

PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION OF PILOTS IN THE CONTEXT OF AIRLINES PILOT APTITUDE TESTING – pilots' view

Antti Tuori, IFALPA HUPER co-chair (medical),
A330/340 F/O, M.D., Ph.D., AME 2

The International Federation of Air Line Pilot's Associations IFALPA

- represents over 100,000 pilots and flight engineers in almost 100 countries world-wide
- The mission of IFALPA is to be the global voice of professional pilots by providing representation, services and support in order to promote the highest level of aviation safety worldwide



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German Wings Task Force

vs.

BEA Accident Investigation

German Wings Taskforce Recommendation

Recommendation 2: The Task Force recommends that **all airline pilots** should undergo **psychological evaluation** as part of **training or before entering service**. The airline shall verify that a satisfactory evaluation has been carried out. The **psychological part** of the initial and recurrent **aeromedical assessment** and the related training for aero-medical examiners **should be strengthened**. EASA will prepare guidance material for this purpose.

IFALPA position on pilot mental health

“IFALPA recommends that systematic psychological/psychiatric evaluation should be limited to pre-employment testing”



Mental Health Requirements for Active Pilots

IFALPA considers that an extensive psychological/psychiatric evaluation, as part of the routine pilot aeromedical assessment, is neither productive nor cost effective and therefore not warranted.

Serious mental health illnesses are relatively rare among pilots and the onset of such illness is impossible to predict.

Routine psychological/psychiatric evaluation is a gross invasion of privacy and may impose more stress, threat and anxiety on the individual. Not all tests are culturally valid and screening tools are unreliable. Mental health assessment will only create the illusion of safety enhancement.

IFALPA recommends that systematic psychological/psychiatric evaluation should be limited to pre-employment testing. However, if substantial evidence indicates a need for further psychological/psychiatric testing, adequate safeguards should be mandated to protect the pilot; e.g. false positives or improper conclusions.

The psychological/psychiatric mental condition assessment should be performed by an unbiased accredited mental health professional, preferably familiar with the aviation environment and chosen and agreed upon by the individual concerned.

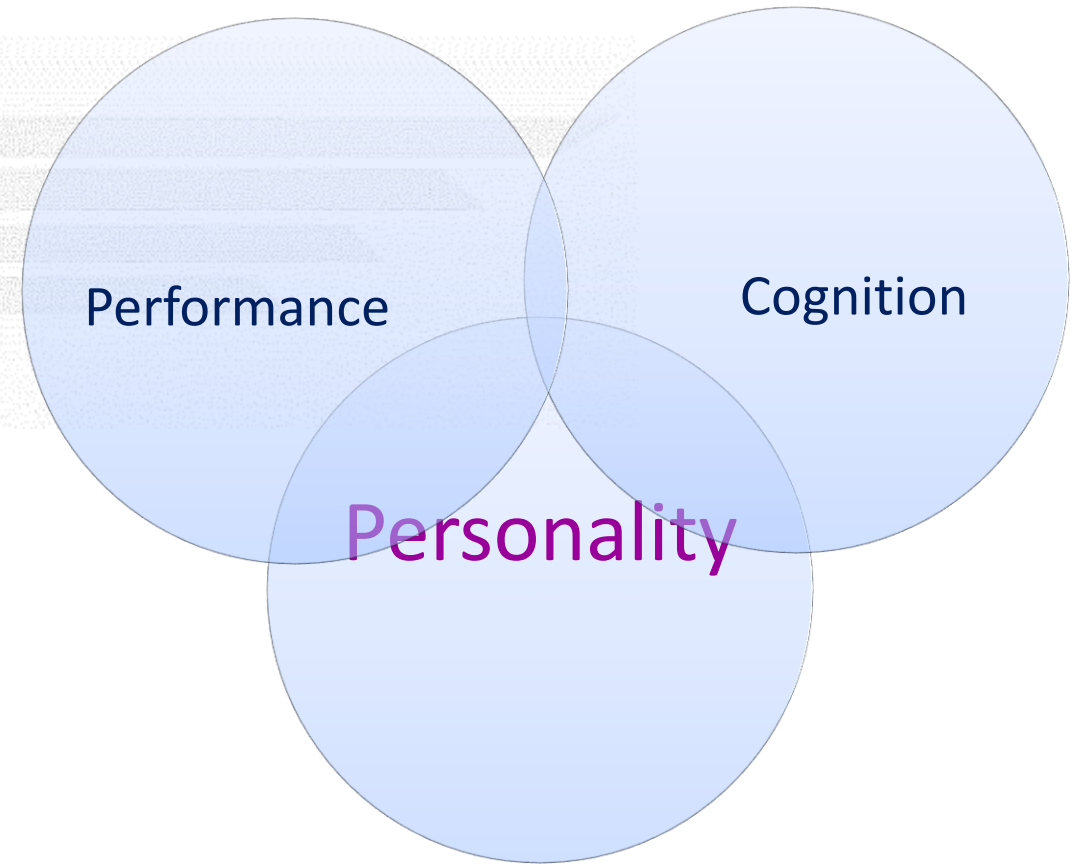
IFALPA strongly recommends that any decisions to undertake further evaluation be done in close consultation with the Pilot Association, the Pilot Assistance Program and medical authorities. Every psychological/psychiatric evaluation event should provide for a second expert opinion conducted by a trustworthy organization agreed upon prior to any testing. The second evaluation should only be necessary and conducted in the case the pilot does not agree with the first opinion.

Note: Where a Pilot Assistance Program does not exist, the judgment referred to in the above text should be left to the appropriate Member Association or local pilot group.

Initial psychological evaluation

What is the current situation?

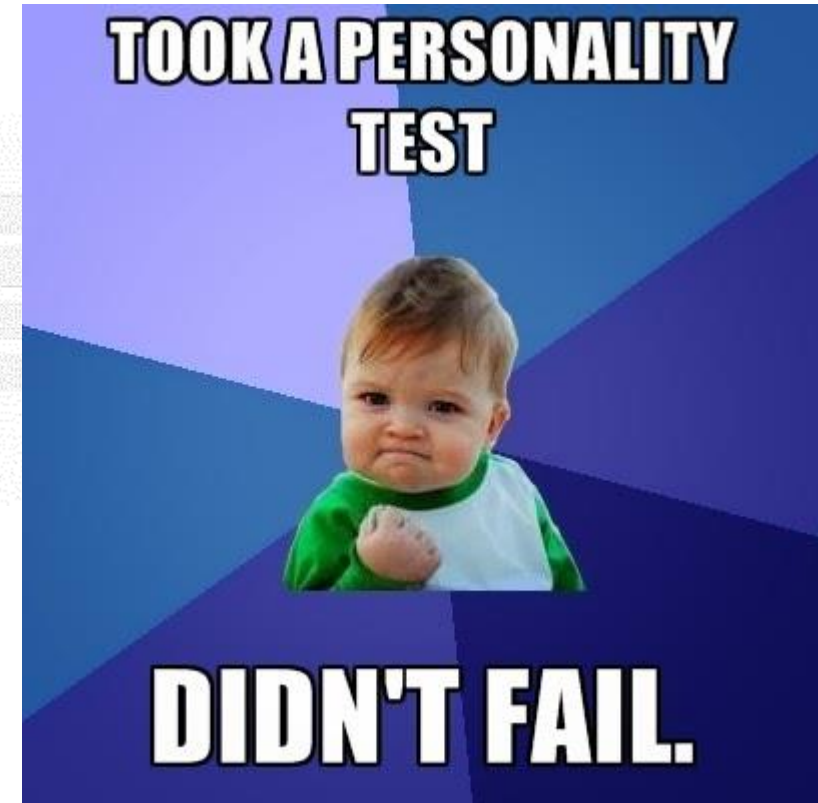
- Mainly personality tests
- Aim to exclude unsuitable applicants with personality disorders or with disposition of those



Initial psychological evaluation

Issues that need to be clarified:

- What is the purpose of the tests?
- What kind of & what tests are accepted? (ref. colour vision tests around the world)
 - Internationally agreed standards of testing
- Issue of “failed” personality test



Initial psychological evaluation

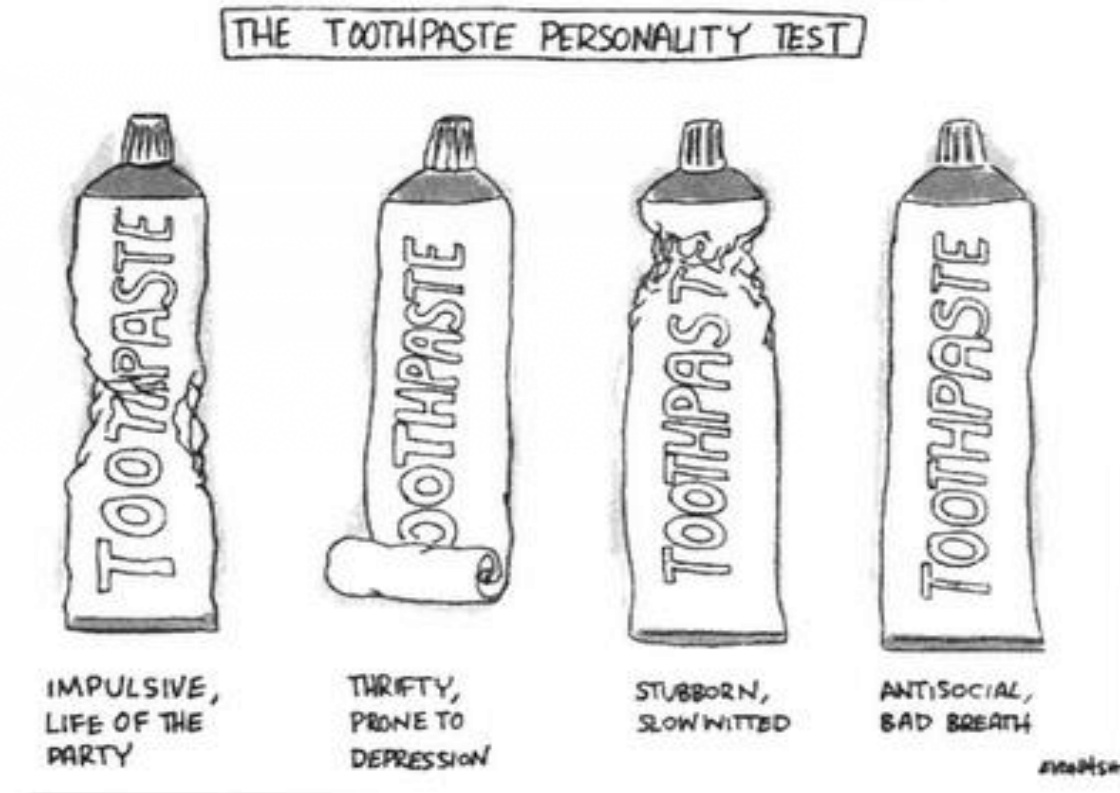
Issues that needs to be clarified (cont´)



- Tests have to be validated
- Are all the tests valid in different cultural environments?
- Language issues
- Who or which organization is allowed to perform the tests?
- Acceptance of the tests by different countries/airlines?

“The airline shall verify that a satisfactory evaluation has been carried out”

- Without more detailed regulation, is an airline able to perform that kind of evaluation ?
- Need for quality control !



Mental assessment during medicals

Current requirements are quite enough. Today's regulation gives the possibility of referring

How to train a regular AME ?

They will by no means become “small psychologists or psychiatrist”



Conclusions

OK for initial, if the **issues concerning tests** mentioned before **are agreed on & solved**.

NO for any additional tests during routine medicals, as current requirements are adequate (incl. possibility of referring)



Thank you

Questions?