 Estes discriminated between good judges and poor judges of interpersonal accuracy and found a significant correlation between artistic interest and judging ability. There was no relation between intelligence, neuroses, or other personality characteristics and the good judges were more accurate across all persons rated and on all measures. These results contradicted Vernon's and provided support for a general trait of perceptual accuracy.

¹ The perceiver is also referred to as a decoder and the stimulus person as an encoder.
Hastorf and Bender (1952, 1953) criticized perceptual accuracy research, and particularly the scoring techniques, for neglecting to differentiate between projection and empathy. For example, studies of the trait of authoritarianism in accuracy of person perception revealed that persons high in authoritarianism rated others as more authoritarian. The authoritarians projected similarity onto others, stereotyping them as authoritarian, and nonauthoritarians were concluded to be more accurate in judging (Scodel & Freeman, 1956; Scodel & Mussen, 1953). The interpersonal and accuracy research became more complex and included controversial issues of scoring validity, subtraction of projection scores from raw empathy scores, and the condemnation of stereotyping (Cronbach, 1955).

The reviews of Bruner and Taguiri (1954), and Taft (1955) culminated in the positive correlation of accuracy in person perception with intellectual and social skills, and with adjustment. Bronfenbrenner, Harding, and Gallwey (1958), found behavioral differences in accurate judges of opposite sex persons and in judges of same sex persons. This further confounded the issue of a general trait versus components in perceptual accuracy.

Cronbach (1955, 1958), and Gage and Cronbach (1955) have criticized the perceptual accuracy research on theoretical and methodological grounds. Among other criticisms, they particularly found fault with scoring methods and the fact that there was no differentiation between assumed similarity and real similarity. They concluded that the most accurate decoders had assumed similarity and consequently stereotyped accurately. "Accuracy" and "assumed similarities" as well as the various researcher's measures were not standardized and in essence, were
too global.

The results of these initial studies and criticisms have produced complex components in the study of interpersonal perception. The previously delineated areas of stereotyping, projection, and assumed similarity are being studied as components of accuracy. Other issues in recent research include the processes of perception; personality, situational, and stimulus variables; gender differences in perceptual accuracy; and differentiating perception from provoked influences. A brief review of this research follows.

Gender differences appear to be important variables in perception. Sarbin (1954) found that men described others in terms of external physiological characteristics, while women used more inferential, internal psychological descriptions. The results of several studies indicate that women are significantly better decoders of emotions than men (Glazner, 1974; Levy, 1961; Zuckerman, Lipitz, Koivumaki, & Rosenthal, 1975). Body cues are important in encoding and decoding (Dittman, Parnlof, & Boomer, 1965) and there is a vast literature in the area of decoding communication in relation to head, body, and vocal cues and abilities (reviewed by Chirico, 1980).

Another area of research in perception involves personality styles. The ability to accurately decode has been studied in the neurotic (Barnett, 1966; Lorenz, 1954; Shapiro, 1965), and in persons with hysterical and obsessive styles (Chirico, 1975; Chirico, Kiesler, Carron, & Baker, 1978). The hysteric and obsessives were found to decode better on the same communication channels on which they encode best. Similar to this, a sensitivity to emotions which are expressed vocally was related to an ability to vocally express emotions and to accurately identify emotions
The authoritarian style of decoding is characterized by a perceptual rigidity, a simplistic viewpoint incapable of integrating complex and conflicting characteristics in stimuli (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950; Steiner & Johnson, 1963).

Hastorf, Schneider, and Polefka (1970) emphasize the perceiver's dominant role in selecting characteristics of other persons to observe and describe. How the decoder categorizes and perceives influences how he behaves toward the encoder, which in turn influences the encoder's behavior. They attribute differences in perceptual ability to the influences of the perceiver's personality. When there are inconsistencies among stimuli part of the evidence is ignored or reduced in importance by the decoder in order to reduce the variability of the stimuli. The authors stress the influence of cognitive processes in the accuracy of perception with cognitively simple decoders likely to rate others on extremes of one dimension (e.g.: good/bad), whereas cognitively complex decoders utilize finer discriminations along several dimensions.

Selective perception is evident in research which reveals that characteristics which are important to a person are attended to differently (Festerheim & Tresselt, 1953; Tajfel & Wilkes, 1964). Hirschberg's theory of individual differences states that "a given personality dimension will be more salient to people who think they possess a high degree of that personality trait," (Hirschberg & Jennings, 1980). Taguiri (1969) also found individual differences in the cognitive processing of judges based upon the traits being perceived and the weights which the judges gave the traits. Perceived similarity of attitudes, whether or not it actually exists, also affects the perception of others
Characteristics of the Decoder

Characteristics of the perceiver are a prominent area of interest in psychology. Warr and Knapper (1968) divide decoder characteristics into stable characteristics and a temporary or transitory set. Examples of stable characteristics are personality, sex, religion, socio-economic status, attitude, etc. These characteristics affect the perceiver's selection of relevant aspects of the environment. They alert the perceiver to certain cues and influence the type of judgments made by the perceiver. Temporary characteristics consist of mood and emotional state. They are influenced by the situational variables as well as by the interaction of the decoder and the encoder.

Personality variables which have been studied in person perception include: authoritarianism, hostility, prejudice, repression/sensitization, intelligence, culture, age, social class, religious beliefs, complex/simple cognitive styles, self concept, attractiveness, perceived similarity, and social skills (see reviews by Shrauger & Altrocchi, 1964; Taguiri, 1958).

Problems in Research

The process of perception appears to be influenced by a number of variables. The literature is vast and the results are occasionally conflicting. There are problems in evaluating this research due to differences in procedures, measurement, analysis, and interpretation. Difficulties arise due to the influence of generalization and stereotyping, motivational and cognitive variables, and comparison standards. Measures used as an index of differentiation may produce high scores
because of two psychologically different processes in perception rather than an actual reflection of the characteristic being measured. Some perceptual accuracy measures are highly correlated with verbal fluency and cognitive complexity (Gardner & Schoen, 1962). Examples of these are Witkin's Embedded Figures Test (Witkin, 1950), and the Kelly Role Construct Repertory Test (Kelly, 1955). Characteristics perceived by the decoder may be rated by individual differences in the interpretation of behavior or they may be identified due to the differential influence of the decoder on the encoder. The latter entails a dyadic interaction in contrast to one-way viewing. The types of dimensions which decoders use in judging others also contribute to individual variations in perception. Judging an encoder's personality involves the perception and intergration of the interaction and combination of personality variables which the encoder possesses. Research problems are emphasized here by limitations in the ability to measure and to identify the perceptions of the decoder and of the dynamic role of a personality trait.

Cronbach recommended in 1958 that future research focus on the perceptual processes of the perceiver and not on issues of accuracy. According to Shrauger and Altrocchi (1964), future needs in research include: specified stimulus persons, specific situations, specific traits to be measured rather than general tendencies, and a circumplex model of multidimensional methodology to study the dynamic role of trait in personality. They advocate a triple interaction specifying the decoder characteristics, encoder characteristics, and the situation in which the encoder and decoder interact.

The present study addresses these issues by specifying the same trait in both the decoder and the encoder and limiting this trait to
specific situational determinants. The characteristic to be studied is assertiveness. The instrument measuring the decoder's observations is Kiesler's (1975) Impact Message Inventory, (IMI), a multidimensional tool which has been validated for the assessment of assertiveness (Reagan 1979; Reagan and Kallman, Note 1).

**Assertiveness**

The characteristic of assertiveness originated in 1949 with Salter's work on the excitatory and inhibitory personality. By 1958 Wolpe had established assertion training as a treatment technique. A content analysis of the assertiveness literature published between 1942 and 1977 reveals 344 studies, 83% appearing since 1972 (Brown & Brown, 1980). Currently there are more than one hundred assertiveness papers published per year. Although the assertiveness research is prolific, there is a lack of agreement on an operationalized definition of assertiveness.

Wolpe's theoretical foundation for assertiveness is reciprocal inhibition. He broadly defines the construct as "the proper expression of any emotion other than anxiety toward another person" (Wolpe, 1973, p. 81). Alberti and Emmons (1970) and Lazarus (1971) defined assertion as standing up for legitimate rights and later broadened this to encompass the honest expression of a range of feelings (Alberti & Emmons, 1974; Lazarus, 1973). Rimm and Masters (1974, 1979) define assertiveness as "interpersonal behavior involving the honest and relatively straightforward expression of thoughts and feelings" which is "socially appropriate" and considers the "feelings and welfare of others." It is important to make a distinction between assertion and aggression, and
also between assertion and anxiety.

A generalized trait theory of assertion has not been validated. The evidence indicates that assertion is a learned behavior (both verbal and nonverbal) which is situation specific. Comprehensive models of assertiveness incorporate situational variables and dimensions of difficulty relating to relationship, rather than focusing on the assertive response. Lorr, More, and Mansueto (1981) propose four factors of assertiveness: 1) social assertiveness, 2) independence, 3) directive, and 4) defense of rights. Kolotkin (1980) specifies dimensions of response difficulty varied with three levels of interpersonal interactions: 1) impersonal (nonrecurring) relationships, 2) business or work relationships, and 3) intimate relationships. The factor analytic data of Gay et. al. (1975) provides seven response type categories: 1) asking favors, 2) refusing requests, 3) expressing opinions, 4) expressing annoyance or anger, 5) expressing positive feelings, 6) standing up for one's legitimate rights, and 7) taking the initiative with others. Galassi and Galassi (1978) discuss three dimensions of assertion: behavioral, persons, and situational dimensions within a cultural or subcultural context. The behavioral component consists of response categories, the dimension of persons is similar to the interpersonal interaction levels described above, and the situational dimension is "public/private...in vast array." They stress the importance of considering all three dimensions in determining the appropriateness of a response within a cultural context.

Although there is a lack of agreement on an operationalized definition of assertiveness, there is an established necessity to specify response classes and situations. Assertiveness has been somewhat
operationalized in terms of nonverbal and paralinguistic behaviors. These nonverbal aspects of assertiveness include: voice tone, inflexion, and volume; eye contact; facial expression; body posture and gestures; speech timing, fluency, and content; and distance between interactants (Alberti & Emmons, 1974; Serber, 1971, 1972). Lange and Jakubowski (1976) differentiate between assertive and nonassertive behaviors. They describe the behavioral correlates of nonassertiveness to be: hand wringing, clutching other persons, stepping back as an assertive remark is made, covering the mouth with a hand, a wooden body posture, a singsong or overly soft voice, hesitancy of speech, frequent clearing of the throat, raising eyebrows when laughing, and winking when angry.

Assessment of assertiveness includes paper and pencil instruments and behavioral measures. Galassi and Galassi (1978) report thirteen paper and pencil scales, inventories, surveys, and schedules as of 1978. Reliability and normative data are limited for all of these instruments, as most of them were recently developed in the past decade. The greatest amount of validity data is available for the Adult Self Expression Scale (Gay, Hollandsworth & Galassi, 1975), the Assertive Inventory (Gambrill and Richey, 1975), the College Self Expression Scale (Galassi, Deleo, & Galassi, 1974), the Conflict Resolution Inventory (McFall & Lillesand, 1971), the Constriction Scale (Bates & Zimmerman, 1971), and the Rathus Assertiveness Schedule (Rathus, 1973). Of these, many reviewers credit the Conflict Resolution Inventory (CRI) with the most impressive validity data (Bodner, 1975; Hersen & Bellack, 1977; Jakubowski & Lacks, 1975; Lange & Jakubowski, 1976; Rich & Schroeder, 1976). Problems encountered with paper and pencil measures relate
to the previously mentioned difficulties in lack of an operationalized definition, the necessity of separating assertion from aggression and anxiety, and measures which produce a unitary score—expecting equal difficulty in all situations. The higher validity results of the CRI may be due to the fact that the instrument measures a single response category—that of the ability to refuse requests. This is the only self-report measure which assesses a specific response class.

In summary, the characteristic of assertiveness lacks a common definition, but researchers appear to be in agreement that response classes of assertiveness are indeed different. Many researchers recognize the additional necessity of specifying a level of relationship and also a specified situation. Assertiveness has been operationalized by nonverbal and paralinguistic behaviors which differentiate between assertive and nonassertive responses.

Impact Message Inventory

The Impact Message Inventory (IMI) (Kiesler, Anchin, Perkins, Chirico, Kyle, & Federman, 1975, 1976; Perkins, Kiesler, Anchin, Chirico, Kyle, & Federman, 1979) is a measure designed to assess relationship behavior in interacting dyads. It is based on one of the major constructs of Kiesler's communications theory of psychotherapy (Kiesler, Note 2; Kiesler, Bernstein, and Anchin, Note 3): an encoder sends an "evoking message" (Beier, 1966) which is received by a decoder as an "impact message."

"The evoking message imposes a condition or command as a result of which the decoder behaves as the encoder determines, without either being aware of the command transaction. The impact message denotes the receiving end of this process and refers to the covert affective, cognitive, and behavioral pulls elicited in the decoder as a result of the encoder's evoking message." (Perkins et al, 1979)
The IMI is designed to assess the encoder's evoking style through behavioral (verbal and nonverbal) impacts rated by the decoder. The novelty of this instrument is that it measures a person's interpersonal style based on the covert responses produced in other persons.

The development of the IMI has its foundation in the interpersonal theories of Leary (1957) and Lorr and McNair (1963). Leary conceptualizes interpersonal behavior as a two-dimensional structure with axes of dominance-submission and love-hate. The Interpersonal Behavior Inventory (IBI) was developed by Lorr and McNair (1967) to rate the manifest, overt interpersonal behavior of target subjects. There are two factors (dominance-submission and love-hate) yielding fifteen interpersonal categories. Listed in circumplex order, these 15 interpersonal styles are: Dominant, Competitive, Hostile, Mistrustful, Detached, Inhibited, Submissive, Succorant, Abusive, Deferent, Agreeable, Nurturant, Affiliative, Sociable, and Exhibitionistic. The IMI has 15 subscales empirically anchored to the 15 categories of Lorr and McNair. From these were generated an IMI item pool of 259 items. Male-gender pronouns were used throughout the items; however, no instructions were given as to the sex of the imagined interactant. Item analysis procedures were performed on half of a sample of 451 male and female undergraduates, reducing the items to 82. Factor analysis of these items on the other half of the sample produced three factors: dominance, affiliation, and submission, which have consistently emerged in previous interpersonal studies. The dominance factor was anchored by the Dominant, Competitive, Hostile, and Exhibitionistic subscales; the affiliation factor was anchored by the Agreeable, Nurturant, Affiliative, and Sociable subscales; and the third factor, submission, was
anchored by the subscales of Inhibited, Submissive, Succorant, and Abasive. The 15 subscales showed a high level of internal consistency reliability and established initial normative data for late adolescent and adult interactions in the normal and psychoneurotic domains (Perkins, et al, 1979).

The current 90 item paper and pencil self-rating IMI-Form II assesses the 15 interpersonal styles in terms of three subclasses of impact messages:

1) direct feeling, "When I am with this person he makes me feel..." followed by 30 items such as "superior to him," "cold," "uneasy."

2) action tendency, "When I am with this person he makes me feel that..." followed by 30 items such as "I could lean on him for support," "I want to stay away from him," "I should like him."

3) "evoking message," "When I am with this person it appears to me that..." followed by 30 items such as "he wants to pick my brain," "he wants to be helpful," "he sees me as superior."

All items are ranked on a four point scale from 1 (not at all) to 4 (very much so) which yields a total rating for each of 15 subscales and produces a profile of strengths of interpersonal style. Kiesler (1979) explains:

"For example, following an interaction with a highly dominant target person (A), respondent B may give high ratings to the corresponding Dominant subscale items of: he makes me feel bossed around; I should tell him he's often quite inconsiderate; he wants to be the center of attention. The procedure thus incorporates the following sequence: a Dominant person creates impacts in the respondent; the respondent records his/her impacts by rating the inventory items; the inventory items are designed so that items endorsed strongly by the respondent (who experienced the "dominance" impact) are the same items endorsed strongly by normative groups of persons after interacting with a highly Dominant person."
Kiesler proposes the IMI to be useful in assessing various dyadic relationship behaviors such as between therapist-client and between husband and wife, as well as in counselor training and supervision.

Although the IMI has only recently been developed, the measure has been used in a number of studies and appears to be a valid and useful measure of interpersonal styles of interactants. Kyle (1976) asked female strangers in a brief dyadic situation to evaluate each other with four of the IMI subscales. The results indicated that impacts can be measured reliably from a brief interaction and that the impact is influenced by the amount of conversation and by the interacting personalities of the encoder and decoder. Chirico (1977; 1980) studied differences in the decoding abilities of the obsessive and hysteric personality styles within the Inhibited-Submissive range using videotaped presentations of visual and vocal channels. Results supported the importance of personality style in ability to decode communication and favored the obsessoid style as registering higher impacts than the hysteric.

Kiesler and Federman (Note 4) differentiated subscales for descriptions of a mildly obsessive personality (Mistrustful, Hostile, and Detached) and a mildly hysteric personality (Sociable, Nurturant, and Affiliative subscales) by analyzing the ratings of 160 judges' impacts on the IMI. Anchin (1978) studied the effects of the interpersonal style of interviewers in stressful and in nonstressful (impersonal) conditions with obsessive interviewees. His results support the premise that situational variables influence communication style responsiveness. The interviewees' impacts rated on the IMI revealed that obsessives behave obsessively when answering personal-high stress
questions and shift to a hysterical style when answering impersonal questions. Anchin also found that the different interpersonal styles of the interviewers (obsessive and hysterical) influenced the interpersonal impacts of the interviewees, supporting the evidence for interactional influence on interpersonal style found by previous researchers.

Schwaninger-Morse (1979) studied the overt task behavior of situational demands in comparison to the covert impacts of interpersonal style as measured by the IMI. She hypothesized that covert impacts would be more consistent and generalizable across situations. Results indicated this to be true for the emotional impact of subjects' dominance cues, but not for cues of affiliation and submissiveness.

There are several other studies which have used the IMI as a measurement instrument (Niemeier, 1980; Nelson, 1980). Most notable and the most relevant to this present research is Reagan and Kallman (Note 1) and Reagan's (1979) establishment of the validity of the IMI in rating assertiveness. Both studies were limited to situations of the ability to refuse requests. In the second study, female undergraduate subjects were selected by their scores on the Conflict Resolution Inventory and placed in three groups of high, moderate, and low assertiveness. All subjects were videotaped as they role-played four situations in a confederate elicited assertive-refusal behavior. Three sets of judges/coders then scored the subjects on the IMI, rated them on physical attractiveness, and coded three verbal behaviors and five nonverbal behaviors.

The results revealed that eight IMI subscales, three verbal content measures, and two nonverbal behavior measures significantly differenti-
ated the three groups in ratings of physical attractiveness. The IMI results replicated the previous study in that the Inhibited, Submissive, Succorant, and Abasive subscales were significantly different between the groups (higher impacts in the low-assertive Ss), while the Sociable subscale was not as significant a difference as was found in the previous study. The Dominant, Competitive, Detached, and the Affiliation subscales also produced significant differences (higher impacts in the high-assertive Ss). Reagan draws the following conclusions from her research:

1) Significantly different scores were obtained by subjects on two factors of the IMI--dominance and affiliation. This suggests that assertiveness is a multidimensional interpersonal concept.

2) The consistent intercorrelations of eight IMI subscales to measures of verbal and nonverbal assertive behavior demonstrate the IMI's convergent validity.

3) The lack of significant correlation between physical attractiveness and IMI scores attests to the discriminant validity of the IMI.

4) Reagan proposes the IMI as a useful screening device for differentiating one response class of assertion--the ability to refuse requests. The IMI would be most useful as an outcome measure of assertion training by measuring changes in how the individual is perceived by others.

**Rationale and Hypotheses**

The present study proposes to assess the influence of a specified decoder's characteristic upon his/her perception of the same characteristic in others. Previous research in selective perception and Hirschberg's (1980) theory of individual differences have encountered numerous problems and criticism. Some of the difficulties previously
delineated include situational and interactional variables, limitations in the ability to identify the dynamic role of a trait in personality, and lack of an appropriate and multidimensional measuring instrument.

The present study proposes to address these problems by specifying stimulus persons, limiting interactional variables, and specifying a trait within a situational context. Reagan and Kallman's (1979; Note 1) research supports the multidimensional description of assertiveness and the validity of the IMI in rating this trait. The decoders and encoders in this research will be differentiated as high-assertive and low-assertive, both male and female. Assertiveness is limited in this study to the situation of the ability to refuse requests. The IMI will be used to rate the multidimensional personality of the encoders from videotaped segments. The decoders will also rate the encoders on a global rating of assertiveness.

The question in this study is how assertiveness affects perceptions of assertiveness, or how the high-assertive subjects will decode differently from low-assertive subjects. Although it is not clear how they differ, some tentative hypotheses can be offered.

--Low-assertive subjects will rate high-assertive encoders as lower on the global assertiveness scale than high-assertive subjects will rate the high-assertive encoders.

--High-assertive subjects will rate the low-assertive encoders lower on the global assertiveness scale than the low-assertive subjects will rate them.

The other goal of this study is to assess the sensitivity of the IMI to differences in assertiveness of encoders as they are rated by decoders with high-assertive and low-assertive characteristics. According to Reagan (1979), the decoders should rate the encoders in expected di-
rections on the eight subscales of the IMI which are correlated with assertiveness and nonassertiveness. Reagan's decoders were all professional women who were probably high in assertiveness. The IMI ratings on the eight subscales will probably correspond to Reagan's results for the high-assertive decoders. The low-assertive decoders may differ in their multidimensional perception of the encoders. They may view high-assertive encoders as more dominant and low-assertive encoders as more sociable. If these differences are found, they may explain some of the discrepancy in results in assertiveness research.
Method

Subjects

The subjects were undergraduate students at a large urban university. They were selected from a research pool of approximately 500 students who were enrolled in General Psychology courses and were required to participate in a mass testing. Those selected received extra credit in their General Psychology class for participation in this study. Students taking General Psychology are comprised of majors from all areas of the university (arts and sciences, arts, health and medicine, business, etc.).

There were a total of 40 Caucasian subjects, 20 males and 20 females, between the ages of 17 and 20, with a mean age of 19.05. Within each gender group there were 10 high-assertive and 10 low-assertive subjects as determined by their scores on the second part of the Conflict Resolution Inventory. Criteria for selection were similar to those suggested by McFall and his associates (McFall & Lillesand, 1971; McFall & Twentyman, 1973) and as developed by Reagan (1979). The means and standard deviations of CRI assertive and nonassertive scores for a sample of 159 undergraduate students was computed. Selection criteria were established as scoring one standard deviation above the mean for the high score and also scoring one standard deviation below the mean for the low score. Those who scored high on assertiveness had to also score low on nonassertiveness to be classified as a high assertive subject. To simplify computations, an overall assertiveness score was computed subtracting the nonassertive score from the assertive score and calculating the mean and standard deviation. Subjects could then be classified as high assertive if their CRI difference score was one
standard deviation above the mean and as low assertive if the score was one standard deviation below the mean. An assistant randomly listed qualifying subjects so that the experimenter was blind to their CRI classification.

**Apparatus**

Measures:

**Conflict Resolution Inventory**, CRI, was developed by McFall and Lillesand (1971) as a measure of the ability to refuse requests. The standardization group for this instrument consisted of introductory psychology undergraduates. It is a paper and pencil self-report measure which contains two parts. The first, a face sheet of eight items, assesses global attitudes toward assertion. The second part is a 35 item inventory which measures the ability to refuse requests in specific situations. Subjects rate whether or not they would refuse a request and whether or not they would feel uncomfortable in doing so. The first section yields a General score of assertiveness, and the second part yields Assertive and Nonassertive scores. The two parts are completely separate and only the second part was administered. (Appendix A).

**Impact Message Inventory**, IMI, was developed by Kiesler *et al* (1976) to assess the covert affective and cognitive impacts which an observer or interactant experiences from another person. It is a 90 item paper and pencil self-report measure which yields fifteen subscale scores. The fifteen subscales are similar to the fifteen interpersonal styles of Lorr and McNair (1967), and are listed in circumplex order: Dominant, Competitive, Hostile, Mistrustful, Detached, Inhibited, Sub-
missive, Succorant, Abasive, Deferent, Agreeable, Nurturant, Affiliative, Sociable, and Exhibitionistic. A factor analysis of the IMI revealed that the subscales cluster around three factors of dominance, affiliation, and submission (Perkins et al., 1979). Kiesler (Note 5) has recently identified four IMI cluster-scores which were derived from three factors and which summarize the majority of the variance among IMI items. These clusters are: Dominant, Submissive, Friendly, and Hostile.

The decoder-subjects were asked to imagine that they were interacting with the encoder-actors on videotape and then to rate them on the IMI. There are six items for each of the fifteen subscales which are rated from 1 (not at all descriptive), to 4 (very much descriptive). The IMI-Form II was slightly altered for ratings of the female encoder by replacing male pronouns with female pronouns. (Appendix B).

Global ratings of attractiveness and assertiveness were accomplished with two seven point scales devised by the experimenter. The attractiveness scale ranged from 1=extremely unattractive, to 7=extremely attractive, with four a midpoint rating of average looking. The assertiveness scale was similar, ranging from 1=extremely unassertive, to 7=extremely assertive, and a midpoint of 4=neutral. The rating of assertiveness specified the ability to refuse requests. The rating of attractiveness was a control for attractiveness as an intervening variable. (Appendices C and D).

Videotape:

Four videotape segments were recorded using a male and female actor. The actors were within the same age range as the subjects and were not outstanding in their attractiveness nor unattractiveness. The
videotape was black and white, each segment was approximately 2½ minutes in length. The actors were coached in verbal and nonverbal behaviors to roleplay an assertive response in a request refusal situation, and then a second segment in which they portrayed an unassertive response. The assertive situation was the same for both male and female encoders and the unassertive situation was the same for both male and female encoders. The assertive situation was different from the unassertive situation. The person with whom the actors were interacting was not seen on the tape. The tapes were viewed and rated for attractiveness and assertiveness by ten upper level undergraduates and first year graduate students. Interrater reliability was assessed to verify that the actors did not differ substantially in attractiveness and that the tapes exhibited the assertive and unassertive behavior which was intended. Criteria for interrater reliability was .85 agreement.

Procedure

The subjects were contacted by phone by the experimenter and asked if they would like to participate in a research project to earn extra credit for their Psychology course. The subjects were run in groups of two to four persons. Each session lasted 50 to 60 minutes. The subjects were greeted in the lobby by the experimenter and asked to wait for the arrival of the others. When all scheduled subjects arrived, or when it was ten minutes after the appointed hour, the experimenter and the subjects went to a room with desk-chairs and TV video cassette monitoring equipment. The subjects were given consent forms to read and sign (Appendix E). They then filled out a global assertiveness rating of themselves. They were told:

"I have four short videotape segments that I would like
you to watch. After each segment you will fill out
two forms rating the person you saw on the tape.
Are there any questions?"

Questions pertaining to the procedure were answered. The experimenter remained in the room to assure that subjects did not discuss
the tapes.

The sequence of the tape segments were counterbalanced for the
sessions. After each segment was viewed an IMI form with correspond-
ing gender pronouns and the attractiveness/assertiveness rating form
was distributed to each subject. The instructions were given and ample
time was allowed for all subjects to complete the forms. Questions
pertaining only to the instructions, not the tape content, were answer-
ed. When all four segments had been viewed and the IMIs and global
ratings of attractiveness and assertiveness had been completed the
subjects were thanked for their participation and told to contact the
experimenter in six weeks if they would like to know more about the
research and the results.
Results

Subject Variables

Assertiveness of Decoder:

The Conflict Resolution Inventory produced two scores for each subject: an assertive score and a nonassertive score. Overall-assertiveness scores were computed for the total group by subtracting the person's nonassertive score from their assertive score. The means, standard deviations, and criterion levels were computed separately for males and females. The mean for the females was 1.63 with a standard deviation of 11.38. Using the overall-assertiveness scores, the criterion level for a female high assertive subject was a score of 13 or greater and for a low assertive subject a score of -9 or less. The mean for the male scores 3.82, standard deviation of 11.45. Criterion scores were 15 or greater for a high assertive male and -8 or less for a low assertive male. These criterion levels were compared to those established when computing levels with the method used by McFall et al (1971, 1973) and Reagan (1979), and were found to be one point lower in cut-off level.

The overall-assertiveness scores were used in the computation of a 2 (sex) x 2 (assertiveness) analysis of variance. The CRI overall-assertiveness scores were converted into positive integers by adding a constant of 23. The analysis revealed a main effect for assertiveness, \( F(1,36)=634.93, p<.001 \). Sex \( F=.23 \) and the sex by assertiveness
(F=2.20) interaction were nonsignificant.

The subjects rated themselves on a 1 (extremely unassertive) to 7 (extremely assertive) scale of their ability to refuse requests. These self ratings were analyzed in a 2 (sex) x 2 (assertiveness) analysis of variance and produced a significant effect for assertiveness, \( F(1,36)=4.16, p<.05 \). All other main effects and interactions were nonsignificant.

Experimental Variables

The subjects (decoders) rated the tapes (encoders) on three measures: attractiveness, assertiveness, and the Impact Message Inventory.

Ratings of Encoders' Attractiveness:

The global ratings of attractiveness (1=extremely unattractive, to 7=extremely attractive) were analyzed in a 2 (rater assertiveness) x 2 (rater sex) x 4 (tape) mixed factor three way analysis of variance with repeated measures on one factor. The between subject variables, assertiveness (F=.20), sex (F=.10), and their interaction (F=.66) were nonsignificant. There was a significant main effect for tape, \( F(3,108)=6.1, p<.001 \), and significant interactions of tape x sex, \( F(3,108)=4.06, p<.01 \); and tape x assertiveness, \( F(3,108)=4.63, p<.005 \). These interactions are shown in Figures 1 and 2. The interaction of tape x sex x assertiveness was not significant.

Separate Newman-Keuls' Multiple-Range Tests were performed on the mean attractiveness rating for tapes, the tape x sex interaction, and the tape x assertiveness interaction. The results of these tests are displayed in Tables 1 to 3. For tapes, significant differences in attractiveness ratings were found between the high assertive female encoder and all three of the other encoders. The female assertive
Figure 1

Mean Attractiveness Ratings of Encoders by Assertiveness of Rater

A = unassertive male encoder
B = unassertive female encoder
C = assertive male encoder
D = assertive female encoder
H = high assertive rater
L = low assertive rater
Figure 2

Mean Attractiveness Ratings of Encoders by Sex of Rater

A = unassertive male encoder
B = unassertive female encoder
C = assertive male encoder
D = assertive female encoder
M = male rater
F = female rater
Table 1

Newman-Keul's Multiple-Range Test Comparisons of Decoders' Ratings of Attractiveness of Encoders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>encoder female</th>
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<th>encoder female</th>
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<tr>
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<td>.58</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>——</td>
<td>——</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>——</td>
<td>——</td>
<td>——</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>——</td>
<td>——</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All reported scores \( p < .01 \)
Table 2

Newman-Keuls' Multiple-Range Test Comparisons
of Male and Female Decoders' Ratings of Attractiveness of Encoders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tape/sex of decoder</th>
<th>D/f</th>
<th>D/m</th>
<th>B/f</th>
<th>A/m</th>
<th>C/m</th>
<th>A/f</th>
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</thead>
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<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>.9*</td>
<td>1.05**</td>
<td>1.3**</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>1.0*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B/f</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C/m</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>A/f</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ns</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>B/m</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key:  
- m = male rater
- f = female rater
- A = m unassertive encoder
- B = f unassertive encoder
- C = m assertive encoder
- D = f assertive encoder

*P < .05
**P < .01
### Table 3

*Newman-Keuls' Multiple-Range Test Comparisons of High and Low Assertive Decoders' Ratings of Attractiveness of Encoders*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>D/h</th>
<th>A/1</th>
<th>A/1</th>
<th>C/1</th>
<th>B/h</th>
<th>C/h</th>
<th>A/h</th>
<th>B/l</th>
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<td>.8*</td>
<td>.95**</td>
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<td>1.2**</td>
<td>1.25**</td>
<td>1.35**</td>
</tr>
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<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
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<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>C/1</td>
<td>ns</td>
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<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B/h</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C/h</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B/l</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key:  
- h = high assertive rater  
- l = low assertive rater  
- A = male unassertive encoder  
- B = female unassertive encoder  
- C = male assertive encoder  
- D = female assertive encoder  
- *p < .05  
- **p < .01
encoder was rated significantly lower in attractiveness. The second comparison of differences in attractiveness ratings for the tape x sex interaction revealed the following significant results:

a) the female decoder rating of attractiveness of the female assertive encoder is significantly different, lower in attractiveness, from the male decoder rating of the female unassertive encoder.

b) the female decoder rating of attractiveness of the female assertive encoder is significantly lower in attractiveness than the female decoder rating of the assertive male encoder.

c) the female decoder rating of attractiveness of the female assertive encoder is also significantly lower than the female decoder rating of the unassertive male encoder.

d) the male decoder rating of the female assertive encoder is significantly lower in attractiveness than the male decoder rating of the unassertive female encoder.

The final Newman-Keuls' Multiple-Range Test of the attractiveness rating compared the differences between the tapes and the assertiveness of decoder. The high assertive decoders' rating of the assertive female encoder was significantly different, and lower, than all other ratings.

Ratings of Encoders' Assertiveness:

The global ratings of assertiveness by the subjects were analyzed by a 2 (assertiveness of rater) x 2 (sex of rater) x 4 (tape) mixed factor three way analysis of variance with repeated measures on one factor. The main effect for tapes was significant, F(3,108)=130.75, p<.001; however, all other main effects and interactions were not significant. Figure 3 illustrates the main effect for tapes.

A Newman-Keuls' Multiple-Range Test was performed on the mean assertive ratings of each tape to assess specific differences between
Figure 3

Mean Assertiveness Ratings
of Encoders

[Bar chart showing mean assertiveness ratings for male and female encoders labeled A, B, C, D, with bars indicating unassertive and assertive ratings.]
tapes. These results are recorded in Table 4. Significant differences were found between the unassertive male (tape A) and the assertive male (tape C), and between the unassertive female (tape B) and the assertive female (tape D). The differences were also significant between the unassertive male and the assertive female (tapes A and D) and the unassertive female and the assertive male (tapes B and C). The Assertive encoders were accurately rated in the assertive direction and these ratings were significantly different from the unassertive encoders ratings which were in the unassertive direction. The differences in assertiveness ratings were not significant between the unassertive male and unassertive female (tapes A and B) nor between the assertive male and assertive female (tapes C and D).

Ratings of Encoders on IMI:
The Impact Message Inventories for each decoder's ratings of encoders were scored on the fifteen subscales and on four cluster-scores advocated by Kiesler (Note 5). The clusters consist of these subscales: Dominant = exhibitionistic + dominant + competitive; Submissive = Submissive + succorant + abasive; Friendly = agreeable + nurturant + affiliative; and Hostile = hostile + mistrusting + detached. Each raw cluster-score was analyzed by a 2(sex of rater) x 2(assertiveness of rater) x 4(tape) three way analysis of variance with repeated measures on the tape variable. Figure 4 reveals the main effect for tapes which yielded significant differences on all four cluster-scores: Dominant $F(3,108)=12.22$, $p < .0001$, Submissive $F(3,108)=81.72$, $p < .0001$, Friendly $F(3,108)=4.05$, $p < .009$, and Hostile $F(3,108)=3.27$, $p < .02$. No other main effects or interactions were significant.

The differences between tapes of the mean cluster-scores were com-
Table 4
Newman-Keuls' Multiple-Range Comparison of Decoders' Assertiveness Ratings of Encoders on Tape Means

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>unassertive encoders</th>
<th>assertive encoders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>2.8*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
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<td>2.6*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.3**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05  
**p < .01
Figure 4

IMI Cluster-scores

Mean Ratings by Cluster

Key:
A = unassertive male encoder
B = unassertive female encoder
C = assertive male encoder
D = assertive female encoder
pared with the Newman-Keuls' Multiple-Range Test for each of the four clusters. These results are listed in Tables 5 to 7. Two of the clusters, Submissive and Dominant, showed significant differences between the assertive male and female encoders (tapes C and D) and the unassertive male and female encoders (tapes A and B). Consistent with these results, there was no significant difference between the assertive encoders (tapes C and D) nor between the unassertive encoders (tapes A and B) on the Submissive clusters. The exception in the Dominant cluster is a significant difference between the male and female assertive encoders (tapes C and D). The male assertive encoder was rated significantly more dominant than the female.

The Friendly cluster was significantly different between both unassertive encoders and the assertive female. The assertive female was perceived as significantly more friendly. The Hostile cluster was not significantly different between tapes. Figure 5 illustrates these IMI cluster ratings for each encoder-tape.
Table 5
Newman-Keuls' Multiple-Range Test Comparison
of IMI Cluster-score Friendly
on Tape Means

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

\( p < .05 \)
Table 6
Newman-Keuls' Multiple-Range Test Comparison
of IMI Cluster-score Submissive on Tape Means

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>assertive encoders</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td>male</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>D</td>
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p < .01
Table 7
Newman-Keuls' Multiple-Range Test Comparison of IMI Cluster-score Dominant on Tape Means

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*P < .05
**P < .01
Figure 5

IMI Cluster-scores
Mean Ratings by Tape

unassertive
male
encoder
(Tape A)

unassertive
female
encoder
(Tape B)

assertive
male
encoder
(Tape C)

assertive
female
encoder
(Tape D)

IMI Clusters
Discussion

The results of this study suggest that the assertiveness ratings of encoders by these undergraduate decoders were not influenced by their gender or their assertive traits. Most of the variance in ratings is accounted for by the encoders, not the decoders. There are significant differences between tapes which indicate that the high and low assertive encoders were accurately perceived by the decoders, and appear to reflect assertive and nonassertive characteristics.

This study addressed specific problems in the research area of perception by specifying a characteristic in the decoder and encoder and measuring the perceptions of that characteristic with a multidimensional instrument. The analysis of the CRI scores and self ratings of the decoders reveals that they were accurately selected for the characteristic of assertion limited to an ability to refuse requests. The assertiveness ratings of the encoders indicate that they were portraying the specified high and low assertive roles. These roles were also limited to an ability to refuse requests. The interactional variables were reduced by having the decoders view the encoders on tape. The multidimensional instrument which measured the decoders' perceptions of the encoders, the IMI, was validated by Reagan (1979) as a measure of assertiveness.

Impact Message Inventory

Three IMI cluster-scores produced significant differences between
the assertive and nonassertive encoders indicating that the assertive encoders were perceived as more friendly and more dominant than the nonassertive encoders. The nonassertive encoders were rated as more submissive than the assertive encoders. All of these ratings were conservative, ranging from 1.43 to 2.49 on the IMI scale of 1 (not at all) to 4 (very much so).

These results corroborate those of Reagan (1979). Reagan found that low assertives score higher on the submissive cluster subscales. The high assertives in Reagan's research scored higher on the sociable, dominant, competitive, and affiliative subscales and scored lower on composite Hate. The sociable subscale is next to the three subscales comprising the Friendly cluster (in the present ratings) in the circular order of subscales. The competitive subscale is within the Dominant cluster of the present study, and the affiliative subscale is within the Friendly cluster.

The IMI profiles were similar for the male and female nonassertive encoders, peaking on the Submissive cluster with the Friendly cluster next highest.

The assertive encoders peaked on the Friendly cluster of the IMI. The next highest cluster was Dominance; however, the female encoder's Dominant cluster-score was significantly lower than the assertive male encoder's Dominant score. The female encoder was rated only slightly lower than the male encoder on the assertiveness ratings and this difference was clearly nonsignificant. The difference in Dominant scores may be due to the individual encoder's styles which leaked through the rehearsed roleplays, although the consistency of all other ratings and the fact that the same model encoded the unassertive and assertive roles diminishes that speculation. The difference in perceived dominance may
be attributed to stereotyping by the decoder of male and female roles of the encoders.

Reagan's (1979) results stressed the importance of the affiliation subscale in the response to assertiveness. The present results indicate that the Friendly cluster, containing the affiliation subscale, was high for all encoders, but was significantly higher for the female assertive encoder. The Friendly cluster-score may have been high for all tapes due to the friendliness of the experimenter. The submissive cluster-score appears to be the most discriminative between high and low assertive encoders. The analysis of IMI data using the cluster-scores of Dominance and Submission appears to accurately discriminate between high and low assertive encoders, both male and female. This appears to be a more consistent and discriminant analysis than the Composite scores used by Reagan (1979).

Attractiveness Ratings

Attractiveness of encoders was rated as a control measure to assess discrepancies in attractiveness which might influence other ratings. The results of these ratings revealed significant differences between tapes, between the tapes by the sex of the rater, and also between the tapes by the assertiveness of the rater. In general, high assertive decoders of both sexes rated the male encoders as more attractive than they rated the females. Conversely, low assertive decoders rated the females as more attractive than they rated the males. Perhaps the decoders stereotyped assertiveness by sex roles. The high assertive decoders might have identified more with the male encoders, while the low assertive decoders identified with the female encoders and thus rated them as more attractive.
The main significant difference between the attractiveness ratings of the encoders was that the assertive female was rated lower than all other encoders. She was rated as "average looking" by all the decoders except for the high assertive decoders whose mean rating of her was between "slightly unattractive" and "average looking." In contrast, the unassertive female encoder received the highest mean rating of attractiveness by the male decoders and by the low assertive decoders. The same model portrayed both the high and low assertive roles, however there were some differences in her appearance from one tape to the next as they were made a few days apart. In the unassertive role she wore her hair in a bun because her hair was dirty. She also had a cold and a stiff back from a recent pinched nerve. In general she was not feeling well that day. Her appearance in the assertive tape occurred on a day when she was healthier and happier. The perceived unattractiveness of the assertive female in relation to the perceived attractiveness of the ill unassertive female may reflect traditional cultural values which do not favor assertiveness in women. It is interesting to note that the assertive female was also rated on the IMI as significantly more friendly than the unassertive encoders.

The male ratings of the assertive and unassertive female encoders were significantly different, the unassertive female receiving the highest mean attractiveness ratings. These results support hypotheses of traditional values in the undergraduates sampled. It seems these young men view unassertive women as more attractive. Even more interesting is the significantly lowest rating of attractiveness which the high assertive females gave to the high assertive female encoder. Perhaps this is a reflection of difficulty they are experiencing with their own asser-
tive role. These young women may also have traditional values relating to assertiveness in women and these values may be in direct conflict with their own assertive roles. The IMI results showed a significant relationship between submissiveness and unassertiveness and the most traditional of values in our culture is that of submissiveness in women.

Hypotheses and Trends

Tentative hypotheses were stated in the introduction that 1) low assertive decoders would rate high assertive encoders lower on the global assertiveness scale than high assertive decoders would rate the same encoders; and 2) high assertive decoders would rate the low assertive encoders lower on the global assertiveness scale than low assertives would rate the low assertive encoders. Although there were no significant differences to validate these hypotheses, trends in the mean ratings of assertiveness were all in those hypothesized directions. Another trend in the data was evident in the female decoders' ratings. They rated all of the encoders except for the assertive female as higher on the assertiveness scale than the male decoders' rating of those encoders.

Although these trends do not approach significance, they are consistent in this data. The process of perception may have involved projecting similarity in the ratings by the unassertives, leading them to rate the assertives slightly lower than they were rated by the assertive decoders. The tapes were too obvious to be viewed inaccurately or with any fine discrimination between ratings, but these small differences may indicate a difference in perceptual processes. In the case of the assertive decoders' ratings of the unassertive encoders as lower, these perceptions may have been influenced by the salience of the
characteristic of assertiveness for these high-assertive subjects. They may have attributed more importance to the characteristic of assertiveness than the low assertive subjects did and classified the unassertive encoders as even lower in assertiveness.

Summary

The targeted characteristic of assertiveness did not significantly affect the subjects' ratings of assertiveness in others. This may have been due to the roleplays being too pure in style and not offering any finer discrimination. The assertive characteristic appeared to affect the decoders' ratings of attractiveness in the encoders, as did their gender.

The results of the IMI data supported previous research (Reagan, 1979) which validated the IMI as a measure of assertiveness. The present ratings offer further validation of this instrument for discriminating between high and low assertive college students in the situation of refusing a request. Three of the four cluster-scores discriminated between high and low assertive encoders, and the Submissive cluster-score showed the most pronounced differences between the two groups. The attractiveness ratings revealed a tendency among young male and female undergraduates to rate unassertive women as more attractive and assertive women as less than average looking. This may be related to traditional values which favor unassertiveness and submissiveness in women. The high assertive women in this study also rated the female assertive encoder quite low in attractiveness. This may indicate conflicts they are experiencing with their assertive roles.

Future Research:

The influence of a decoder's characteristic on perception of others
needs to be researched with a design which contains ratings of fine discriminations. The global scales used here did not offer many choices in ratings. The encoders also roleplayed clear styles, so there were not many choices to be made. A scale ranging from 1 to 100 may have produced more significant differences in ratings. The use of a more ambiguous stimuli may allow the decoders to project characteristics or similarity onto them. The difficulty in utilizing a more ambiguous stimuli is that the ratings become more ambiguous as well and it is important to emphasize processes of perception, not accuracy, in this type of research.

The perception of attractiveness in assertive and unassertive encoders could be further studied in a research design specifically assessing this relationship. Subjects could rate tapes of encoders which are a) neutral roleplays, b) assertive and c) unassertive roleplays, and perhaps nonverbal d) assertive, e) unassertive, and f) neutral roleplays. Measures assessing subjects' assertiveness and values would add important dimensions, as would different gender and age groups.

Future research possibilities with the IMI are limitless. In regard to assertiveness, as Reagan (1979) has suggested, this instrument appears to fill a void in the area of assertiveness ratings and would be a useful training measure for assertiveness training groups. The IMI is also a useful instrument for measuring interactions between dyads--couples, families, therapist-client, etc. (Kiesler, 1979)
Reference Notes


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Appendix A

Conflict Resolution Inventory

Directions. Read each situation carefully. Decide which of the five responses (A-E below) you would be most likely to make if the situation actually happened to you. Mark the response you select in the appropriate space on the answer blank supplied. Try to consider each situation separately, not letting your reaction to one situation influence your reaction to other ones. The answer is attached to the back of the inventory.

Alternatives

A=I would refuse and would not feel uncomfortable about doing so.

B=I would refuse but would feel uncomfortable doing so

C=I would not refuse but would feel uncomfortable because I didn't.

D=I would not refuse even though I might prefer to, but would not feel particularly uncomfortable because I didn't.

E=I would not refuse because it seems to be a reasonable request.
CRI Situations

1. Suppose you want to sell a book for $5. A mere acquaintance of yours says that he/she really needs the book, cannot find it anywhere, and can only pay $3 for it. You are sure that you can easily get $5 for it.

2. Suppose it were a friend who needed the book, but you were broke and needed $5 to pay off a debt.

3. Suppose it were a mere acquaintance who needed the book, but you were broke and needed the $5 to pay off a debt.

4. An acquaintance of yours asks you to go with him/her to get something to eat and you know that he/she will not go if you refuse to accompany him/her.

5. Suppose a mere acquaintance asks you to go with him/her to get something to eat; you know that he/she will not go if you refuse to accompany him/her, but you have just finished eating.

6. Your roommate is constantly borrowing dimes from you in order to buy cokes, but he/she never pays you back. You are getting rather annoyed at this and have decided to stop lending them out to him/her. Now he/she asks to borrow a dime.

7. Suppose this person were merely an acquaintance from down the hall who kept borrowing dimes and not repaying them.

8. Suppose your roommate is constantly borrowing dimes from you in order to buy cokes, but he/she never pays you back. You are getting rather annoyed at this and have decided to stop handing them out to him/her and besides you are really low on money and have put yourself on a tight budget.

9. An acquaintance of yours is going to fly home over the weekend and will have to miss a class on Friday. Even though you are not enrolled in that class, he/she asks as favor that you go to the class and take notes on Friday (you are free at that hour).

10. Suppose it were a close friend who asks for this favor, but you are somewhat pressed for study time since you have an exam on Friday.

11. Suppose a mere acquaintance asks the favor, but you have an exam on Friday afternoon.

12. A slight acquaintance of yours asks to borrow $5 until next week. You have the money, but you would have to postpone buying something you wanted until the loan was repaid.

13. A student you do not know well is chairman of the dorm's fund-raising campaign. He/she catches you when you do not have anything special to do, and asks you to help out by soliciting room-to-room for about 3 hours.
14. Suppose that your roommate is the fund-raising chairman, but that he/she needs your help right when you should be studying for an exam.

15. Suppose the chairman, who is someone you do not know too well, needs your help right when you should be studying for an exam.

16. A friend in one of your classes borrowed your class notes several weeks ago, then failed to return them at the next class, thus forcing you to take notes on scrap paper. Now he/she is asking to borrow your notes again.

17. Suppose that the person who borrowed your notes were someone you had only met in class and did not know too well.

18. Suppose that it is your friend who is asking to borrow your notes again, but that there is going to be an exam on the next day of class.

19. Suppose that your classroom acquaintance is now asking to borrow notes again, but the exam is scheduled for the next day of class.

20. You live in a dorm. Suppose someone, whom you do not know, calls on your phone one night. He/she says that the phone of the person he/she is trying to reach seems to be out of order. He/she asks if you would go get this person. You do not even know the person the caller is trying to reach, and you are expecting an important phone call yourself.

21. A class project has been planned. There are several things left to do before the project is finished, but instead of asking the other members to do the work, the chairman, whom you hardly know, asks if you would help him/her do it. You have already done your share of the work.

22. Suppose the chairman, who asks you to finish the project, were your best friend, but that you have already done your share of the work and had made plans to do something else.

23. Suppose the chairman, who asks you to help finish the project, was someone whom you hardly knew, and that you had already done your share of the work and had made plans to do something else.

24. A person you do not know well is going home for the weekend. He/she had some books which are due at the library and he/she asks if you would take them back for him/her, so they will not be overdue. From where you live it is a 25-minute walk to the library. The books are heavy, and you had not planned on going near the library that weekend.

25. You have volunteered to help someone, whom you hardly know, to do some charity work. He/she really needs your help but when he/she calls to arrange a time, it turns out that you are in the middle of exams.
26. You know you have a lot of schoolwork to do, but an acquaintance of yours, whom you do not know very well, asks you to go to a concert with him/her.

27. You are studying for an exam but your best friend asks you to go to a concert with him/her. He/she makes you feel that if you were a true friend you would go.

28. What if you are studying for an exam and it was someone whom you hardly knew who asked you to go with him/her to the concert.

29. You have been standing in the ticket line at the movie theatre for about 20 minutes. Just as you are getting close to the box office, three people, who you know only slightly from your dorm, come up to you and ask if you would let them "cut in" in front of you.

30. You are in the thick of studying for exams when a person whom you knew only slightly comes into your room and says "I am tired of studying. Mind if I come in and take a break for a while?"

31. You and two close friends are looking for a fourth person with whom to share an apartment. Now your two roommates come to you and say that they have found someone they would like to ask. However, you know this person and secretly dislike him/her.

32. On your way back to the dorm, you meet a slight acquaintance who asks you to carry a heavy package home for him/her since he/she is not going home for awhile, but it would be quite cumbersome since you are carrying packages of your own.

33. A friend of yours comes to your door selling magazine subscriptions. He/she says it would be a personal favor if you bought one since he/she is trying to win a scholarship in a sales contest. He/she is offering a good price, but you are only mildly interested in the magazines being sold.

34. In the above situation, suppose that you not only could not find any especially interesting magazines on your friend's list, but that you also felt that they were slightly overpriced.

35. A young high school boy comes to your door selling magazine subscriptions. He says it would really help him if you would buy one since he is competing for a college scholarship. You cannot find any especially interesting magazines on his list, and in any case, you feel they are slightly overpriced.
Appendix B

IMPACT MESSAGE INVENTORY
(INTERNAL MESSAGE INVENTORY III- 1981)

Name: ____________________________ Sex: ________
Age: ____________ Subject Number: ____________

This inventory contains words, phrases and statements which people use to describe how they are emotionally engaged or impacted when interacting with another person.

You are to respond to this Inventory by indicating how accurately each of the following items describes your reactions to the particular person under consideration. Respond to each item in terms of how precisely it describes the feelings this person arouses in you, the behaviors you want to direct towards this person when they're around, and/or the descriptions of this person that come to mind when you're with them. Indicate how each item describes your actual reactions by using the following scale: 1--Not at all, 2--Somewhat, 3--Moderately so, 4--Very much so.

In filling out the following pages, first imagine you are in this person's presence, in the process of interacting with him/her. Focus on the immediate reactions you would be experiencing. Then read each of the following items and darken in the corresponding number on the answer sheet which best describes how you would be feeling and/or would want to behave if you were actually, at this moment, in the person's presence.

EXAMPLE: If item 32 describes your feeling very much, find number 32 on the answer sheet and darken in the oval marked 4.

At the top of each page, in bold print, is a statement which is to precede each of the items on that page. Precede the reading of each item with that statement; it will aid you in imagining the presence of the person described.

There are no right or wrong answers since different people react differently to the same person. What we want you to indicate is the extent to which each item accurately describes what you would be experiencing if you were interacting right now with this person.

Please be sure to fill in the one number which best answers how accurately that item describes what you would be experiencing. If you need to erase, please do so fully before marking in another answer. Please do all items.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

The IMI was developed by Donald J. Kiesler, Jack C. Anchin, Michael J. Perkins, Bernard M. Chirico, Edgar M. Kyle, and Edward J. Federman of Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feeling</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.- Not at all</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.- Somewhat</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.- Moderately</td>
<td>3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.- Very much so</td>
<td>4.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**WHEN I AM WITH THIS PERSON HE MAKES ME FEEL...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feeling</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. bossed around.</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. distant from him.</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. superior to him.</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. important.</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. entertained.</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. impersonal.</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. like an intruder.</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. in charge.</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. appreciated by him</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. part of the group when he's</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>around.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. cold</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. forced to shoulder all the</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>responsibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. needed.</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. complimented.</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. as if he's the class clown.</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. annoyed.</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. embarrassed for him.</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. frustrated because he</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>won't defend his position.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. loved.</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. taken charge of.</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. defensive.</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. curious as to why he avoids</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>being alone.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. dominant.</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. welcome with him.</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. as important to him as others</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the group.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. like an impersonal audience.</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. uneasy.</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. as though he should do it</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>himself.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. admired.</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. like I'm just one of many</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>friends.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.- Not at all
2.- Somewhat
3.- Moderately
4.- Very much so

WHEN I AM WITH THIS PERSON HE MAKES ME FEEL THAT...

31. I want to tell him to give someone else a chance to make a decision.
32. I should be cautious about what I say or do around him.
33. I should be very gentle with him.
34. I want him to disagree with me sometimes.
35. I could lean on him for support.
36. I want to put him down.
37. I'm going to intrude.
38. I should tell him to stand up for himself.
39. I can ask him to carry his share of the load.
40. I could relax and he'd take charge.
41. I want to stay away from him.
42. I should avoid putting him on the spot.
43. I could tell him anything and he would agree.
44. I can join in the activities.
45. I want to tell him he's obnoxious.
46. I want to get away from him.
47. I should do something to put him at ease.
48. I want to point out his good qualities to him.
49. I shouldn't hesitate to call on him.
50. I shouldn't take him seriously.
51. I should tell him he's often quite inconsiderate.
52. I want to show him what he does is self-defeating.
53. I should tell him not to be so nervous around me.
54. I could ask him to do anything.
55. I want to ask him why he constantly needs to be with other people.
56. I want to protect myself.
57. I should leave him alone.
58. I should gently help him begin to assume responsibility for his own actions.
59. I want to hear what he doesn't like about me.
60. I should like him.
1. - Not at all 2. - Somewhat 3. - Moderately 4. - Very much so

WHEN I AM WITH THIS PERSON IT APPEARS TO ME THAT...

61. he wants to be the center of attention. 77. he's nervous around me.
62. he doesn't want to get involved with me. 78. whatever I did would be okay with him.
63. he is most comfortable withdrawing into the background when an issue arises. 79. he trusts me.
64. he wants to pick my brain. 80. he thinks other people find him interesting, amusing, fascinating, and witty.
65. he carries his share of the load. 81. he weighs situations in terms of what he can get out of them.
66. he wants me to put him on a pedestal. 82. he'd rather be left alone.
67. he'd rather be alone. 83. he sees me as superior.
68. he thinks he can't do anything for himself. 84. he's genuinely interested in me.
69. his time is mine if I need it. 85. he wants to be with others.
70. he wants everyone to like him. 86. he thinks he's always in control of things.
71. he thinks it's every man for himself. 87. as far as he's concern, I could just as easily be someone else.
72. he thinks he will be ridiculed if he asserts himself with others. 88. he thinks he is inadequate.
73. he would accept whatever I said. 89. he thinks I have most of the answers.
74. he wants to be helpful. 90. he enjoys being with people.
75. he wants to be the charming one.
76. he's carrying a grudge.
Appendix C

Name: __________________

Global Assertiveness Rating

Please rate yourself on the following scale by circling the number which describes how assertive you feel when you are asked to do something that you do not want to do.

1. extremely unassertive - it is very difficult for me to refuse and I feel very uncomfortable doing so

2. somewhat unassertive

3. slightly unassertive

4. neutral

5. slightly assertive

6. somewhat assertive

7. extremely assertive - it is very easy for me to refuse and I feel very comfortable doing so
Appendix D

Tape # __

Name: __________

Global Attractiveness and Assertiveness Rating

Please rate the person on the tape on the following scales by circling the number which describes how attractive and how assertive you think they are.

1. extremely unattractive
2. somewhat unattractive
3. slightly unattractive
4. average looking
5. slightly attractive
6. somewhat attractive
7. extremely attractive

________________________________________

1. extremely unassertive
2. somewhat unassertive
3. slightly unassertive
4. neutral
5. slightly assertive
6. somewhat assertive
7. extremely assertive
Appendix E

INFORMED CONSENT

I hereby acknowledge that I have been informed by Elise H. Labe, of Virginia Commonwealth University, of a study of perceptions and assertiveness. The purpose of this study is to see how people vary in their perceptions of others.

I understand that my participation in this study requires me to view four short videotape segments and fill out two forms rating the people on the tapes. I understand that there are no risks involved and that the benefits include promoting and extending scientific research in the area of person perception. I have been told that my name will not be used, that results will be reported in terms of group responses, and that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time and have my data removed from the study.

I hereby agree to participate in this study.

Date: ____________________________

Subject's signature

Witness __________________________

print name

address
Appendix F

Roleplay Scripts for Videotapes

Tapes A and B, nonassertive roles

Encoder: 
You approach the service desk in an auto repair shop. You told the clerk at the desk earlier in the day that you wanted a tune-up for your car. He appeared to understand your request and assured you that a tune-up would cost no more than $25.00. You ask the clerk for the bill.

Off camera "clerk": 
Ok, I've made up the ticket. The tune-up was $12.00 for parts and $13.00 for labor. The antifreeze and flush job was $21.00, and the new windshield wipers will cost you $6.00. That'll be $54.60 with tax. Will that be check or cash?

Encoder: 
Begins to pay bill, but questions the cost, remaining quiet and hesitant, expressing verbal and nonverbal unassertive behaviors.

Clerk pushes the encoder with statements such as:
The car needed all of this. Can you understand that? 
You must know that not paying your bills will ruin your credit rating. 
We pride ourselves on looking out for the safety of our customers. Don't you think that kind of protection is worth something?

Encoder: 
pays bill

Tapes C and D, assertive roles

Encoder: 
you are waiting for a bus.

Off camera man: 
approaches the encoder, describes an environmental project that he is work on and asks for contributions.

Encoder: 
listens to the discussion, but politely and assertively declines to contribute.

Man: 
pushes the encoder with statements such as:
Come on, can't you just give a couple of dollars?
I know things are tight, but this money helps the National Forests. You might want to take your kids there someday.
Tells more about the program.

Encoder: Listens, empathizes, but does not contribute.
Vita