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## INTRODUCTION

Vocational interests and personality traits mutually influence vocational behavior such as vocational choice, job satisfaction, and career transitions across the life span. Understanding their overlap and distinctness is critical to advancing theory and practice in vocational psychology.

The main goal of this study was to examine relationships between two widely accepted models for classifying individual differences—Holland's RIASEC occupational types and the five-factor model of personality. As there was no contemporary and proper measures to be applied in career counselling in Estonia, new tools to assess personality traits and vocational interest were originally constructed.

## RESULTS

In line with meta-analyses (Larson et al., 2002; Mount et al., 2005), there were moderate correlations between some personality traits and some vocational orientations, whereas in other cases the correlations were very small when age and gender were taken into account (see *Figure 1*).

More specifically, of the 30 possible pairs of correlations between the *Tripod-IK* and the *Tripod-TASK* inventories, only few were greater than .25 in this study: Artistic–Openness, Social–Extraversion, Enterprising–Openness, Enterprising–Extraversion, and Enterprising–Emotional Stability. Realistic, Conventional, and Investigative orientations showed only minimal overlap with any Big Five domain and thus cannot be interpreted within Holland's theory.

## METHOD

### PARTICIPANTS

In total 2,393 participants completed the new Tripod's test package in 2010:

- (1) **Adolescent sample** consisted of 831 adolescents (58% females, 42% males) attending grades 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup>. The participants' age ranged from 15 to 18, with mean age of 17.2 years ( $SD = 0.82$ ). The sample was drawn from 16 Estonian-speaking public secondary schools and gymnasiums all over Estonia. Written consent was obtained from adolescents' parents.
- (2) **Adult sample** consisted of 1,562 individuals living in Estonia (73% females, 27% males) with a mean age of 31.1 ( $SD = 10.4$ ) years, ranging from 19 to 68. Different educational backgrounds and levels of attainment were represented.

### MEASURES

#### Personality traits

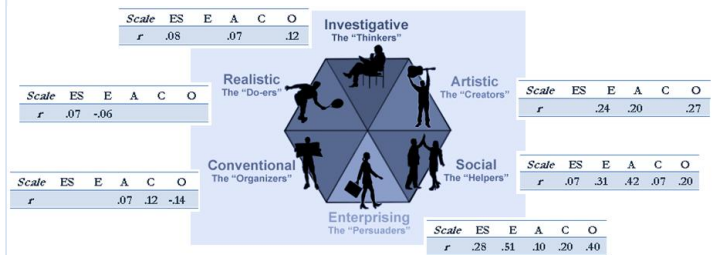
A linguistically simple self-report Big Five personality inventory (*Tripod-IK*) consisting of 144 items was originally constructed to measure the five major personality domains: emotional style (*Emotional Stability*), activity level (*Extraversion*), interaction style (*Agreeableness*), performance style (*Conscientiousness*), and general receptivity (*Openness*). In addition, 15 more narrow personal characteristics (e.g. *Self-Control*, *Empathy*, *Adaptability*) were described. All items were answered on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The internal reliability coefficients (Cronbach  $\alpha$ ) of the scales varied from .77 to .92.

#### Vocational orientations

A 110-item questionnaire (*Tripod-TASK*) was developed to assess the participant's resemblance to each of Holland's six occupational types, namely *Realistic*, *Investigative*, *Artistic*, *Social*, *Enterprising*, and *Conventional*. Typical items in this measure include, for instance, "to teach children", "to interview job applicants", "to write poems or novels". All short descriptions were rated on a 4-point scale ranging from 1 (*dislike very much*) to 4 (*like very much*). The questionnaire had a 6-factor structure explaining 56,3% of the total variance. The internal reliability coefficients (Cronbach  $\alpha$ ) of the scales varied from .80 to .91.

Additionally, the adult participants completed the Estonian Personality Item Pool NEO (*EE.PIP-NEO*; Mõttus, Pullmann, & Allik, 2006) to validate the constructed measures.

FIGURE 1. THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN VOCATIONAL ORIENTATIONS AND BIG FIVE PERSONALITY TRAITS.



Notes.  $N = 1,911$ . Only statistically significant ( $p < .01$ , at least) partial correlations between the scales are reported (age and gender controlled for).

ES = *Emotional Stability*, E = *Extraversion*, A = *Agreeableness*, C = *Conscientiousness*, O = *Openness*.

## CONCLUSION

The results for interest-personality correspondence show potential for strengthening career counseling practice. In particular, the substantial shared variance among Holland's Big Six and the Big Five personality traits provides synergy to enhance the meaning of traditional assessment in counselling (Larson et al., 2002).

On the other hand, the limited overlap between vocational interests and personality traits suggest that the assessment of both domains provides unique information about the client in career counselling process, contributing to more effective career decisions.

## REFERENCES

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