

Do men cheat more on internet selection tests?

MEN are considered much more likely to cheat on internet selection tests than women, a new survey reveals today.

The report, commissioned by work psychologists at Saville Consulting, questioned over a thousand UK students.

In this sample, 42% thought men were more likely to cheat than women, compared to just 9% who thought that females were more likely to cheat than males.

Internet selection tests measure a respondent's abilities in certain areas to predict their likely level of performance at work. Tests typically measure verbal, numerical or logical skills.

Many UK organisations use such tests as part of their recruitment process, but the vast majority of such tests can be completed by job applicants on their home computer, in an unsupervised manner.

Worryingly, 14% of students openly admitted to receiving help from others on such internet tests. Overall, respondents also revealed that they knew more men who had cheated on internet tests than women. When students who rated themselves as being of lower ability were compared to those who reported being of a higher level of ability, 58% more students of lower ability admitted to receiving help on internet tests.

Previous research commissioned by Saville Consulting indicated that personality and intelligence tests were actually seen by people as being more useful selection methods than job interviews. Eight out of ten students in the current survey confirmed that many people exaggerate on job application forms.

Moreover, the same proportion of respondents agreed that if an organisation followed unsupervised tests with longer supervised tests prior to appointment, this was an effective method for preventing cheats from being selected.

These findings undermine the use of unsupervised tests without the re-testing of applicants under supervised conditions. Organisations may not re-test applicants because they believe this offers a more economical recruitment process. However, recruiting dishonest and less intelligent workers will inevitably be counterproductive for an organisation's effectiveness.

*- Professor Cary Cooper CBE, Professor of Organizational Psychology at Lancaster University Management School, said:*

"I am not surprised by these results, as past research has shown that women score higher than men on conscientiousness and integrity. In addition, men are more driven than women by status and the need to be successful. In many cases, men are prepared to take more risks to achieve this. Women on the other hand are not only likely to be more truthful but also interested in the satisfaction derived by a job well done, rather than by achieving status or moving up the proverbial 'greasy pole'"

- Professor Binna Kandola OBE, Senior Partner and Head of Well-Being at Pearn Kandola, said:

“It is possible that employers who do not re-test in a supervised environment could be illegally discriminating against honest, intelligent female applicants”

- Professor Peter Saville, International Chairman of Saville Consulting, said:

“Following up applicants who complete online unsupervised tests with supervised tests of equal or greater rigour is arguably the most effective way to prevent candidate cheating. Other methods, such as randomising the order of questions or adapting questions to the ability of a candidate simply do not get around the problem of unsupervised cheating.

If job applicants know that they are going to be retested in a properly supervised environment, this can do much to reduce the problem of cheating. The supervised test at the later stage also provides a safeguard that the successfully appointed applicant has the abilities to match the requirements of the role”.

For further information please contact Gabby Parry ([gabby.parry@savilleconsulting.com](mailto:gabby.parry@savilleconsulting.com)), Managing Director of Saville Consulting UK, on +44(0)7747470863, or Professor Peter Saville ([peter.saville@savilleconsulting.com](mailto:peter.saville@savilleconsulting.com)) on +44(0)7797739257.

Notes to editors:

- Work psychologists at Saville Consulting commissioned Opinionpanel to host a 25-minute survey of UK students (n=1012), in order to assess the extent of cheating and to ascertain the views of students about the use of unsupervised internet selection tests
- Students were also asked about their own work styles, preferences and abilities
- The sample was comprised of 908 full-time final year undergraduates and 104 full-time postgraduates, each of whom had experienced an unsupervised internet test on at least one occasion
- Saville Consulting is an international business founded in 2004 by Professor Peter Saville (previously the founder of SHL Group plc). The team comprises human resource specialists in psychology, business consulting and information technology, all of who share Peter’s belief in customer service and his passion for innovation in assessment