

EFFICACY OF PERFORMANCE COUNSELLING IN THE INDIAN AIR FORCE: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

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Performance Counselling (PC) in the Indian Air Force (IAF) was evolved over the years and has been made mandatory recently. However, it is not known if the process is being effective and is actually helping in improving the performance of IAF Officers. Hence, a survey was carried out to obtain the opinion of Appraisees and Initiating Officers (IOs) on their understanding of the process and determine its effectiveness. A total of 306 responses from all branches of the IAF were obtained and a cross section of officers was also interviewed to obtain their views. Data has been collected from various stations in the IAF that are heterogeneous in nature and is considered sufficient as a true sample for the study. Data collected was analyzed and also checked for independence with regard to any variations in the different branches of the IAF. It was found that the process of counselling, though formalized as a procedure, has not been fully integrated into the IAF as yet. Most of the officers go through it as a formality that has to be undertaken in the process of appraisal reporting. Most of the officers consider counselling necessary only when the appraisee is perceived to suffer from some kind of serious behavioral problem, thereby conveying a negative connotation. PC as a tool for improvement has, therefore, neither been understood nor appreciated. PC is carried out invariably as a one-way dialogue wherein shortcomings are pointed out and the officer is asked to show improvement. It is concluded that the process is largely ineffective and does not successfully enhance the performance as was originally envisioned. It is recommended that a concerted effort be made to sensitize and educate the officers on the concept and the benefits of PC and give them training on the methodology of conducting PC.

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