Professional Military Education (PME) in the USAF SOS Leadership Course: Incorporating Emotional Intelligence

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Abstract

This article presents the implementation of the education model of emotional intelligence (EI) in Air University’s Squadron Officer’s School (SOS). SOS provides resident and non-resident leadership development curriculum for company grade officers (CGO) based on United States Air Force (USAF) professional military education (PME) standards. The participants of the study \((N=1213)\) had a minimum of four years experience in the USAF and were pay grade O-3 (Captain) and civilian equivalent professionals. The purpose of the initiative was to introduce a transformative approach to EI in the leadership development course, norm the Emotional Skills Assessment Process (ESAP) instrument with this population, and explore relationships that may exist between EI and quality of leadership as measured by the Distinguished Graduate (DG) ranking. The results suggested that the criterion measure, quality of leadership performance, was significantly related to EI.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, leadership, professional military education, ESAP


Introduction

Integrity First, Service Before Self, and Excellence In All We Do — these are the human capital skills requisite of a quality, United States Air Force (USAF) Airman. These are the USAF core values.

We must, of course, include in professional development curricula discussions about our organizational core values. In doing so, we should also understand that the brunt of the personal requirements needed to practice core values is neither totally physically nor totally cognitively based. The capacity to actually live the core values of integrity, excellence, and service; the capacity to positively and purposefully redirect behavior, is primarily emotion-based.

‘Fit-to-fight’ programs and PME are fine-tuned to take care of the body and the rational mind—to develop skills and knowledge. Nevertheless, emotional aspects, beyond mental...
References


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