

# Cloninger's personality model and important career outcomes

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## Introduction

In recent years, prominent scholars have advocated that personality should prove importance in predicting outcomes that are relevant for individuals and society if policymakers are to be influenced. Moreover, it can also help to refine or integrate similar existing models, by selecting or combining traits from models that prove useful in predicting valued outcomes (Ozer and Benet-Martínez, 2006).

## Objectives

To study the relationship between Cloninger's personality model and its dimensions and 11 different objective career outcomes in a large clinical sample.

## Method

Cross-sectional, correlational study. The sample was made up from 867 patients consecutively referred to the Psychology Service of a General Hospital and assessed with the Temperament and Character Inventory-Revised (TCI-R; Cloninger, 1994) and the Life Outcome Questionnaire (LOQ; Gutiérrez et al., 2013). Multiple regression analyses of the Cloninger's personality dimensions (Table 1) on 11 career outcome variables were performed to ascertain the significance of the whole model and its dimensions unique contribution on the selected outcomes. In a first step, we controlled for the effects of sex, age, age<sup>2</sup> and age<sup>3</sup>. Additional analyses were also performed: a/ controlling for psychopathology, and b/ univariate regression.

## Results

The Cloninger's personality model was significant for the 11 variables under study, explaining from 1.3% to 6.3% of their variance (p<.001 – p=.019). Career outcome variables were differentially related to the 7 personality dimensions (Table 2). Persistence and Self-Transcendence stood out as the most relevant variables from the Cloninger model, though the sign of their relations was opposite. Analysis controlling for psychopathology showed similar results. Multivariate and bivariate regression showed quite different results regarding Harm Avoidance, Self-directedness, Cooperativeness and Self-transcendence (Table 3).

Table 2. Multiple regression coefficients for TCI dimensions predicting 12 career outcomes (n=867)

Career outcomes	R <sup>2</sup>	(p)	TCI-R Dimensions													
			NS		HA		RD		PS		SD		CO		ST	
			Beta	(p)	Beta	(p)	Beta	(p)	Beta	(p)	Beta	(p)	Beta	(p)	Beta	(p)
Education																
Education level (0-5) <sup>c</sup>	.034	(<.001)							.086	(.027)			.084	(.041)	-.103	(.005)
Level per years devoted	.032	(<.001)							.171	(<.001)					-.119	(.002)
Aband. psych. probl. (N/Y)	.060	(<.001)			.171	(<.001)										
Job																
Age starts working	.020	(.019)							-.084	(.040)	-.119	(.022)				
Working years (yr.)	.013	(<.001)							.086	(<.001)					-.046	(.019)
Job changes (#)	.030	(.003)							.137	(.002)						
Quit job (#)	.063	(<.001)	.156	(.001)			-.091	(.040)	-.129	(.003)					.102	(.016)
Fire from job (#)	.063	(<.001)							-.159	(<.001)			-.104	(.032)	.115	(.007)
Job level (1-3) <sup>c</sup>	.033	(.002)					.091	(.047)							-.110	(.011)
Finances																
Net income (€/1000)	.054	(<.001)					.113	(.008)	.097	(.021)					-.122	(.002)
Income cover needs (%)	.104	(<.001)							.151	(<.001)	.163	(.001)			-.153	(<.001)

<sup>c</sup>Categories: 'Education level' (0=no studies, 1=primary, 2=secondary, 3=bachelor, 4=master, 5=doctor); 'Job level' (1=unskilled worker, 2=semi-skilled worker, 3=skilled worker).

Table 3. Standardized beta coefficients for 11 career outcomes regressed onto the seven TCI personality dimensions once controlled for age and sex (simple regression).

Career outcomes	TCI-R Dimensions													
	NS		HA		RD		PS		SD		CO		ST	
	Beta	(p)	Beta	(p)	Beta	(p)	Beta	(p)	Beta	(p)	Beta	(p)	Beta	(p)
<b>Education</b>														
Education level (0-5) <sup>c</sup>	-.067	(.046)	-.078	(.017)			.080	(.016)	.127	(<.001)	.117	(<.001)	-.072	(.028)
Level per years devoted							.128	(<.001)	.078	(.027)				
Aband. psych. probl. (N/Y)			.212	(<.001)	-.074	(.028)	-.074	(.030)	-.193	(<.001)				
<b>Job</b>														
Age starts working							-.107	(.002)	-.081	(.022)				
Working years (yr.)			-.071	(<.001)	.051	(.004)	.087	(<.001)	.068	(<.001)	.044	(.014)		
Job changes (#)			-.111	(.003)			.157	(<.001)						
Quit job (#)	.150	(<.001)	.080	(.036)			-.131	(.001)	-.149	(<.001)			.082	(.032)
Fire from job (#)			.103	(.007)	-.099	(.010)	-.150	(<.001)	-.183	(<.001)	-.162	(<.001)		
Job level (1-3) <sup>c</sup>			-.077	(.048)	.101	(.009)			.110	(.005)	.097	(.012)		
<b>Finances</b>														
Net income (€/1000)			-.153	(<.001)	.120	(.001)	.119	(.001)	.153	(<.001)	.072	(.049)	-.74	(.043)
Income cover needs (%)			-.193	(<.001)	.098	(.005)	.167	(<.001)	.267	(<.001)	.124	(<.001)	-.106	(.003)

<sup>c</sup>Categories: 'Education level' (0=no studies, 1=primary, 2=secondary, 3=bachelor, 4=master, 5=doctor); 'Job level' (1=unskilled worker, 2=semi-skilled worker, 3=skilled worker).

## Conclusions

Personality according to Cloninger's model seems relevant in predicting objective career outcomes. High-Persistence and Low-Self-Transcendence were related to career success. Univariate analysis show different results, thus calling for caution in interpreting studies where correlations are reported or a single personality dimension is used. In our study, results concerning Harm Avoidance, Self-directedness and Cooperativeness were inflated in univariate analysis, whereas the opposite was found for Self-transcendence, showing unique contributions.

## References

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