

# Harmonious Passion, Obsessive Passion and Personality

Séverine Balon, Julie Lecoq & Bernard Rimé

Université catholique de Louvain, Centre d'Etude du Comportement Social

Contact : severine.balon@student.uclouvain.be

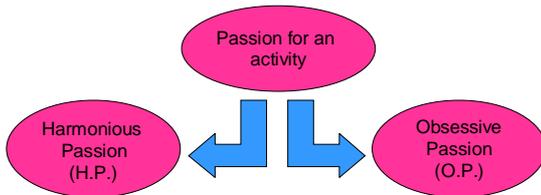


## 1. Introduction

• **Passion** : strong inclination towards an activity that people

- ➔ like
- ➔ find important
- ➔ and in which they invest time and energy

• **Dualistic Model of Passion** : 2 types of passion (Vallerand et al., 2003)



⇒ **Harmonious passion (H.P.)** : the person controls his/her favourite activity.

⇒ **Obsessive passion (O.P.)** : the favourite activity controls the person.

➔ These two forms of passion differ from one another regarding their mode of development but also regarding the consequences they bring.

## 2. Research question

- Old research tradition : the passionate personality (Heymans & Wiersma, 1912).
- No previous research has examined with precision the personality variables that could intervene in passion development.
- Is passion associated with a particular **profile of personality** ?
- Does this profile differ according to the **type of passion** (H.P. vs. O.P.) ?

## 3. Hypotheses

### Regarding Big Five dimensions

- 1) Both H.P. and O.P. correlate positively with Conscientiousness
- 2) H.P. correlates positively with Extraversion
- 3) O.P. correlates positively with Neuroticism

### Regarding perfectionism

- 4) H.P. correlates positively with adaptive perfectionism (self-oriented perfectionism)
- 5) O.P. correlates positively with maladaptive perfectionism (socially prescribed perfectionism)

## 4. Method

### Participants :

- N = 320
- 171 women (53%) and 149 men (47%)
- Aged 14 to 79 years old (M = 28.48; SD = 12.06)

### Procedure :

- Data collected on the **Internet** by means of an on-line questionnaire.
- Questionnaire posted on various forums and web sites.

### Measures : questionnaire in 4 parts

- Socio-demographic information
- The Passion Scale : 16-item questionnaire assessing the two types of **passion** (harmonious vs. obsessive) (Vallerand et al., 2003).
- The Big Five Inventory-10 : 10-item questionnaire measuring the **Big Five** dimensions (BFI-10; Rammstedt & John, 2007).
- The Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale : 45-item questionnaire assessing both adaptive and maladaptive **perfectionism** (MPS; Hewitt & Flett, 1991).

## 5. Results

Table  
Partial Correlations Between Personality Variables and the Two Types of Passion

Personality variables	Harmonious passion	Obsessive passion
Big Five dimensions		
Conscientiousness	.19**	-.06
Extraversion	.14*	-.19**
Neuroticism	-.27***	.16**
Perfectionism		
Adaptive	.002	.23***
Maladaptive	-.19**	.31***

\*p < .05. \*\*p < .01. \*\*\*p < .001.

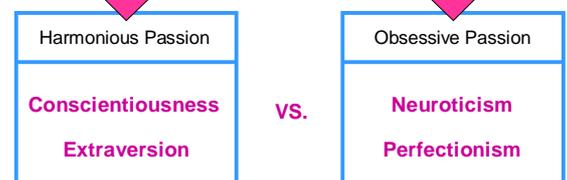
- 1) Only H.P. presents a positive correlation with **Conscientiousness**. O.P. has no significant relationship with this dimension. The first hypothesis is thus partially supported.
- 2) H.P. is positively associated with **Extraversion** whereas O.P. is negatively associated with it.
- 3) O.P. is positively associated with **Neuroticism** whereas H.P. is negatively associated with it.
- 4) Surprisingly, H.P. almost presents a zero-correlation with **adaptive perfectionism**. Yet, H.P. presents a negative correlation with maladaptive perfectionism.
- 5) Surprisingly again, O.P. appears to be linked positively not only with **maladaptive perfectionism** but also with the adaptive form.

## 6. Conclusion

- Passionate people do not seem to distinguish themselves from non-passionate but **differences obviously appear** in the very heart of the passionate group (see Table).
- **Harmonious passion** appears to be linked with Conscientiousness and Extraversion while **obsessive passion** rather seems to be related to Neuroticism as well as to perfectionist tendencies (self-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionism).

• **Two different profiles of personality appear depending on whether the individual has developed a harmonious or an obsessive passion.**

➔ This finding is consistent with previous research that systematically demonstrated the more positive/adaptive nature and consequences of harmonious passion in comparison with obsessive passion.



## References:

- Hewitt, P. L., & Flett, G. L. (1991). Perfectionism in the self and social contexts: Conceptualization, assessment and association with psychopathology. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 60, 456-470.
- Heymans, G., & Wiersma, E. (1912). Beitrage zur speziellen psychologie auf grund einer massenuntersuchung. *Zeitschrift Fur Psychologie*, 62, 1-59.
- Rammstedt, B., & John, O. P. (2007). Measuring personality in one minute or less: A 10-item short version of the Big Five Inventory in English and German. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 41, 203-212.
- Vallerand, R. J., Blanchard, C., Mageau, G. A., Koestner, R., Ratelle, C. F., Léonard, M., Gagné, M., & Marsolais, J. (2003). Les passions de l'âme: On obsessive and harmonious passion. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 85(4), 756-767.
- Vallerand, R. J., Rousseau, F. L., Grouzet, F. M. E., Dumais, A., Grenier, S., & Blanchard, C. (2006). Passion in sport: A look at determinants and affective experiences. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 28, 454-478.