

PROFILES OF RESPONSE TO LIFE CHANGES: SITUATION PERCEPTION AND COPING STRATEGIES

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Профили реагирования на жизненные изменения: восприятие ситуации и копинг-стратегии

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Abstract

This study uses latent profiles analysis to identify types of responses to life changes. We had two goals: 1) to define profiles depending on the combination of strategies for responding to a situation of change; 2) to identify differences in the perception of a situation of change among people with different profiles. Latent profiles were identified based on scales of the questionnaire “Types of Response to a Situation of Change” (TRSC); perception of a situation of change was determined based on content analysis of qualitative data. The study involved 216 people from different cities of Russia (ages 17–55; $M_{age} = 28.5 \pm 9.8$). Three profiles of response to a situation of change were identified: 1) acceptance of changes; 2) ambivalent profile; 3) rejection of changes. The change rejection profile is characterized by a negative attitude towards

Резюме

Исследование посвящено выявлению типов реагирования на жизненные изменения с помощью анализа латентных профилей. Мы преследовали две цели: 1) определить профили в зависимости от сочетания стратегий реагирования на ситуацию изменений; 2) выявить различия в восприятии ситуации перемен у людей с разными профилями. Латентные профили выделялись по выраженности шкал опросника «Типы реагирования на ситуацию изменений» (ТРСИ); восприятие ситуации перемен определялось на основе контент-анализа качественных данных. В исследовании приняли участие 216 человек из разных городов России (17–55 лет; средний возраст – 28.5 ± 9.8). Выделены три типа реагирования на ситуацию изменений: 1) принятие изменений; 2) амбивалентный профиль; 3) отвержение перемен. Профиль отвержения перемен характеризуется негативным отно-

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change, and coping by withdrawing from the situation. The change acceptance profile is defined by a positive attitude towards change and a feeling of emotional uplift. The ambivalent profile is characterized by a large repertoire of coping methods associated with finding positive meanings in a situation of change and intense activity in analyzing experience, which allows the subject to accept changes. This is combined with avoidance coping, which helps to relieve emotional stress. The results are discussed in the context of the theme of this issue: general personology. We analyze ways to apply the obtained knowledge about the types of response to change, in the consultative practice of a psychologist.

Keywords: situation perception, life changes, coping, psychological situation, latent profiles analysis, acceptance of change, rejection of change, valence of appraisal, ambivalence, mixed-methods research.

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шением к изменениям, копингом ухода от ситуации. Напротив, профиль принятия перемен определяется позитивным отношением к изменениям, чувством эмоционального подъема. Амбивалентный профиль описывается большим репертуаром способов копинга, связанных с нахождением положительных смыслов ситуации изменений и высокой активностью по анализу опыта, что позволяет субъекту принять изменения. Это сочетается с копинг-стратегиями ухода от ситуации, позволяющими снять эмоциональное напряжение. В контексте темы данного номера, посвященного общей персонологии, мы обсуждаем возможности применения полученных знаний о типах реагирования на изменения в консультативной практике психолога.

Ключевые слова: восприятие ситуации, жизненные изменения, копинг, психологическая ситуация, анализ латентных профилей, принятие изменений, отвержение изменений, валентность оценки, амбивалентность, смешанный дизайн исследования.

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Changeability is a basic characteristic of the modern world, and the ability to adapt quickly and flexibly is becoming one of the most sought-after human skills. However, this does not preclude patterns of resistance to change: people react differently to its conditions. In situations of change, people use a repertoire of strategies rather than a single method, even if it is the one that best suits the person's goals in a particular situation. These two statements – about different types of response to a situation of change and their repertoire – determined the perspective of this work.

Personality Changes – Situation Changes – Life Changes

Modern research reflects at least two aspects of life changes. The first examines how the personality, its status and roles, change in the process of encountering significant life events (Luhmann et al., 2014), how personality changes throughout life (Caspi et al., 2005), and self-change (Grishina, 2022). And although “life transitions do not necessarily lead to change [of the personality – authors] but may also foster stability” (Neyer et al., 2013, p. 539), there is still agreement that major life events influence people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, as well as changing their personality (Dugan et al., 2024; Specht, 2017).

The second aspect of research studies situation changes, which involves consideration of the following features:

- 1) the situation can be studied from an objective or subjective point of view;
- 2) situational information includes a) cues as environmental stimuli, b) characteristics as interpretations of cues, and c) classes of situations with similar profiles of stimuli and characteristics;
- 3) different approaches can be used: nomothetic or idiographic (Rauthmann & Sherman, 2016).

Note that situation changes require participants to invest time, resources, or energy to situation modification (van Bockstaele et al., 2020), which can lead to exhaustion of resources and, consequently, susceptibility to stress in the process of change.¹

Although it is possible to analyze these two aspects separately – personality changes and situation changes – their mutual influence or interaction, as reflected in the interactionist paradigm, should be recognized. For example, this is expressed in the idea of “fit” between personality and environment, which involves searching for situations that are consistent with the person's identity (Roberts & Wood, 2006), or in the fact that people “choose and create their daily environments according to their personality” (Wrzus et al., 2016, p. 782).

The psychological situation, including the decision made by a person, is given decisive importance in S. L. Rubinstein's definition: events are “key moments and

¹ According to one of the generally accepted definitions, stress occurs when a person evaluates a situation as making excessive demands that exceed his or her resources, which further determines the emergence of coping as a process aimed at a person's adaptation to environmental conditions, which involves the attraction of new resources (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Coping is “constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person” (Ibid., p. 141).

turning points in an individual's life path, when the adoption of one decision or another determines the person's future life path for a more or less extended period" (Rubinstein, 2015, p. 643). It is this aspect – situations that involve life changes – that is important to us in this work.

Perceived Characteristics of Change

One of the ways to study personality–situation interaction is to analyze the person's perception of the situation (Furr & Funder, 2022). The model of the process of perception of a situation presented by J. Rautmann and colleagues includes the following components: 1) the perceived setting or external environmental cues; 2) processing of these cues that depends on both stable and variable person-bound variables (such as traits, roles, and mental states); 3) the experience of the situation, which the authors call a psychological situation (Rauthmann et al., 2015). In that regard, people with similar patterns of situation perception may be grouped together (Rauthmann & Sherman, 2019). We believe that perceptions of life changes are inter-related with strategies of response to them, and aim to determine how situations of change are perceived according to different types of response. The type is determined by an repertoire of such strategies; and the perception model used in this work includes cues (that life changes are happening or are about to happen), their appraisal and attitude towards them (which assumes cognitive and emotional components), and ideas about ways of acting in the situation (including coping strategies).

In the study of responses to change, uncertainty is considered their most significant perceived characteristic (Bordia et al., 2004; Cullen et al., 2014; et al.). Uncertainty is often identified as a stressful and aversive state, which may be associated with a loss of control (Bordia et al., 2004) or with the perception of ambiguous situations as a threat to one's well-being that requires coping with the threat (Rosen et al., 2014). This aspect of the relationship between perceived uncertainty and stress is the most frequently studied. It should be noted that changes and uncertainty can also cause other reactions: for example, positive emotions and creative transformation of the situation (Sokolova, 2015). This perspective on the topic of life changes is less often subjected to empirical analysis.

In the present study, we are interested in different aspects of the perception of change: both negative attitudes (rejection) and positive ones (acceptance). We are also studying the ambivalent or mixed type of response. Ambivalence towards life events is being approached in contemporary studies as ambivalent feelings towards a decision (Chow et al., 2024; Saint Denny et al., 2024) or vacillations between denying an adverse event and accepting it (Zhong et al., 2024). We consider an ambivalent type of response to life changes, in which a person simultaneously reports both acceptance and rejection of changes.

Types of Response to Change

A review of studies that analyzed the types of response to change (Bityutskaya & Khanaliyeva, 2022) showed that the following typologies can be identified:

a) people grouped according to the speed of acceptance of change (for example, innovators, early adopters, laggards (Rogers, 2003)); b) types of attitudes (for example, a cognitive-exploratory attitude to the world: in one case, the world is perceived as stable and orderly, and in the other as changing and unstable (Poddiakov, 2001)). A recent study (Bityutskaya & Khanaliyeva, 2022) attempted to identify types based on analysis of an individual profile using a questionnaire. It turned out that most people reported using strategies of accepting and not accepting changes simultaneously. This type of response was defined as ambivalent. In addition, it was shown that life changes are often perceived as presenting a difficult, stressful situation. Based on the criteria of dynamism, uncertainty, and the need for high resource expenditure, it can be considered “objectively” difficult. Accordingly, the response strategies that a person uses in such a situation can be considered as coping strategies (Ibid.).

This work aims at describing the types of perception of a situation of change, based on identifying groups of people relate to change in different ways. The problem of identifying such groups can be solved using a modern method – latent profiles analysis (Ferguson et al., 2020). It is used to divide a sample into groups using a set of numerical parameter scales and to determine possible combinations of these parameters. In the field of research on coping strategies, it can be used to form groups of respondents, considering not separate coping strategies, but their combinations, defining a repertoire of responses to situations in the form of patterns that include several different strategies (Kavčič et al., 2022; Kornilova et al., 2023; Nagy & Balázs, 2023). In the context of our work, this method appears to be a suitable tool with which to identify groups of respondents demonstrating different repertoires of response strategies (or types). It also seems advisable to further analyze the characteristics of these types from the point of view of perception of the situation.

Methods

Participants

The study involved 216 people aged 17 to 55 years (mean age 28.5 ± 9.8), including 182 women (mean age 27.3 ± 9.01) and 34 men (mean age 34.8 ± 11.3), residents of different cities of Russia (Moscow, St. Petersburg, Tula, Rostov-on-Don, Tyumen, Kazan, Kaliningrad, Saratov, and others). The participants were students and employees in various specialties (student profiles: journalism, philology, psychology, economics, and others; employee professions: programmers, bank employees, teachers, engineers, and others). The questionnaires were presented online using the “testograf” platform. The participants were first asked to familiarize themselves with the general objectives of the study and provide informed consent; then they proceeded to answer open-ended questions and then to answer the questionnaire items. All respondents were provided with feedback in the form of a questionnaire profile with interpretation.

Procedures

The *TRSC questionnaire* (Bityutskaya et al., 2021) consists of 48 items in seven scales. The scales operationalize two types of strategies for responding to a situation of change: acceptance and non-acceptance (rejection) of the changes. The first type includes four scales: mastering change, overcoming difficulties, creating change, preferring uncertainty. The second type includes three scales: avoiding change, preventing change, maintaining stability. To evaluate the questionnaire items, we used a Likert scale from 0 (least often) to 3 (most often).

Qualitative data obtained through open-ended questions were used to study the perception of the situation of change. The questions are aimed at studying signs that are significant for determining life changes (questions 1, 2) and ways of accepting and coping with changes (3, 4): 1. By what environmental cues do you understand that life changes are occurring? 2. What signs of change (external, internal) are the most important for you? 3. What helps you accept change? 4. How do you eliminate resistance to change?

Since a situation of change can be considered as a type of life difficulty that involves the use of coping strategies, two additional questionnaires were used:

1) “*Types of Orientations in a Difficult Situation*” (TODS), designed to diagnose orientations such as the focus of attention in a difficult situation on approaching the difficulty (drive, thoroughness, opportunity orientation) and avoiding it (rejection, inaction, insouciance), as well as two orientations towards threat cues and obstacles (Bityutskaya & Korneev, 2020);

2) the Russian-language version of the “*Ways of Coping Checklist (Revised)*” (WOC), which operationalizes nine coping strategies: planful problem-solving, seeking social support, positive reappraisal, confrontive coping, self-controlling, self-blame, wishful thinking (fantasizing), distancing, escape/avoidance (Bityutskaya, 2014; Folkman & Lazarus, 1985).

Procedure for Content Analysis

First, coding instructions were drawn up describing *the general categories*, their corresponding specific subcategories, and their indicators. Two researchers independently coded a random sample of 20 cases for an initial test of the coding instructions. The instructions were then revised and consensus was reached on their fit to the data and clarity, as well as on discrepancies in data coding. The remaining responses were then coded.

The study examines seven categories and 74 subcategories, identified inductively (based on the responses). For example, the general category of *coping orientation* includes five specific subcategories: 1) coping focus on the goal, 2) on oneself, 3) on others, 4) on the situation, 5) other. Responses to questions 1 and 2 (signs of change) were coded using five categories. The coders determined whether the signs related to *external* or *internal* cues or *activity*; which of them the respondent considered important; and then, whether there were indicators of the *appraisal*. The answers to questions 3 and 4 (coping) were analyzed using two categories: first, the

described *methods of coping with the situation of change* were identified (for example, positive reappraisal or postponement), and then the entire description of coping was related to the *orientation*. We recorded and then counted all the indicators of each subcategory present in the text.

Statistical Processing

Latent profiles analysis was used to identify groups with different levels of intensity of individual strategies for responding to a changing situation. The selected groups were compared using ANOVA and its nonparametric analogue, the Kruskal-Wallis test. Pairwise comparisons were performed using Student's t-test and the Mann-Whitney test with Holm's correction for multiple comparisons. The calculations were carried out in the R environment (version 4.3.3) using these packages: tidyverse (ver. 2.0.0; Wickham et al., 2019), rstatix (ver. 0.7.2), mclust (ver. 6.1.1; Scrucca et al., 2016), and tidyLPA (ver. 1.1.0; Rosenberg et al., 2019).

Results

Latent Profiles Analysis

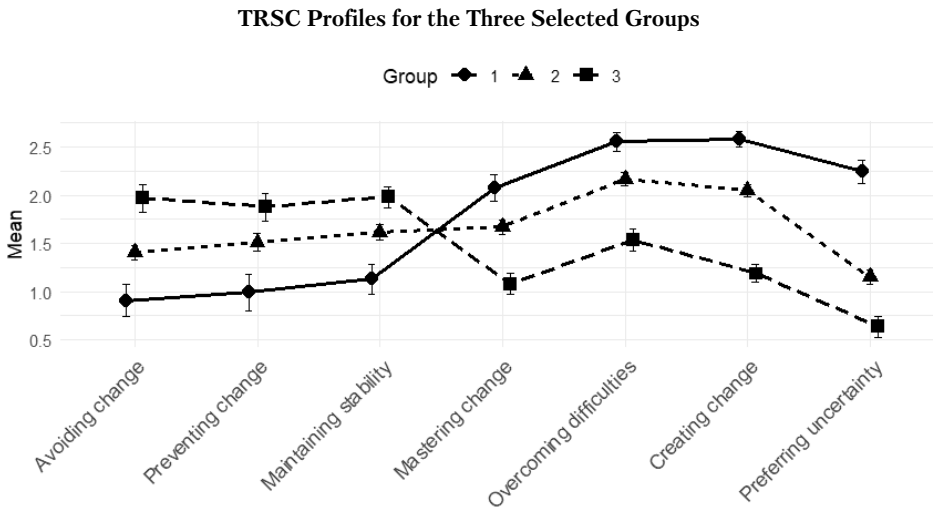
Latent profiles analysis was used at the first stage. To determine the number of groups, models were evaluated that identified from one to six groups, with each option evaluated according to different assumptions (equal/varying variances and covariances across the groups). The quality of the solution was determined according to the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) and the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC). The best AIC indicator was obtained in the model that divided the subjects into three groups with equal variances and non-zero covariances between the variables. The BIC in this model was second only to single-group models. The entropy coefficient (average estimated probability of an object belonging to a group) in this solution is quite high — .90. On this basis, three groups of subjects were identified; their composition is described in Table 1, and the mean scores of the TRSC scales in the groups is shown in Figure 1. Analysis of variance and pairwise comparisons showed that differences between all the groups on all the scales were significant at the level of $p < .001$.

Table 1

Size and Composition of the Selected Groups

Profile name and acronym	Group	N	Male/female	Percentage male/female	Age
Acceptance G-AC	1	45 (20.8%)	13/32	28.9/71.1	28.1±10.1
Ambivalence G-AMB	2	111 (51.4%)	14/97	12.6/87.4	28.7±9.9
Rejection G-REJ	3	60 (27.8%)	7/53	11.7/88.3	28.3±9.5
	Total	216	34/182	15.7/84.3	28.5±9.8

Figure 1



As can be seen in Figure 1, the first group has relatively high scores on the acceptance scales: *mastering change*, *overcoming difficulties*, *creating change*, and *preferring uncertainty*, and relatively low scores on the rejection scales: *avoiding change*, *preventing change*, and *maintaining stability*. The third group, on the contrary, has relatively high scores on the rejection scales and relatively low scores on the others, which describe acceptance. The second group occupies an intermediate position: it has average scores on all scales.

The first group can be called “the group with a change acceptance profile” – G-AC;

the second is “the group with an ambivalent profile” – G-AMB;

the third is “the group with a change rejection profile” – G-REJ.

Descriptive statistics for the content analysis categories are presented in Table 2. As the table shows, the differences between categories are small. Comparison of the three groups on these measures using analysis of variance showed no significant difference among the groups for all categories except *appraisal of change* ($F(1, 214) = 3.891, p = .05$). The average score for this category in the G-AC and G-REJ groups was higher than in the G-AMB; that is, the group with the ambivalent profile describes appraisals of change less often.

We maintain that the categories, being large units of analysis, indicate signs of change and features of coping that were generally mentioned by respondents from the selected groups. At the same time, within one category, there may be different subcategories (for example, a problem-oriented coping strategy of *planful coping* and emotionally oriented *distraction, postponement*). In this case, a general summation by category of *methods of coping with a situation of change* determines the frequency at which coping strategies in general were mentioned. What is more interesting in this study is the analysis of specific subcategories. It is in the frequency by which they are mentioned that one should expect differences.

Table 2

**Descriptive Statistics for Content Analysis Categories in the Three Groups
(means are given, with standard deviations in parentheses)**

Category	Profile		
	G-AC	G-AMB	G-REJ
1. External signs	1.422 (1.53)	1.252 (1.21)	0.983 (0.93)
2. Internal signs	2.111 (1.93)	2.117 (1.72)	1.833 (1.63)
3. Activity of the subject	0.578 (0.75)	0.613 (0.84)	0.683 (0.85)
4. Appraisal of change	0.4 (0.94)	0.171 (0.45)	0.3 (0.83)
5. Important signs of change	0.933 (0.33)	0.937 (0.31)	0.983 (0.34)
6. Ways to cope with a situation of change	3.222 (1.46)	3.523 (1.79)	3.533 (1.83)
7. Coping orientation	0.978 (0.34)	1 (0.30)	1 (0.184)

Note. Categories 1–5 were used to code responses to questions 1 and 2; categories 6 and 7 for questions 3 and 4.

Assessment of Differences within Subcategories

At the second stage, we compared specific subcategories of content analysis; several significant differences (at the level of $p < .05$) and sub-significant differences ($p < .1$) were found, which are presented in Table 3.

Differences were found to be significant in the following subcategories:

Table 3

Comparison of the Three Groups by Subcategories

Category	Subcategory	Profile			Significance of the differences
		G-AC	G-AMB	G-REJ	
Internal signs	Negative emotions	0.178 (0.535)	0.225 (0.517)	0.417 (0.72)	$F(2, 213) = 2.783$, $p = .064$, $\eta_p^2 = .025$
Appraisal of change	Positive appraisal	0.178 (0.442)	0.045 (0.208)	0.050 (0.22)	$F(2, 213) = 4.024$, $p = .019$, $\eta_p^2 = .036$
Ways to cope with a situation of change	Postponement	0.044 (0.208)	0.117 (0.323)	0.267 (0.516)	$F(2, 213) = 5.226$, $p = .006$, $\eta_p^2 = .047$
	Resistance to change	0.044 (0.208)	0.018 (0.134)	0.117 (0.372)	$F(2, 213) = 3.369$, $p = .036$, $\eta_p^2 = .031$
	Readiness for change	0.156 (0.424)	0.171 (0.445)	0.033 (0.181)	$F(2, 213) = 2.623$, $p = .075$, $\eta_p^2 = .024$
Coping orientation	Oneself	0.800 (0.405)	0.928 (0.322)	0.900 (0.303)	$F(2, 213) = 2.339$, $p = .099$, $\eta_p^2 = .021$

Note. Averages for profiles are given, standard deviations are in parentheses; the significance of the differences was determined by analysis of variance.

*Positive appraisal of change*². In G-AC, the average frequency of mentions of this subcategory is higher than in the other two groups ($p = .039/.019$ ³ when compared with G-REJ and $p = .021/.007$ when compared with G-AMB).

Postponement describes the need for a long time to accept change, to expect “it to go away on its own.” In G-REJ, the average number of occurrences of this subcategory is higher than in G-AC ($p = .008/.002$) and than in G-AMB ($p = .025/p = .012$).

Resistance to change^{*}. In G-REJ, the average number of occurrences of this subcategory is higher than in G-AMB ($p = .031/.010$).

Sub-significant differences were found for the following subcategories:

Negative emotions^{*}. In G-REJ, the average frequency of mentions of this subcategory is higher (but not significant in pairwise comparisons) than in G-AMB ($p = .117/.042$).

Readiness for change^{*}. In G-AMB, the average frequency of mentions of this subcategory is sub-significantly higher than in G-REJ ($p = .080/.026$).

Orientation towards oneself. In G-AMB, the average number of occurrences of this subcategory is sub-significantly higher than in G-AC ($p = .097/.032$). This subcategory is associated with the mention of a number of coping strategies that allow one to improve one’s condition, which is analyzed in detail below (“Analysis of Results”).

Assessment of Differences within Subcategories

At the third stage of analysis, subcategory blocks were identified for a more detailed analysis of the qualitative data results. For this purpose, we performed a grouped the subcategories into blocks, analyzing their meaning. As a result, 18 blocks of subcategories were described, after which we compared the sums of the corresponding subcategories in the three groups of respondents. Significant and sub-significant differences were obtained for three blocks of subcategories, which are given in Table 4. The subcategory indicators of each block and examples from respondents’ reports are presented in Table 5.

The *internal motivation* block includes the following subcategories: *motivation for change, interest, self-development, readiness for change, interesting goal*. Pairwise comparisons showed that for this block, significantly higher values were obtained in G-AMB compared to G-REJ ($p = .031/.010$), and sub-significantly higher values were obtained in G-AC compared to G-REJ ($p = .082/.041$).

The block of *negative attitudes towards changes* included the following subcategories: *negative emotions, negative appraisal of change, lack of understanding of changes, inability to overcome difficulties, resistance to change*. Higher values were

² The characteristics of the subcategories marked with an asterisk* are presented in Table 5.

³ From here on, the first significance is with Holm’s correction, the second – without correction. We discuss the significance of differences adjusted for multiple comparisons, but given the exploratory nature of our study, we felt it was important to also present the unadjusted significance, as an indication of possible meaningful differences.

Table 4

Comparison of the Three Groups by Blocks of Subcategories of Qualitative Appraisals

Block	Profile			Significance of the differences
	G-AC	G-AMB	G-REJ	
Internal motivation	0.578 (0.783)	0.586 (0.847)	0.267 (0.578)	$F(2, 213) = 3.685$, $p = .027$, $\eta_p^2 = .033$
Negative attitude towards change	0.378 (0.886)	0.396 (0.856)	0.783 (1.236)	$F(2, 213) = 3.465$, $p = .033$, $\eta_p^2 = .032$
Positive attitude towards change	0.311 (0.701)	0.126 (0.384)	0.117 (0.415)	$F(2, 213) = 2.807$, $p = .063$, $\eta_p^2 = .026$

Table 5

Characteristics of Subcategories Included in the Blocks

Subcategory	Indicator	Examples from respondents' descriptions
<i>Internal motivation block</i>		
Motivation for change	Desires and motives to change one's life	"I want to radically change my life"; "a strong inner desire to do something new"; "a desire to change everything"
Interest	Changing interests	"New interests are appearing", "interest in life", "inner curiosity"
Self-development	A coping method that involves awareness of personality development, skills, etc.	"Behind every change there is something new that ... can teach me how to cope with situations"; "the awareness that any change is a marker of development and movement"
Readiness for change	When describing coping, the focus is on readiness for changes, openness to them	"Openness to new experiences and courage help me cope with change"; "confidence in the ability to cope with new things and adapt to them"
Interesting goal	Interest in achieving a goal	"The main thing is that I am motivated to move towards this goal; if I were not interested, I wouldn't want to move towards it."
<i>Negative attitude towards change block</i>		
Negative emotions	Mentions of anxiety, worry, stress, panic, fears, etc.	"Tension, anxiety", "periods of stress and tension"; "my body gives me cues in the form of neuroses, fatigue, anxiety"
Negative appraisal of changes	Changes for the worse	"Changes are associated with negative situations for me"
Positive appraisal of changes	Changes for the better	"Everything is getting better", "changes that mean progress"

Table 5 (ending)

Subcategory	Indicator	Examples from respondents' descriptions
Lack of understanding of changes	Mentions of lack of understanding and uncertainty	"I don't understand what's going on," "I may not fully understand the problem," "I don't understand how to cope"
Impossibility of overcoming difficulties	When describing coping, the impossibility of overcoming difficulties is noted	"With global changes, I go deeper into myself, close myself off and cannot make decisions"; "there's no way to eliminate resistance to change"
Resistance to change	The words "resistance", "struggle" with changes; a need to force yourself to accept them	"I overcome what is happening through force", "grinding my teeth"; "I have a hard time convincing myself"
<i>Positive attitude towards change block</i>		
Positive emotions	Mentions of joy, delight, pleasure, etc.	"I feel emotionally uplifted", "a feeling of drive, excitement"
Positive appraisal of changes	Changes for the better	"Everything is getting better", "changes that mean progress"

obtained in G-REJ compared to G-AMB ($p = .044/.015$), and sub-significantly higher values compared to G-AC ($p = .074/.037$).

The block of *positive attitude towards change* included the following subcategories: *positive emotions*, *positive appraisal of change*. Sub-significantly higher scores were obtained for G-AC when compared with both G-AMB and G-REJ ($p = .086/.029$ and $p = .086/.039$, respectively).

Assessment of Differences in Questionnaire Scales

At the fourth stage of the analysis, we used data from the TODS and WOC questionnaires, which were completed by some of the respondents (82 people). They were distributed among the groups as follows: 16 respondents in G-AC, 40 in G-AMB, and 26 in G-REJ. Due to the small sample size, the comparison was performed using nonparametric statistics, and significant results are presented in Table 6.

Significant differences between groups were found on the following scales:

WOC questionnaire – planful problem-solving. In G-AC and G-AMB, the average score on this scale is significantly higher than in G-REJ ($p = .038$ and $p = .002$ for G-AC and G-AMB, respectively).

WOC questionnaire – positive reappraisal. In the G-AC and G-AMB, the average score on this scale is significantly higher than in G-REJ ($p = .034$ and $p = .002$ for the G-AC and G-AMB, respectively). This and the previous results indicate that in difficult life situations, people with the acceptance profile and with the

Table 6

Comparison of Questionnaire Scores for the Three Groups

Scale	Profile			Result of the Kruskal-Wallis test
	G-AC	G-AMB	G-REJ	
WOC – planful problem-solving	1.865 (0.427)	2.038 (0.565)	1.474 (0.59)	$\chi^2(2) = 14.314, p < .001$
WOC – positive reappraisal	2.01 (0.928)	1.996 (0.695)	1.333 (0.733)	$\chi^2(2) = 12.237, p = .002$
TODS – obstacle orientation	1.587 (0.659)	1.84 (0.536)	2.054 (0.626)	$\chi^2(2) = 6.965, p = .031$
TODS – rejection	1.41 (0.705)	1.544 (0.566)	1.974 (0.633)	$\chi^2(2) = 1.010, p = .007$

ambivalent profile more intensively use the coping strategies of planful problem-solving and positive reappraisal.

TODS – obstacle. In the G-REJ, the average score on this scale is sub-significantly higher than in G-AC ($p = .057$). Here and below, pairwise comparisons were performed using the Mann-Whitney test, with Holm's correction for multiple comparisons.

TODS – rejection (avoidance). In the G-REJ, the average score on this scale is significantly higher than in G-REJ and G-AMB ($p = .016$ in both cases). This and the previous results indicate that in difficult life situations, people with a profile of rejecting change are more likely to attach importance to obstacles and are also more likely to avoid difficulties.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Next, we will analyze the qualitative data according to the profile comparison.

A distinctive feature of *the change rejection profile* is a *negative attitude* towards change, associated with negative experiences, a pessimistic perception of change (“everything gets worse”), a lack of understanding of what is happening, and a loss of emotional strength. This is associated with resistance to change and difficulty coping with their situation. The method of coping most often reported by G-REJ respondents is emotionally oriented: “not to think about change.” Great importance is attached to support by other people.

In the group of participants with *the ambivalent profile*, the category of *self-oriented coping* is described more often than in the G-AC. A qualitative analysis of the G-AMB reports shows the semantic richness of this topic and the internal work on accepting change. *Positive reappraisal* is most commonly encountered within this category. Moreover, in such descriptions, this is a targeted coping strategy, such as an effort to “convince oneself,” “to find the positive aspect of change.” The second significant factor that allows a person to accept change is *analysis of the experience*, “analysis of all the paths of development and choice of the one that is most suitable

for me.” At the same time, a number of emotionally oriented coping methods involve coping by withdrawal from the situation (distraction, distancing). The combination of withdrawal and approach (focusing one’s thoughts on the situation, rethinking it) defines the ambivalent perception of change.

A positive attitude towards change, which distinguishes *the change acceptance* profile, involves mentioning the following semantic themes: 1) a boost in strength and positive emotional experiences, “a sense of harmony”; 2) positive, optimistic appraisals of what is going on: “it is getting easier and more pleasant to live”, “all the changes are for the better”; 3) flexible acceptance of change.

Discussion

In this work, we identified groups of people (or types) who react differently to a situation of change; and we then analyzed the characteristics of perception of change and coping strategies for each type. In the structure of the perceived situation, we considered cues, their appraisals and attitudes towards them, and ideas about methods of action. Interestingly, we found no differences between the types in frequency of mentioning external signs (environmental cues) that are interpreted by the people as life changes. However, appraisals of these stimuli, attitudes towards them, and actions differ for representatives of the different groups. The fact that people *perceive and react differently* to similar stimuli clearly characterizes the psychological situation. As J. F. Rauthmann and colleagues note, cues are the environmental structures into which psychological situations (i.e., cognitive representations of the cues) are couched. The psychological situation itself is based on cognitive representations of cues (Rauthmann et al., 2015). N.V. Grishina emphasizes that “it is a person’s interpretation of a situation that determines whether this situation turns into an event in his or her life” (Grishina, 2020, p.168). Our study supports the view expressed in current literature that it is important to consider “not only the objective occurrence of life events, but also people’s *subjective perception* of these events” (Dugan et al., 2024, p. 133).

The approach used, related to the analysis of latent profiles, has a number of advantages: it allows researchers to study combinations or repertoires of response strategies (rather than isolated coping methods), to identify groups of people using similar response patterns (Nagy & Balázs, 2023). In the present study, this approach allowed us to comprehensively describe the types and associated features of perception of a situation. It should be noted that previous studies using latent profiles analysis were performed according to a quantitative research design (Kavčič et al., 2022; Nagy & Balázs, 2023; etc.). We, on the other hand, propose a new application of the method: in the context of a mixed design. This is made possible through the use of qualitative data as well as content analysis.

Another important result of this study is related to the description of three types of responses to situations of change as holistic patterns, including a complex of appraisals, interpretations of the situation, and coping strategies. Of particular interest is the least studied profile in responding to change, the ambivalent profile, as a type with specific characteristics. Compared to the G-REJ, people with an

ambivalent profile more often report a readiness for change and a focus on accepting it through analysis of the positive aspects of the situation. Compared to the G-AC, the reports of the G-AMB more frequently and more diversely describe coping strategies aimed at managing one's emotional state.

Previously, ambivalence in the field of coping research has been studied in the context of a difficult decision, which is associated not only with thinking it through, but also with the possibility of avoidance, aimed at reducing negative emotions. To explain coping strategies that describe ambivalence, the conceptualization of R. Lazarus and S. Folkman (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) was considered successful; they identified emotion- and problem-focused coping (van Harreveld et al., 2009; Luce et al., 1997). In this regard, we note that the reports of the G-AMB indicate the existence of dilemmas when it is no longer possible to live in the old way, and the need to live in a new way requires significant expenditure of effort to restructure one's life. That may cause internal resistance, which those in the G-AMB also manage. It is also confirmed that the G-AMB combines emotional- and problem-oriented coping strategies.

Based on analysis of the self-reports, it can be stated that the situation of change is associated with high stress and difficulty for two groups: the G-REJ and G-AMB. At the same time, for the G-REJ, coping by avoidance serves the function of reducing emotional tension. For the G-AMB, emotionally oriented coping is also associated with positive reappraisal, which prepares the ground for accepting change. For the G-REJ, the difficulty of the situation is determined by the need for additional efforts at adaptation. The differences in the expression of coping strategies and orientations in a difficult situation (discovered at the fourth stage of our comparison) are consistent with the characteristics of responding to change. For example, those in the G-REJ report avoidance both in their answers to open-ended questions about change and in the questionnaires about difficult situations. This may indirectly reflect the similarity of the constructs of response to change and coping strategies.

Practical Application

In the context of the topic of this issue of the journal — *general personology* as a field synthesizing academic and practical psychology (Petrovsky & Starovoytenko, 2012) — it is important for us to reflect on the practical implications of the results obtained.

First of all, the finding is important for consultative personology that, as perceptual cues change, attitudes towards and interactions with the situation of change also change. If we consider the three types from the perspective of acceptance of change, then the second conclusion about different effective coping strategies for each type will be significant. Let us take a look at them.

The group that is the most vulnerable and most in need of psychological support is the G-REJ. The key factor of adaptation for them is the need for a long time to recover their strength, including adequate rest, as emotional burnout in this group is often accompanied by physical exhaustion. It is also necessary to consider the

deterioration of a person's understanding of a situation when it is rapidly changing. Therefore, proactive activity (preparation) and learning simple techniques for analyzing a situation (before it happens) are important. At the same time, the person needs to think about the possibility of turning to people close to them for help.

For the G-AMB, the key factors are positive reappraisal and self-determination in a situation of change, and analysis of priorities. Therefore, two lines of support are important: 1) working towards a goal in the given situation, 2) working on one's emotional state. It is also important for this group to make a firm decision, which will help overcome a possible dilemma.

Even though people with the acceptance profile appear to be the group best adapted to change, psychological work with them could be aimed at encouraging purposefulness of actions in a situation of change, and control of euphoric experiences, since these can reduce the appropriateness of actions and distort the person's appraisal of their own capabilities.

Conclusion

Analysis of latent profiles has allowed us to identify three profiles of response to a situation of change. For each profile, differences from the other groups were identified. People with *an acceptance profile* more often described a positive and optimistic attitude towards changes. People with *an ambivalent profile* more often mentioned an internal motivation towards changes. This group described readiness to change more often than the rejection group, and a coping orientation to their emotional state more often than the change acceptance group. The results of the coping strategies questionnaire showed that people with an ambivalent or acceptance profile reported more intensive use of planful coping and positive reappraisal. People with *a rejection profile* were more likely to describe negative attitudes toward change, the need for a long time to accept changes. Compared to the ambivalent group, they were more likely to mention resistance to change and negative emotions. According to the questionnaire, people with a rejection profile had high levels of avoidance and orientation towards obstacles in difficult life situations.

The study opens up possibilities for analyzing the profile of the TRSC questionnaire, and not just its individual scales. This is important for psychodiagnostics using the TRSC, but it requires further research to test the questionnaire as a tool for determining types of response to change.

Limitations. 1. The ratio of men and women who participated in this study (16% / 84%, respectively) does not allow the description of gender differences in the perception of change. 2. This work discusses not only significant but also sub-significant differences between groups. This is because the work is exploratory in nature and is aimed at a preliminary assessment of the characteristics of the identified groups. The sub-significant results require further analysis and re-testing on independent samples.

Ethics statement. The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Psychology of Moscow State University.

Authors' contributions. E.V. Bityutskaya and A.A. Korneev designed the study. E.V. ($n = 189$) and A.G. Dokuchaeva ($n = 27$) collected the data. E.V. performed the theoretical substantiation, qualitative data analysis, content analysis (expertise), and wrote the primary manuscript. A.G. did most of the work related to the use of content analysis. A.A. performed the statistical processing, described its procedure and results. All authors took part in the preparation of the final version of the text.

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