

Airline Pilots – Case Five

This case illustrates the test-retest procedure used by Dr. James N. Butcher, author of the Minnesota Report™: Revised Personnel System—3rd Edition, for reducing test defensiveness.

Job applicants often present themselves in a very favorable light, minimizing problems and asserting good psychological adjustment. If they are administered a psychological test as part of the application process and respond defensively to the items, the results may be invalid. However, research has shown that people tend to be less defensive in their responses to the MMPI-2 if they are warned that the test includes measures to detect defensiveness and faking. When people are encouraged to respond honestly to avoid invalidating the test, they tend to respond more openly. Instructions such as the following are usually effective.

When taking psychological tests, some people try to create an overly positive or overly negative impression of themselves. As a result, their test results may not be usable. The MMPI-2 includes several measures to evaluate whether people responded truthfully to the items. To ensure that your results will provide accurate information

about you, please respond honestly to the items and try not to leave any of them blank.

Following is an example of a test-retest assessment with the MMPI-2. After the first administration produced invalid results, the test was administered again with instructions similar to those above. The second administration produced more usable personality information than the first.

The applicant, John W., is a 44-year-old pilot who is a captain with a regional commuter airline. He graduated from a four-year aviation college with a degree in aviation science. He started flying for the regional carrier three years ago following his discharge from the Marine Corps. He spent 20 years in the service, where he flew helicopters and fixed-wing jet aircraft. He was discharged from the military with the rank of major. The background investigation disclosed three driving offenses in the past 10 years and no other arrests.