

Butcher, J. N. (2016). Personality assessment of airline pilot applicants. Bor, R., Eriksen, C. Oakes, M. & Scragg, P. (Eds.) *Pilot Mental Health Assessment and Support: A Practitioner's Guide*. London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis.

Abstract

Psychopathology in the workplace can have a great impact on public safety particularly when it involves malicious, aggressive behavior that has occurred in trusted occupations such as airline pilots. Recent air disasters that killed hundreds of passengers were caused by psychologically maladjusted flight crew-members whose psychological disturbance was not detected by authorities prior to the incidents. Many US and international airlines do not conduct psychological evaluations of pilot applicants prior to employment or perform periodic evaluations to screen for mental health problems that develop over time, even though some people with no history of mental illness develop psychological problems.

Some air carriers that conduct pre-employment pilot assessment evaluations include the use of personality-based measures that are conducted in employment screening assessments (usually after the person has been determined to be qualified for the job and made a preliminary offer). One of the most frequently used clinical personality instruments used in pre-employment screening is the MMPI-2. The clinical scales of the MMPI-2 have a long history of application in pilot screening and have a substantial research base supporting their interpretation.

This chapter addresses the application of the MMPI-2 in pilot screening and describes the scales that provide important information assessment psychologists find pertinent to making employment decisions. A procedure that was developed to reduce the invalid defensive protocol, the test-retest method, was described and illustrated. A

case study was provided to illustrate the information from the MMPI-2 that can be of value in pilot assessment.