

# A cross-sectional investigation of the relation between career level and personality traits.

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## Abstract

**Objective.** Self-reported personality traits are often described as valid but relatively weak predictors of job performance (Barrick Mount, 1991), compared with other sources of individual differences, such as cognitive ability (Schmidt Hunter, 1998) . However, research rarely investigates how personality traits relate to an individual's career advancement. For example, it is not clear whether individuals in management positions report different personality traits than line employees — for example, in leadership, extroversion, diplomacy, innovativeness, and, more broadly, entrepreneurial personality traits (Leutner et al., 2014) . This is however an important question, notably because it is frequent that high achieving line employees get promoted to supervising positions based on their performance as an employee rather than based on their leadership skills – or lack thereof. Therefore, individuals in managerial positions may not necessarily exhibit a number of personality traits however desirable to be performant as managers.

**Methods.** Based on a correlational study of over 8000 respondents, we compare personality traits and profiles (based on an array of self-report questionnaires) across different career advancement levels (entry level, mid-senior, team leader, director, etc.), using One-Way ANOVAs.

**Results.** Although results will be discussed more in detail, the largest effect is observed with a moderate relation between career level and leadership. Moderate differences are also observed in attention to detail and social influence, and we found similar results when controlling for age and gender. It is concluded that personality is related to career advancement. Implications are discussed. It is concluded that personality is related to career advancement. Implications are discussed.