Listening to Leaders: Expanding Cultural Intelligence Learning Opportunities

for U.S. Army Special Forces at the Captain's Career Course

by

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the impact of learning about cultural intelligence (CQ) from senior U.S. Army Special Forces leaders (Group Commanders and Group Command Sergeants Major) on aspiring Special Forces Captains (students) at the Captains Career Course. Three research questions addressed the influence of senior leader interventions on students' CQ scores, motivation to work with partner forces, and intentions to improve CQ. The study involved quantitative and qualitative data for each of the three comparison groups: control, face-to-face (in-person interaction with senior leaders), and podcast (audio-only recordings).

The quantitative data measured CQ capabilities of motivation, cognition, metacognition, and behavior. Descriptive statistics revealed that from the pre-test to the post-test, the control and podcast groups experienced increased self-assessment scores on all four constructs but decreased observer assessment scores. By contrast, the face-to-face group experienced both a decrease in observer assessment scores as well as a marginal decrease in self-assessment scores (on motivation and metacognition).

Exploring motivation to work with partner forces, analysis of the group interview transcripts revealed that the control group attributed their motivation primarily to their prior experiences, while participants in the face-to-face group reported mixed feelings regarding prior experiences but highlighted the impact of senior Special Forces leaders' stories on their motivation. The podcast group credited their course experience and the senior leaders' narratives for their increased motivation.

Examining the influence of senior leader stories on intent to improve CQ, the control group provided generic responses focused on improving cognition. The face-to-

face group offered more specific, action-oriented answers emphasizing business systems, sociolinguistics, and cultural values. The podcast group produced varying responses, with some sharing basic intent and others detailing specific strategies such as language fluency and cultural immersion. Participants across all three groups expressed a strong intention to seek out mentorship and stories from experienced individuals.

In conclusion, this study highlights the myriad influences on aspiring Special Forces Captains' CQ and the multifaceted impact of senior Special Forces leaders' stories. The narratives contributed to increased motivation, deeper understanding of the Special Forces mission, and specific strategies for improving CQ, providing valuable insights for military education and training programs.

DEDICATION

My family and friends were incredibly supportive during this journey. A special debt of gratitude to my brother, who is my role model, and my sister-in-law. They have given me the best reasons to further my education – my niece and nephews. I hope to serve as an example as they pursue their education in the years to come.

Lastly, I dedicate this dissertation to my late mother. Although she did not have a formal education, she understood its value and demanded we do well in our educational endeavors. As an immigrant from Afghanistan, I am the first woman in my family to go to college and the first to complete a Master's. Any success I enjoy in this life is directly because of my mother's love, sacrifices, and prayers. I hope I make her proud.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Cultural intelligence or CQ is the "...capability to function effectively in a variety of cultural contexts – including national, ethnic, organizational, and generational" (Livermore, 2011, p. xiii). Many individuals have heard of IQ (a measure of general intelligence) and EQ (a measure of emotional intelligence). CQ is a lesser-known form of intelligence even though researchers began studying CQ as a way to address cross-cultural challenges almost 20 years ago. While anyone can benefit from improving their CQ, U.S. Army Special Forces (commonly referred to as Green Berets) are called upon by the U.S. government to deploy across the globe, work in austere environments, and train our partner nations' military forces to fight and win against our common enemies. Perhaps more than any other type of military service member, Special Forces are expected to be the cross-cultural experts able to excel in the unpredictable nature of global conflict. However, aspiring Special Forces officers do not complete any assessments of their CQ capability during their training nor is there a formalized process for senior Special Forces leaders to share their CQ experiences and lessons learned from decades of overseas deployments. Understanding their CQ capabilities and learning from seasoned leaders could improve the mission outcomes of U.S. Special Forces as they deploy in current and future conflicts.

**Larger Context**

Looking to the past for context, a team of U.S. Army Special Forces were accused of shooting and murdering two pregnant Afghan women in Afghanistan's Paktia province in 2010. This was in the ninth year of the Global War on Terror that began after the 9/11

attacks on the U.S in 2001. U.S. Army Special Forces had been deployed in Afghanistan for the entirety of those nine years. It should have been common knowledge amongst the Special Forces community that Afghanistan is a gender-segregated society that is also governed through various codes of honor. However, one universal cultural concept amongst Afghans is the need to exact revenge for the killing of one's family members.

The tragic incident received international attention. At the time, the commander of the U.S. and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces was U.S. Army General Stanley McChrystal. He instructed one of his subordinate commanders, U.S. Navy Admiral William McRaven, to travel to Paktia and meet with the father who lost his family members in the shooting. Admiral McRaven knew that according to the tribal code of Pashtunwali, anyone can ask for forgiveness for a wrongdoing or offense, even one as heinous as death, by offering the sacrifice of two sheep. Admiral McRaven traveled to the village, met face-to-face with the grieving father, offered the two sheep, explained that the U.S. Special Forces who killed the Afghan women were under his command, and asked for forgiveness and mercy.

Admiral McRaven's cultural intelligence helped to diffuse a potentially horrific series of events since "presenting sheep is such a powerful form of requesting forgiveness that the father is now obligated not to take revenge, even though he has told reporters he wanted to become a suicide bomber" (Shifrin & Agha, 2010).

While this serves as powerful example of how cross-cultural understanding can positively impact mission success for U.S. military personnel, there are numerous examples of how a lack of cross-cultural understanding can negatively impact mission success. It is beyond the scope of this proposal to detail all those examples, but a study

conducted by psychologist Dr. Jeffrey Bordin at the request of the U.S. Army uncovered numerous instances in which cultural grievances resulted in Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) killing U.S. service members as revenge (Bordin, 2011). After ten years in Afghanistan, U.S. service members were still plagued with a lack of cultural understanding that meant life or death for themselves and their teammates.

Today, there are zero U.S. government or military personnel in Afghanistan and the war has concluded. The White House, which publishes the National Security Strategy (NSS) that outlines U.S. national interests, released an interim NSS in 2021 to "…reaffirm, invest in, and modernize the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and our alliances with Australia, Japan, and the Republic of Korea – which, along with our other global alliances and partnerships, are America's greatest strategic asset" (Biden, 2021, p. 10). The document explained that the U.S. would no longer wage forever wars as it had in Afghanistan, focusing instead on strategic competition against the U.S.'s peer and near-peer adversaries such as Russia and the People's Republic of China (PRC), and that "…when force is required, we will employ it alongside international and local partners wherever possible to bolster effectiveness and legitimacy, share burdens, and invest others in success" (Biden, 2021, p.14). For U.S. military personnel, the NSS's focus on NATO and other allies to counter Russian and Chinese aggression means deployments to more parts of the world working across multiple cultures, differences, languages, and more.

Since 2015, the Cultural Intelligence Center (CQC) has supported the Department of Defense (DoD) in developing a long-term strategy to ensure cultural readiness across the Armed Forces. While anyone can benefit from improving their cultural intelligence

(CQ), the predictive nature of the CQ assessment is critical for the U.S. military so it can assign the right people to the right mission. Additionally, CQ is an important skill for military leaders as they command and manage an increasingly diverse workforce in the U.S. and work with our partners abroad. Due to the unpredictability of conflict across the globe, military personnel must be prepared to work in any culture. A servicemember may be deployed in Latin America one year and on the African continent a year later. Therefore, the DoD sought a reliable measure to assess a service member's ability to relate and work effectively across various cultures and to measure the effectiveness of language and culture training programs.

In response to the increasing possibility of these cross-cultural misunderstandings due to globalization, Earley and Ang (2003) originally conceptualized CQ as a three-factor model: motivation, cognition, and behavior. Ang and Van Dyne (2008) developed and validated the Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS) after separating metacognition and cognition as two distinct factors. The research question that drove the development of the scale was "why do some but not other individuals easily and effectively adapt their views and behaviors cross-culturally? (Ang et al., 2011, p. 582). Van Dyne, et. al. (2012) added subdimensions to each of the four CQ capabilities to further refine the measurement. Currently, the CQS measures a total of four factors and thirteen subdimensions. CQ motivation measures intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and self-efficacy. CQ cognition measures understanding of business/cultural systems, cultural values, sociolinguistics, and leadership. CQ metacognition measures an individual's level of planning, awareness, and checking. Finally, CQ behavior measures adaptability in verbal behavior, nonverbal behavior, and speech acts.

In 2015, the Cultural Intelligence Center (CQC) partnered with the Defense Language and National Security Education Office (DLNSEO) to develop a CQ assessment specifically designed for the U.S. military based on the CQ assessment that had already been validated through the peer-review process. DNLSEO had previously worked with psychologist Dr. Louise Rasmussen to develop the Adaptive Readiness for Culture (ARC) model. The model includes twelve competencies consistently found among DoD personnel who have successfully engaged cross-culturally (Rasmussen & Sieck, 2015). The four overall CQ capabilities (factors) measured in the CQS also measure the twelve competencies highlighted in the ARC model. See Figure 1 below.

**Figure 1**

*Cultural Intelligence Capabilities and Adaptive Readiness for Culture Model*



CQ Motivation – ARC Model's "Diplomatic Mindset"
- Maintains mission orientation
- Understands self in cultural context
- Manages attitude towards culture
- Copes with cultural surprises

CQ Cognition – ARC Model's "Cultural Learning"
- Develops realizable information sources
- Develops cultural explanation of behaviors

CQ Metacognition – ARC Model's "Cultural Reasoning"
- Reflects and seeks feedback on cultural encounters
- Takes perspective of others
- Plans intercultural communication

CQ Behavior – ARC Model's "Intercultural Interactions"
- Acts under cultural uncertainty
- Engages in disciplined self-presentation

The CQC worked with DLNSEO to develop a military-specific CQ assessment based on the originally-validated CQ assessment. The main difference between the original assessment and the military-specific assessment was lexicon. For example, while the original assessment referenced global or international travel, the military-specific version referenced overseas deployments. The jointly developed CQ military assessment that measures the competencies highlighted in the DoD's preferred ARC model is the only empirically rigorous tool designed specifically to evaluate CQ for military personnel. Since 2015, the CQC has administered 2,500 pre-tests (T1) and 2,500 post-tests (T2) each year to numerous military populations across the DoD. The purpose of the tests is two-fold: to ascertain an individual servicemember's CQ scores at T1 (as compared to the worldwide norm) and to assess if there was a correlation between the training program (intervention) and a service member's CQ scores at T2.

However, military units are often unwilling to invest the money and time necessary to improve servicemembers' capability to work and relate effectively across numerous and varying cultures. According to Mackenzie and Miller,

> Military communities often refer to training as preparation for the known and education as preparation for the unknown. Accordingly, training is often intended for short-term, immediate goals that typically strive for knowledge as an end state. This outcome does not always align with intercultural education programs which often seek behavioral and affective change as a learning goal. (MacKenzie & Miller, 2017, p. 4)

**Situated Context**

At a global level, numerous organizations and individuals have worked with the Cultural Intelligence Center (CQC) over the last decade to measure the CQ capability of their people and to measure the impact of cross-cultural training to improve cross-cultural effectiveness using the Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS). Today, the nature of global conflict remains unpredictable, and service members will travel broadly but not deeply, being stationed and deployed in numerous countries throughout their career. It is not possible to spend months preparing for each assignment or overseas deployment by studying the culture-specific information or language for each cultural group a service member may encounter. Therefore, the culture-general capability to work and relate effectively across multiple cultures, both domestically and overseas, is critical for those supporting the DoD.

However, since I have experience teaching and deploying alongside U.S. Army Special Forces, the focus of my action research is the impact that senior leader interaction has on the CQ scores of aspiring Special Forces officers. In those previous teaching experiences, I have often been asked by military leaders to shorten my cultural intelligence workshops and education programs to either a half-day or one-day session due to servicemember's ever-changing schedules and time constraints. While time is always a concern when designing and delivering quality instructional programs, it is unrealistic to expect a one-off workshop or educational program that lasts at most a few days to provide a service member the skills and knowledge they need to work alongside numerous countries' military forces. In my experience, these programs often focus on "check the box" knowledge transfer from an instructor to the participants rather than

providing opportunities for the participants to learn from lived experiences and to apply what they have learned to real-world scenarios. Instead, the military should emphasize the importance of CQ through early and often educational opportunities to improve problem-solving, critical thinking, and effectiveness in culturally diverse situations.

Army Special Forces candidates who are undergoing training to become "Green Berets" at the U.S. Army Special Warfare Center and School (SWCS) located at Fort Liberty, North Carolina. According to the 2022 Factbook from U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC), the three-star Army headquarters which overseas SWCS and is also located at Fort Liberty:

> SWCS builds the only force specifically trained and educated to shape foreign political and military environments in order to prevent war. Special Operations Soldiers do this by working with host nations, regional partners and indigenous populations in a culturally attuned manner that allows them to bridge language barriers, open lines of communication and connect with key political and military leaders in a way that is both immediate and enduring (p.11)

Specific to the varying types of military personnel who are assessed, selected, and educated at SWCS to conduct the aforementioned missions that require CQ, USASOC's latest Factbook confirms that "Special Forces (Green Berets) units perform unconventional warfare, foreign internal defense, special reconnaissance, direct action, combating terrorism, and counter-proliferation. These missions make Special Forces unique because they are employed in peacetime, conflict and war" (U.S. Special Operations Command, 2022, p. 22). According to USASOC, the foundation of these units is the "…Operational Detachment-Alpha [ODA], a highly trained team of 12

Special Forces Soldiers. Cross-trained in weapons, communications, intelligence, medicine, and engineering, the ODA member also posses [sic] specialized language and cultural training…" so they can conduct various missions to support U.S. national interests (U.S. Special Operations Command, 2022, p.7).

To command an ODA, a junior Army officer must complete an initial 21-day assessment and selection process. The next step is to attend the U.S. Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) Captains Career Course (CCC). SWCS conducts this 20-week course four times per year so there is an overlap between courses. Each class has six instructors, a mix of active duty and civilian personnel. Each class accepts approximately 100 officers, with approximately 40% of the class being SF candidates who aspire to become a Green Beret. The remaining percentages are approximately 30% aspiring Civil Affairs officers who focus on building relationships with civil society and civil authorities and approximately 20% aspiring Psychological Operations officers who focus on influencing the population in a deployed environment. The purpose of the course is to produce critical thinkers and planners that can solve complex problems. These Captains are "…tactically and doctrinally sound, self-aware, and ethical company grade officers, who are prepared to lead in combat or serve on a Battalion/Brigade staff…" (ARSOF CCC Executive Summary, 2022, p. 1). The 20-week course begins with four weeks of leadership development, followed by six weeks of operational planning and analysis, four weeks of tactical planning and analysis, and finally six weeks of ODA training management (how to plan training for their ODA). Holistic human performance training is interwoven throughout the 20-week course, with three hours each week dedicated to cognitive, physical, and interpersonal training activities.

In the initial four-week leadership development phase, there is a "Culture Brief" component where the active-duty Captain who is the class leader/instructor provides the students a written memo that directs students to work in small teams and conduct a culture assessment analysis on an overseas area. The students then present their analysis to the instructor and the rest of the class, with the instructor using a rubric to determine if they met all the requirements for the activity. However, the instructors do not teach any cross-cultural competency curriculum. Instructors and outside guest speakers discuss cross-cultural competency at various times throughout the course, but they are ad hoc and not structured. Therefore, there is no formal instruction on a topic that is critical for these aspiring SF Captains as they undergo and complete their foundational leadership course in order to "…plan, train, and fight ARSOF detachments and indigenous forces…" in a deployed environment (ARSOF CCC Executive Summary, 2022, p. 1).

At the level specific for this action research study, the CQC has previously used the CQ military assessment to measure changes in CQ scores for U.S. Army Special Forces students at SWCS before and after language training. However, the CQ military assessment that was jointly developed between the CQC and the DoD has not been used in conjunction with leadership training at SWCS's ARSOF CCC, nor has the CQ model been taught to Special Forces candidates. It is this gap in research and literature that my study seeks to explore.

**Researcher Positionality**

As a girl who sought refuge in the U.S. after fleeing the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1982 and as a woman who served in the U.S. military from 2001 to 2007, cultural intelligence is a field of study that I am both personally and professionally

motivated to research so I can improve the capability of citizens across the world to work and relate effectively across cultures. During my active-duty service, I deployed to Afghanistan in support of special operations as an intelligence analyst and was subjected to cultural training that consisted of little more than a list of "do" and "don't" actions that furthered the stereotypes I already had about a specific culture.

Since 2008, I have served as a cultural advisor for the U.S. DoD as a contractor. Over the last two decades preparing U.S. government personnel (active duty, national guard, reservists, government civilians, and contractors across all branches of military service and across numerous government agencies) for their deployments to South and Central Asia, I have educated Americans on the importance of working across cultural differences, from countering an insurgency to defeating terrorists to training a foreign military to conducting peace-keeping operations alongside our allies. A service member's capability to effectively read and adapt to various and varied cultural situations has an impact on their operational effectiveness working with partner forces to accomplish their mission.

I deployed twice more to Afghanistan as a Cultural Advisor. In 2011, I served as a Cultural Advisor at the Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command in Kabul and for a full year from the summer of 2013 to the summer of 2014, I served as the Cultural Advisor at the Special Operations Joint Task Force in Kabul. In these roles, I routinely educated and interacted with the U.S. Army Special Forces at the village level across Afghanistan. Since returning from that deployment, I have and continue to serve as a senior Cultural Advisor for U.S. Special Operations Command.

Additionally, I served as the Cultural Intelligence Center's Director of

Government Programs and Master Facilitator from 2017 to 2022. In my Master Facilitator role, I oversaw the training and development of approximately 1,800 global facilitators as they provided corporate, academic, government/military, and non-profit organizations the CQ assessments and education programs they needed to improve their CQ capabilities. As the Director of Government Programs, I oversaw our work with numerous military units in the U.S and abroad by conducting a qualitative needs assessment (interview) with senior leaders to better understand the types of training they have conducted in the past, what their interest is in CQ training, and what their goals are for their service members in terms of behavior change. Subsequently, I design and deliver customized training to meet their goals. My military intelligence background coupled with 15 years of experience as a cultural advisor to units deployed in combat zones across the world helps prove that the military needs CQ for effective relationships across differences.

According to Sapsford (2007) "where research is commissioned and applied, the 'customer' will have preconceived notions of what the question ought to be and what kind of answers may be needed, but these are not necessarily the most fruitful way of considering the problem" (p. 17). The customer is the involved party, the one who is most actively impacted by a situation and can provide detail/nuance. By contrast, the researcher can be the detached party, the one who can conduct root cause analysis to determine the actual question that needs to be answered.

However, since I am a veteran, service members have expressed that I am able to "understand" them and their culture because I used to be an "insider" of the system. Yet I am now an "outsider" since I am no longer in uniform. Therefore, service members now

view me as a more objective third party. I see myself as the paradox of involvement and detachment that Sapsford mentions because I am an insider outsider. The challenge for me as I conduct my action research is to acknowledge the impact my experiences as both a former service member who received subpar cross-cultural training as well as my participation in designing and delivering cross-cultural training for the Special Forces community might have on my evaluation of data during this study. The value that I bring to the research is that I understand military culture, structure, acronyms, jargon, etc. which allows me to understand the study participants' responses and experiences more effectively.

**Problem of Practice and Previous Cycles of Action Research**

My problem of practice is how to improve the Cultural Intelligence (CQ) of U.S. Army Special Forces (SF) attending the U.S. John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (SWCS) ARSOF CCC. As a practitioner, I chose to conduct action research because I have a vested interest in systematically inquiring how I can improve a teaching and learning environment to improve student outcomes (Mertler, 2020, p. 5). Furthermore, action research can "…bring about results that are more informative and have immediate and direct application" than traditional research (Mertler, 2020, p. 5). Rather than traditional research, which is focused on a contribution to the body of knowledge about a particular topic or field of study through generalizable information, action research is focused on solving a particular problem in a situated context. The iterative and cyclical nature of action research lends itself to continuous inquiry and improvement so that instructors and educators can use the results of each cycle of research to improve the next iteration of the ARSOF CCC (Mertler, 2020, p. 36).

To better understand the types of training that military service members receive during their careers, I conducted two previous cycles of research as part of the action research process. First, I conducted interviews with two active-duty military colleagues in Spring 2021 to discuss their lessons learned from teaching CQ concepts in their respective training environments (Appendix A). The purpose of the interviews was to examine the experiences of military educators who have incorporated CQ into their curriculum. Specifically, I sought to understand their methods of delivery for CQ curricula and ways to improve CQ scores. One colleague is an Army Captain (mid-career officer) who oversaw a language and culture training program for military linguists and the other is a Navy Lieutenant (also mid-career officer) who serves in a diversity and inclusion role at the U.S. Naval Academy. I used a seven-item, open-ended question instrument for the interviews. Two themes emerged from these interviews: (1) a course on CQ should be embedded into already existing curricula because military students are unlikely to take a cross-cultural course as an elective; and (2) real-world application of CQ concepts enhanced student learning outcomes.

The second cycle of research in Fall 2021 focused on developing a quantitative instrument to measure participants' understanding of CQ concepts taught during the CQ certification course because to date, the CQC had not yet developed an assessment of student learning to measure if the students who attend our training programs are able to apply what they have learned to real-world situations.

Quantitatively, I collected data using a fifteen-question multiple-choice student learning assessment to measure the participants' ability to comprehend the CQ concepts I taught during the certification program (Appendix B). I administered the assessment via a

Survey Monkey link through email at the end of the course. Respondents had one week to complete the assessment. Following completion of the quantitative assessment, I downloaded respondents' answers to the quantitative assessment from Survey Monkey and was able to determine each respondent's scores. The following day, I conducted a brief discussion with three of the respondents to determine the questionnaires' clarity, comprehensiveness, and acceptability (Rea & Parker, 2014, p. 38).

The respondents who completed the quantitative survey were participants of our public open enrollment CQ certification course. I facilitated the CQ certification course on October 12-13, 2021, via Zoom. Due to the open enrollment nature of public certification programs, I was unable to actively recruit participants. There was a total of 23 participants and 16 of them completed the assessment. Many participants were mid-career professionals focused on diversity and inclusion, equity, cross-cultural effectiveness, and innovation.

The key findings from the assessment measuring participants' ability to comprehend and apply the CQ concepts I taught during the certification program are as follows: (1) participants scored lowest on questions that did not involve personal reflection or perspective; and (2) participants scored highest on questions that involved an activity or longer discussion during the certification program. For example, the three lowest scored questions were (1) "Suspending judgment is more difficult for a person who has low scores in which of the four CQ capabilities" with a score of 33%; (2) "All the following are benefits of CQ Cognition EXCEPT" with a score of 50%; and (3) "Which of the following BEST describes people with high CQ behavior?" with a score of 63%.

By contrast, the three highest scoring questions with 100% were as follows: (1) "You are discussing a feedback report with one of your participants. They ask you how to determine the worldwide norm. The correct response is:"; (2) "A family member asks you to explain the components of CQ. Which of the following would you share with them?"; and (3) "As you prepare for a one-on-one personal feedback session, you review the participant's cultural value profile. You learn that this individual prefers high power distance and high uncertainty avoidance. Therefore, you plan to:" Each of the above questions required the respondent to consider a situation in which they were interacting with another person during a real-world scenario. Furthermore, I conducted an activity around worldwide norms (distribution of scores for all the individuals across the world who have completed any version of the CQ assessment) during the large group session and the participants were broken down into small group breakout rooms to complete a 25-minute cultural values activity.

Through these two cycles of research, I discovered the common theme that real-world application of cross-cultural training is more likely to result in positive student outcomes. The corroboration of this theme from two different cycles of research from two distinct groups of individuals (the first cycle being military educators and the second cycle being a mix of participants from across the globe) encouraged me to explore the relationship between the types of training programs that involved real-world application and a U.S. servicemember's CQ capability.

**Purpose of Study and Research Questions**

An educational issue that I am most interested in researching is how to improve the CQ of U.S. Army Special Forces leaders. While there have been numerous studies on

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cross-cultural awareness and competence in the U.S. military, there have been no research studies using the academically reliable CQS to determine how the method of delivery (face-to-face versus digital) impacts an individual's CQ capability. This gap in research and literature is what my study seeks to explore. This is intended to help U.S. Army Special Forces determine a baseline cross-cultural training program that is cost-effective and scalable so the SWCS can improve the CQ capability of future Special Forces officers and commanders. By providing participants with the military-specific version of the CQ assessment as a pre-test before the cross-cultural intervention and a post-test after the intervention, the Special Forces branch can effectively measure the impact of its Captains to more effectively work across cultures around the world. I thus conducted this study to answer the following research questions (RQs):

RQ1: How does learning about cultural intelligence from experienced officers and non-commissioned officer leaders (either face-to-face or through a podcast) impact a student's cultural intelligence capability as measured through the CQ military assessment?

RQ2: How does learning about cultural intelligence from SF leaders (either face-to-face or through a podcast) influence SWCS students' motivation to work in a deployed environment across cultures?

RQ3: How does learning about cultural intelligence from SF leaders (either face-to-face or through a podcast) influence SWCS students' intent to improve their cultural intelligence in ways that are different from instructor-led interaction?

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND GUIDING RESEARCH

This chapter will detail the evolution of cross-cultural competency programs and the need

for CQ, both as a model and as an academically-validated assessment for measuring the

CQ of individuals as well as the impact of cross-cultural competency programs. My

action research evaluated the impact of Special Forces leader-led cultural intelligence

education to improve the CQ capabilities of Special Forces officers using the only

instrument (CQ military assessment that was jointly developed between the CQC and the

DoD) designed specifically for a military context. Additionally, the study explored the

impact that learning about cultural intelligence directly from Special Forces leaders, both

officers and enlisted, has on an aspiring Special Forces officer's CQ scores while they are

at the ARSOF CCC at SWCS. My study is informed by two theoretical perspectives.

After presenting the history of cross-cultural competency programs with the DoD, I will

detail the theory of multiple loci of intelligence which provides the foundation for the CQ

model and the Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS) used in this study to measure a service

member's CQ capability. I will then detail the theoretical perspective of multimodality

which provides the foundation for delivering the leader-led CQ program via different

modes.

**DoD Cross-Cultural Competency Programs**

At a global level, numerous organizations and individuals have worked with the

Cultural Intelligence Center (CQC) over the last decade to improve cross-cultural

effectiveness using the Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS). At the level specific for this

action research study, the CQC has worked closely with the DOD's previously mentioned

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DLNSEO since 2015 to measure the military's cultural intelligence. DLNSEO

"...develops, recommends, and monitors policies for language, regional, and culture

capabilities related to the accession, management, and utilization of members of the

Armed Forces..." (Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Estimates, February 2020, p. 12). As the lead

DoD organization for culture capabilities, DLNSEO defines cross-cultural competence

(3C) as a "a competency based on a set of knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes

(KSAAs) developed through education, training, and experience that provide the ability

to operate effectively in culturally complex environments. An individual's 3C can be

further developed and augmented by the acquisition of cultural, linguistic, and regional

proficiency, and by their application in cross-cultural environments" (Department of

Defense, 2014, p. 14).

DoD cross-cultural competency needs have their roots in World War II. Soldiers

learned the importance of learning language skills and cultural effectiveness as they

found themselves in multiple areas of North Africa and Europe fighting against Nazi

Germany as well as in Asia fighting against Imperial Japan (U.S. House of

Representatives, 2008, p. 5). The Global War on Terror that began after the attacks on

9/11 in 2001 led to numerous and varying cross-cultural competency programs focused

on preparing U.S. military service members for their deployments to Iraq and

Afghanistan. Each of the service branches (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps)

"…adopted strategic plans for developing and managing language, regional expertise,

and culture (LREC) capabilities. Each of those plans included both a culture- or country-

specific component and a culture general component" (Abbe, 2021, p. 5-6). While

culture-specific training focused on a specific country or military operation, "…a culture-

general component addressed knowledge, skills, and capabilities that spanned different countries and regions, improving the ability of servicemembers to operate effectively in any intercultural setting" (Abbe, 2021, p. 6). The U.S. Army created the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Culture Center in 2004 and two years later, the U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Navy, and U.S. Air Force established their respective culture centers (Abbe, 2021, p. 7). Due to each service branch's differences in budgets, organization culture, and authorities, they "…adopted different methods to develop culture-general capabilities in their personnel, using a combination of training and education" (Abbe, 2021, p. 9). For example, the U.S. Marine Corps created its own operational culture model specifically for Marines in a deployed environment (Salmoni & Holmes-Eber, 2008).

These variations in cross-cultural competency programs resulted in a lack of a DoD-wide standardized system for cross-cultural training and education. In 2011, the U.S. Government Accountability Office found that the Army lacked a consistent method to track their soldier's completion of cultural training, the Marine Corps had no method to track completion, and that the "DOD has not yet established a way to test or otherwise evaluate the culture knowledge and skills of service members" (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2011, p. 10). For example, the U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences used validated assessments such as the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire, and the CQS to measure the current cross-cultural competency of 169 active-duty soldiers assigned to various bases and representing a variety of different functional areas, even though these soldiers were not actively in a cross-cultural program (Abbe et. al., 2010, p. 7). By

contrast, the Air Force Culture and Language Center used internally-developed situational judgment tests to determine the effectiveness of their online cross-cultural competency programs (Mackenzie et. al, 2013, Tucker & Miller, 2015).

This standardized assessment gap as well as inconsistency in the services using assessments to determine the effectiveness of DoD-wide cross-cultural competency programs led DLNSEO to begin using the CQ military assessment in 2015 as the DoD-approved instrument for collecting empirical research on cross-cultural programs across the service branches. Specifically, SWCS has used the CQ military assessment to assess U.S. Army's Special Operations Forces (Special Forces, Psychological Operations, and Civil Affairs) before and after they have completed a five-month long language program. However, those findings are not published in any peer-reviewed academic articles and instead were provided to DLNSEO as part of contract-mandated reporting. Furthermore, the DoD decided to cancel the CQ military assessment contract with DLNSEO in December 2020 due to budgetary constraints.

Yet in 2022, the nature of global conflict remains unpredictable. As detailed in the previous chapter, U.S. Army Special Forces are required to deploy across numerous continents to perform a variety of missions. They are unable to spend months preparing for each assignment or overseas deployment by studying the culture-specific information for each cultural group they may encounter. Additionally, there is often a gap between the information taught at the Special Warfare Center and School and what Special Forces experience in a deployed environment because commanders and leaders are doing what they are tasked to do – deploy overseas. However, it is possible that leaders experiencing using cultural intelligence can potentially close this gap by sharing their lived experiences

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to develop more motivated, knowledgeable, strategic, and adaptable Special Forces officers.

**Theoretical Perspective: Cultural Intelligence**

As previously defined, CQ is the capability to work and relate effectively across cultural differences and has been researched for over 20 years. As an intelligence capability that is rooted in theory and can be measured, SWCS could use the assessment to provide developmental feedback to aspiring Special Forces Captains in preparation for their overseas deployments.

During their 1986 study, psychologists Robert J. Sternberg and Douglas K. Detterman asked 24 cognitive psychologists to define "intelligence." The study revealed consensus on two aspects of the definition: intelligence required learning from experience and adapting to one's environment (Sternberg & Detterman, 1986). Furthermore, the authors noted that intelligence is multifaceted and goes beyond mental capabilities. While motivation, cognition, and meta-cognition occur in the brain, behavioral intelligence is displayed through action.

The first publication of CQ was in 2003 by industrial/organizational psychologist P. Earley and management expert Soon Ang. In response to the increasing possibility of these cross-cultural misunderstandings due to globalization, Earley and Ang (2003) originally conceptualized CQ as a model of intelligence comprised of motivation, cognition, meta-cognition, and behavior based on Sternberg and Detterman's (1986) theory of multiple loci of intelligence. Earley and Ang's rooting of CQ in the multiple loci of intelligence theory resulted in the initial creation of a four-factor model that mapped directly to Sternberg and Detterman's theory: (1) motivational CQ, the capability

to direct and sustain energy towards multicultural effectiveness; (2) cognitive CQ, the capability to learn and understand knowledge of cultural similarities and differences; (3) metacognitive CQ, the capability to use cultural knowledge in perspective-taking and strategizing; and (4) behavioral CQ, the capability for behavioral flexibility in cross-cultural interactions (Ang et al., 2011, p. 584).

Using Earley and Ang's conceptualization, Ang and Van Dyne developed and validated the 20-item CQS (Ang and Van Dyne, 2008). To further refine the scale, Van Dyne, et. al. (2012) added subdimensions to each of the four CQ factors and developed the expanded 39-item scale to provide nuanced feedback. Ang and Van Dyne (2008) developed and validated the Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS) after separating cognition and metacognition, each with incremental validity. The research question that drove the development of the scale was "why do some but not other individuals easily and effectively adapt their views and behaviors cross-culturally? (Ang et al., 2011, p. 582). Van Dyne, et. al. (2012) added subdimensions to each of the four CQ capabilities to further refine the measurement. Currently, the CQS measures a total of four factors and 13 subdimensions. Motivational CQ measures intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and self-efficacy. Cognitive CQ measures understanding of business/cultural systems, cultural values, sociolinguistics, and leadership. Metacognitive CQ measures an individual's level of planning, awareness, and checking. Finally, Behavioral CQ measures adaptability in verbal behavior, nonverbal behavior, and speech acts.

The CQS has been used by researchers around the world and the results have been published in numerous peer-reviewed papers across myriad disciplines. Rocksuhl and Van Dyne (2018) conducted a meta-analysis of all the research (44,155 participants from

199 samples) that used the CQS and their results replicated the basic findings from the initial construct validity study (Ang et al., 2007). Most important for service members is that numerous studies prove CQ as a predictor of intercultural effectiveness in leadership and management contexts. A study on 126 Swiss military officers showed that while general intelligence (IQ) predicts both domestic and cross-border leadership effectiveness, emotional intelligence (EQ) is a stronger predictor of domestic leadership effectiveness, but CQ is a stronger predictor of cross-border leadership effectiveness (Rockstuhl et al., 2011). Additionally, a study of 99 culturally diverse leaders and 321 followers showed that a leader's CQ predicts multicultural team performance in ethnically and nationally diverse contexts, controlling for leader emotional intelligence and other leadership competencies (Groves & Feyerherm, 2011). Furthermore, CQ predicts the degree to which an individual effectively negotiates with someone from a different culture. A study of 124 East Asian and American negotiators found that cross-cultural groups where both parties have high CQ motivation were more effective in negotiating (Imai & Gelfand, 2010). Lastly, studies have shown a positive relationship between high CQ and idea sharing/collaboration (Chua et al., 2012) as well as creativity (Chua et al., 2017).

Leading and managing across cultures, effective negotiations, collaboration, and idea sharing are critical skills for military personnel as they not only work alongside an increasingly diverse domestic workforce but must also navigate numerous cultural differences when stationed overseas or deployed. As Mackenzie and Miller (2017) note:

An understanding of the impact of culture on communication behavior and the ability to communicate across cultural divides persists as a strategic leadership

characteristic critical for mission and career success in the US military. As the

military continues in its attempt to optimize performance through intercultural

training, the main challenges will likely center on assessment and collaboration

(p. 7)

To address the importance of assessments, especially the criticism of the self-

reporting nature of the CQ self-report assessment (Mackenzie & Miller, 2017; Nield,

2019), this study uses a multi-rater version of the CQS. The academically validated

measurement of CQ, theoretically grounded in intelligence scholarship that posits a

positive relationship between learning from experience and improved cultural

intelligence, will allow this study to conduct research from both an individual's

viewpoints as well as observers' viewpoints to explore the extent to which training

improves Special Forces' CQ capability. Specifically, this study will explore the impact

that learning from experienced Special Forces leaders has on the aspiring Special Forces'

candidates CQ.

**Theoretical Perspective: Multimodality**

Technological advances in the last several decades, such as personal computers in

the 1980s and the internet in the 1990s, have expanded access to learning opportunities

for more people across the world. They have also expanded the modes through which

educators are able to engage learners to positively impact student outcomes.

Multimodality is the theory of how varying modes of communication – such as

written, visual, gestural, tactile, audio, and spatial - are increasingly interconnected and

can contribute to meaning-making and understanding (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001).

These modes of communication were initially referred to as literacies by the New London

Group, a group of 10 academics with expertise in literacy, linguistics, education, pedagogy, and social meaning that came together in September 1994 to explore a new pedagogy in an effort to address the changing technological and social environment for educators and students, especially the "…burgeoning variety of text forms associated with information and multimedia technologies" (New London Group, 1996, p. 61).

The New London Group defined traditional literacy pedagogy as centering on language alone. By contrast, multiliteracy pedagogy is one that "…focuses on modes of representation much broader than language alone. These differ according to culture and context, and have specific cognitive, cultural, and social effects" (New London Group, 1996, p. 64). For example, visual representations of communication such as dance or oral representations of communication such as poetry may be more powerful modes than text representation in some cultures, especially amongst societies for whom written text is less accessible or taught in educational settings. The New London Group's acknowledgement of the differences amongst cultures and societies in modes of communication embraces cultural intelligence, noting that "classroom teaching and curriculum have to engage with students' own experiences and discourses, which are increasingly defined by cultural and subcultural diversity and the different language backgrounds and practices that come with this diversity" (New London Group, 1996, p. 88).

Education environments, especially those related to the social sciences, have long been dominated by the verbal mode of representation, both written and spoken. Educators assigned written text and delivered lectures or discussion-based seminars based on those written texts. Multimodality posits that there is no one way to communicate and that multiple modes of representation can be used to express an idea. The proliferation of

technology and the World Wide Web have allowed educators in the 21st century to increasingly add and combine different modes in order to expand learning opportunities for their students (Kress, 2010).

**Related Research and Studies**

Since the latter part of the 1990s, researchers across disciplines have sought to explore if students engaged in learning that includes multimodal teaching outperform students who are engaged in traditional, monomodal learning. As my research will compare student groups that are learning through a multimodal (face-to-face using written, verbal, gestural) as well as monomodal (verbal-only) capacity, several studies that focus on student outcomes are valuable. For example, a 1997 study involving three small face-to-face experiments (n < 35 for all) on first-year trade students in Sydney, Australia found that participants who studied instructional materials that incorporated both audio and visual modes performed better than those participants who studied only visual materials (Tindall-Ford et al, 1997). Specifically, the findings suggest that when students face intellectually difficult materials presented through multiple sources of information, "…mental integration may be easier if written information is transferred into an auditory form" (Tindall-Ford et al, 1997, p. 285). A 2002 study on 75 undergraduate students at Mississippi State University were equally and randomly assigned to three groups to complete an online proportional math problem test: text only, voice only, and voice plus an animated agent that provided instructions using gaze and gesture. The experiment found that students in the voice-plus-agent group outperformed their peers and that students may "…benefit on a variety of cognitive and affective measures by working within a learning environment that contains an animated pedagogical agent—in

particular, an agent capable of delivering instruction aurally and using forms of nonverbal communication to support learning" (Atkinson, 2002, p. 426).

In 2010, researchers conducted an experiment with 60 undergraduate students at the University of South Queensland. The students were equally distributed across six groups and tested on the concepts of Customer Satisfaction and Service Quality. All participants took a pre-test to measure their understanding of these concepts. The learning materials were then presented in six different ways, known as a condition in this study. Each participant was exposed to two different conditions. For example, a student assigned to Group B was exposed to a learning condition that included text, a study guide, and a printed PowerPoint presentation (Condition 2) as well as to a learning condition that included the three previous items, a recorded PowerPoint with audio and an interactive diagram with script and audio (Condition 6). Condition 1 had the least amount of presentation materials and was offered only through text while Condition 6 had the most amount of presentation materials and included text, audio, and interactivity. Participants completed a post-test and a qualitative questionnaire describing their experience. While all student scores improved, the limited size of each group made it difficult to infer if providing multiple representations made an impact on learning performance. However, "…the qualitative data clearly indicates that students perceive learning resources with additional representations of content to assist their comprehension, understanding and retention of content, and to be more interesting and enjoyable to use" (Sankey et al., 2010, p. 861).

Most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic has had significant impacts on educators and students. Students around the world were unable to physically interact with each

other and their educators due to quarantine restrictions. This included students for whom physical interaction was historically considered a requirement for learning. For example, medical students have historically learned about human anatomy by dissecting cadavers but were unable to access cadavers due to restrictions on face-to-face courses. Multimodal e-learning became a necessity. In 2021, researchers conducted a study on 141 undergraduate medical students learning about congenital heart disease (CHD) at a large postsecondary academic institution. Students took pre and post-tests before and after the multimodal e-learning course that included "…videos of 3D printed models…cadaveric specimens…interactive 3D virtual model, animations, and graphics" (Stunden et al., 2021, p. 2). The study concluded that "…the low learning outcomes before the course (pretest scores) followed by the uniformly high learning outcomes after using the e-learning course (posttest scores) suggest that a multimodal approach to addressing different ways of learning was effective in teaching first-year undergraduate students about varying degrees of CHD" (Stunden et al., 2021, p. 11).

These studies found that multimodality supports learning outcomes, especially with cognitively difficult concepts and topics, and enhances student enjoyment during the learning journey. As aspiring Special Forces Captains at SWCS who will be expected to work in austere and varying deployed environments with partnered forces, these studies show potential in incorporating multimodal teaching to educate these Captains about the cognitively difficult concept of cultural intelligence.

**Implications for Problem of Practice**

With the reduced focus on and budget for DoD-wide cross-cultural competency programs, U.S. Army Special Forces will increasingly find themselves as the "cultural

experts" tasked to work with multiple and varying partnered forces across the globe. The CQ model provides the culture-general capability that U.S. Army Special Forces need to effectively relate across cultural differences. The model emphasizes motivation, cognition, metacognition, and behavior as key factors in cross-cultural efficacy. U.S. Army Special Forces can apply this model to any situation to explore their motivation as well as the motivation of others, to reflect on information about their own culture as well as cultural information they must learn about their partnered force, to develop metacognitive mental maps that will guide them as they interact across cultures, and to adapt as well as to interpret the actions and adaptations of others. Additionally, the CQ military assessment provides an academically rigorous instrument to measure the impact of the leader-led CQ sessions. However, the reduced budget and focus on cross-cultural competency programs requires an educational approach to cultural intelligence that has a measurable positive impact on student outcomes and that can be achieved with limited outside resources.

The theory of multimodality and the related studies detailed in the previous section focused on multimodal learning suggest approaches to cultural intelligence and teaching intercultural competence in a Special Forces context. Multimodality as a broader concept provides added value to this training need in two ways. First, it embraces CQ's core principles of multiculturalism. This pertains to not only how students learn information about CQ but also how cultures vary in the modes of representation and communication. Since CQ requires both high levels of cognition and metacognition, using a multimodal learning design to convey the complexity of CQ in deployed environments may help improve student learning at SWCS. This aligns with the CQ

model because CQ cannot be taught or learned through one mode alone. CQ requires an ability to engage in perspective-taking and interpretation. For example, the CQ cognition construct encompasses the ability to view an artifact or image and understand the meaning that a culture group ascribes to it. CQ behavior requires an understanding of verbal and nonverbal behaviors, from rate of speech to tone to facial expressions. CQ, as a capability, requires an individual to engage multiple modes in order to develop their skill and work effectively with individuals and groups in culturally diverse situations.

Second, the concept of multimodality offers a lens through which to test the effectiveness of cross-cultural programs to determine if modality impacts on student outcomes. As described in the research questions, this research study seeks to explore both *if* and *how* learning from senior Special Forces leaders impacts a student's cultural intelligence capability. Therefore, while the innovation described in Chapter 3 is not multimodal in itself, the study will seek to explore the impact of multimodal (dynamic and face-to-face) teaching as compared to monomodal (verbal-only) teaching. For example, during the face-to-face sessions, senior Special Forces leaders were encouraged to share their knowledge, experiences, and recommendations for working effectively with a partner force overseas by incorporating a variety of communication modes. Rather than simply writing a memo or paper about their experiences, they may have improved Special Forces candidates' meaning-making capability by sharing their stories face-to-face. By contrast, the podcast version of the leader-led CQ sessions used only the verbal mode to teach CQ to the aspiring Special Forces Captains.

In conclusion, this study seeks to provide learning opportunities for the aspiring Special Forces Captains at SWCS on the theoretically-grounded model of cultural

intelligence in an effort to improve their cultural intelligence capability. Additionally, by using the academically-validated CQ assessment, this study seeks to measure the impact of the educational innovation - senior Special Forces leaders teaching cultural intelligence concepts through their lived experiences – on the CQ scores of the Special Forces Captains. Furthermore, the theory of multimodality and the research studies on the impact of multimodal versus monomodal teaching influence the design of the innovation by encouraging these senior Special Forces leaders to use a multimodal approach to teaching during face-to-face interaction.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

This chapter will review the purpose of this study and research questions, provide information on the setting and participants, detail the intervention, identify the quantitative and qualitative data sources, describe the data analysis methods, and outline the timeline and additional considerations.

**Review of the Purpose of this Study and Research Questions**

This pilot program used a control-treatment design and incorporated both self and observer assessments to explore how learning from senior Special Forces leaders (intervention) impacts the CQ of Captains at the ARSOF CCC. I adopted a utilization-focused design that emphasizes the utility of the study findings for the end users (the CCC instructors and students) because in the context of this study, the central objective was to investigate the impact of senior leader interactions on the development of aspiring Special Forces candidates (Donaldson et al., 2010). The inclusion of a control group and two experiment groups is deliberate because it allows for comparative analysis, enabling the assessment of the effectiveness of different interventions in enhancing CQ as compared to the control group. This decision was made in collaboration with various stakeholders, to include CCC instructors and senior leaders, who requested that a control group serve as a benchmark against which the effectiveness of the interventions can be validated. A major contributor to this design was the limited amount of senior Special Forces leaders' time to travel to CCC so the stakeholders sought to determine if the senior leader engagements were the optimal way to enhance CQ training within the aspiring Special Forces candidates.

The research questions guiding this study are below.

RQ1: How does learning about cultural intelligence from experienced officers and non-commissioned officer leaders (either face-to-face or through a podcast) impact a student's cultural intelligence capability as measured through the CQ military assessment?

RQ2: How does learning about cultural intelligence from SF leaders (either face-to-face or through a podcast) influence SWCS students' motivation to work in a deployed environment across cultures?

RQ3: How does learning about cultural intelligence from SF leaders (either face-to-face or through a podcast) influence SWCS students' intent to improve their cultural intelligence in ways that are different from instructor-led interaction?

**Setting and Participants**

This study took place at the Special Warfare Center and School (SWCS) located at Fort Liberty (formerly named Fort Bragg) in North Carolina. SWCS overseas and delivers training and education for U.S. Army Special Operations Forces consisting of the branches of Special Forces, Civil Affairs, and Psychological Operations. SWCS is a physical, brick and mortar educational institution consisting of several buildings on Fort Liberty. This study took place at Lucius Clay Hall, the main training building associated with ARSOF CCC. The students participated in all aspects of the study within the classrooms of Clay Hall.

This setting was chosen because the study participants are required to attend and complete the ARSOF CCC in order to become Special Forces Green Berets. Upon graduation from this five-month course, the students are then eligible to go through the

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Special Forces Qualification Course (SFQC). During SFQC, often referred to as the Q

Course, aspiring Special Forces learn military occupational specialty (MOS) skills so

they can contribute to the Special Forces team. I chose to deliver this innovation during

ARSOF CCC because it follows the initial entry phase, but it proceeds the Q course.

During the five-month long ARSOF CCC, students are meant to learn about leadership

and interact with leaders from the SOF community as well as leaders from the

interagency and our international partners.

The participants at the ARSOF CCC are all U.S Army personnel who are at the

rank of Captain. These Captains are aspiring to become a U.S. Special Forces ODA

commander, an individual at the rank of Captain who "…has the overall responsibility

for everything that happens or fails to happen for the ODA…[and] often, he is the senior

representative of U.S. interests in an area or region of a foreign country…"

(Headquarters, 2020, p. 3). More than any other member of the SOF community, U.S.

Army Special Forces Captains need CQ to be the effective representative while in a

deployed environment so they can ensure mission success for their ODA team, their

partnered force, and the U.S.

The students have all completed the Special Forces assessment and selection

process, a baseline assessment conducted over 21 days. Therefore, the study participants

have completed their initial entry phase and are now assigned to SWCS to begin their

education and training to become a U.S Army Special Forces Green Beret. Historically,

the Special Forces candidates in the ARSOF CCC have been majority white and male.

The average age is 26 years old, with participants having spent two years at the rank of

Second Lieutenant and two years at the rank of First Lieutenant before being

automatically promoted to the rank of Captain. Additionally, historically the number of Special Forces students has ranged from 20 to 30 in each ARSOF CCC. In 2015, the DoD reversed the combat exclusion ban that prevented women from joining the Special Forces community so it was possible that this would be a mixed-gender group of participants but all the Special Forces candidates in this ARSOF CCC identified as male.

**Innovation/Intervention**

The innovation in this study is leader-led, experience-based learning to bridge the gap between the mandated program of instruction and the rapidly changing global cross-cultural environment as the U.S. engages in both countering terrorism and engaging in strategic deterrence against our peer and near-peer adversaries. Senior Special Forces with deployments in at least two countries shared their experiences using CQ while working with a partnered force to achieve mission objectives. The five face-to-face senior leader interactions, each one with leaders representing the five-active duty Special Forces Groups detailed below, occurred with the aspiring Special Forces candidates assigned to the face-to-face study group and were also shared as an audio-only recording with the students assigned to the podcast group.

**Phase I: Development**

The first step in developing the intervention consisted of interviews with senior Special Forces leaders, both officers and enlisted. There are currently five active-duty special forces groups. Each one of them covers a different geographical region of the world. 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) is headquartered at Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Washington state. It is responsible for providing Special Operations support to the Indian and Pacific region. 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne) is headquartered at

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Ft. Liberty in North Carolina and is responsible for providing Special Operations support

to the African continent. 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) is headquartered at Fort

Campbell in Kentucky and is responsible for providing Special Operations support to the

Middle East and Central Asia. 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) is headquartered at

Eglin Air Force Base in Florida and is responsible for providing Special Operations

support to Latin America. 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) is headquartered at Fort

Carson in Colorado and is responsible for providing Special Operations support to

Europe. Each Special Forces Groups (SFG) is commanded by a U.S. Army Special

Forces Colonel and his senior enlisted leader equivalent, known as the Command

Sergeant Major. For the study, I sought to interview the  current Special Forces

Commander from all five of the active-duty special forces groups detailed above as well

as any of their Command Sergeants Major who were willing to participate. Some of the

current Group Commanders were unavailable due to operational and overseas

requirements. In those instances, I interviewed their predecessors or successors.

In total, I was able to interview five senior Special Forces leaders: four active-

duty Special Forces Commanders and one retired Command Sergeant Major who shared

real-world, cross-cultural scenarios that involved maintaining key relationships with a

partnered force. The first interview was with the incoming Commander of 10th SFG on 9

March 2023 (he took command in July 2023 and previously served as a Battalion

Commander within 10th SFG). The second interview was with the previous Commander

of 3rd SFG on 13 March 2023 (he was in command from June 2020 to June 2022). The

third interview was with the current Commander of 7th SFG on 13 March 2023. The

fourth interview was with the previous Command Sergeant Major of 3rd SFG on 20

March 2023 (he was the CSM from July 2018 to July 2020). The fifth interview was with

the current Commander of 5th SFG on 24 March 2023. I was unable to interview the

current Commander of 1st SFG due to operational requirements and his predecessor

retired from the U.S. Army so 1st SFG was the only SFG that did not have representation

in the development of the intervention.

The interviews explored these senior Special Forces leaders' experiences with

cultural intelligence and were conducted  one-on-one via my ASU student Zoom account.

Each interview was audio-only recorded with the participant's consent. The interviews

lasted  no more than 30 minutes and consisted of questions related to their Special Forces

experiences working across cultures with partner forces, specifically around topics

related to motivation, cognition, metacognition, and behavior (the four main components

of cultural intelligence). I used the same semi-structured and open-ended questions in the

same order for each senior leader interview (Appendix C).

Subsequently, analyzed the recorded transcripts from these one-on-one interviews

to determine themes that would be used to inform the content for the leader-led cultural

intelligence education at ARSOF CCC. I utilized the themes to create an interview

protocol for both the leader-led in person and recorded podcast discussions of those face-

to-face engagements. . I used the same semi-structured and open-ended questions in the

same order for each senior leader interaction (Appendix D). The questions were a mix of

topics related to the Special Forces identity, working with a partner force, and leadership

so the senior leaders could connect these concepts together during their remarks, thereby

emphasizing the importance of cultural intelligence in leading Special Forces teams to

accomplish Special Forces missions with partner forces.

**Phase II: Senior Leader Intervention with Students**

For this iteration of ARSOF CCC, there were four small group instructors. However, since this study involved three comparison groups – control, face-to-face, and podcast - the CCC Director randomly assigned each of the incoming students to one of four small groups so that there would be a relatively equal distribution of aspiring Special Forces candidates for each of the three study comparison groups. The control group, led by one small group instructor who is an active duty Special Forces Captain, had a total of nine Special Forces candidates. The face-to-face group, led by one small group instructor who is currently a contractor after retiring as a Special Forces Lieutenant Colonel, had a total of 10 Special Forces candidates. To ensure even distribution of Special Forces candidates for the podcast group, the Special Forces candidates from the two remaining small groups were assigned to the podcast group. One of the small groups, led by an active duty Civil Affairs Captain, had 5 Special Forces candidates. The other small group, led by an active duty Special Forces Captain, had 5 Special Forces candidates. Therefore, the podcast group had a total of 10 Special Forces candidates.

Since these random small group assignments were made before the course began, there was no information about the students beyond their identity as aspiring Special Forces candidates. Therefore, there was no information that would have allowed for covariate balance, such as the number of years lived abroad, prior military experience working with partner forces, prior training on cross-cultural awareness or CQ, educational background, or podcast listening habits [such as podcast listening frequency, prior podcast participation, preferred podcast length, preferred podcast format, and

preferred podcast listening context (e.g., commuting, working out, being stationary, doing housework, etc.) to understand attention or multitasking behavior] which may have impacted the outcome of the study.

The small groups do not routinely interact with one another during the five-month period, although there are occasions when they may come together to listen to a guest speaker or work on an assignment. Each small group followed the same program of instruction, but each small group instructor was allowed maximum flexibility to bring in guest speakers. Therefore, the course groups were not identical. This variation in course flow contributed to internal validity because there was no expectation from the students that they were all learning the same material at the same time or that they were interacting with the same guest speakers at the same time.

The nine students in the control group experienced the traditional instructor-led training on cross-cultural competency that previous ARSOF CCC students have received described in the Situated Context section of Chapter 1.

The 10 students in the face-to-face group received the leader-led, face-to-face, multimodal cultural intelligence education intervention. The senior leader engagements began in March 2023 and ended in June 2023. The former Commander and CSM of 3rd SFG spoke to the students on 30 March 2023. The incoming Commander and current CSM of 10th SFG spoke to the students on 20 April 2023. The current Commander of 7th SFG spoke to the students on 1 May 2023. The current Commander of 5th SFG spoke to the students on 3 May 2023. Finally, the current Commander of 1st SFG spoke to the students on 8 June 2023. Therefore, senior representatives from each of the five active duty Special Forces Groups participated as speakers.

Of note, while the intent was to spread the speakers out throughout the course of the five months, the compressed timeline of senior leader engagements was driven by operational requirements as well as availability. For example, as previously mentioned, the 1st SFG Commander was unavailable for the Zoom interview due to operational requirements and since he is based in Washington state, I scheduled his face-to-face session when he was due to be in Fort Liberty for other work engagements, thereby saving him time and taxpayer funds. The same applies to the 7th SFG and 5th SFG Commanders, based respectively in Florida and Kentucky. Both Commanders were at Fort Liberty for a Commanders Roundtable the first week of May 2023, so I scheduled their face-to-face sessions during that time.

The podcast group received an audio-only recording of the recorded face-to-face interactions that were recorded using SWCS equipment. Each of the recordings was provided to the 10 students within a few days after the face-to-face interaction because it took time to download the recording and then disseminate it to the students on a compact disc. The students received the recording of the 3rd SFG engagement on 6 April 2023. The students received the recording of the 10th SFG engagement on 28 April 2023. The students received the recording of the 7th SFG engagement on 5 May 2023. The students received the recording of the 5th SFG engagement on 11 May 2023. Finally, the students received the recording of the of 1st SFG engagement on 9 June 2023.

**Data Collection and Analysis**

This section details the research design, quantitative and qualitative data collection, and data analysis methods. The study used a convergent mixed-methods design in which quantitative and qualitative data was collected concurrently. Also known

as a parallel design, these types of studies"…simultaneously collect both quantitative and qualitative data, merge the data, compare the results, and explain any discrepancies in the results" (Creswell & Gutterman, 2019. p.551). I used Excel for the quantitative Cultural Intelligence data and conducted descriptive statistical analysis on each of the three comparison groups using built-in Excel functions. I analyzed the qualitative data using the Zoom transcriptions from the respective student group interviews and coded them using Atlas.ti, a qualitative data analysis software.

The quantitative data from the CQ military assessment was used to answer RQ1. Qualitative data (group interview responses) were used to answer RQ2 and RQ3. See Table 1 below.

**Table 1**

*Research Questions and Data Sources*

| |
|---|
| **RQ1:** To what extent does learning about cultural intelligence from experienced officers and non-commissioned officer leaders (either face-to-face or through a podcast) impact a student's cultural intelligence capability as measured through the CQ military assessment? |
| Data Source: CQ Military 360 Assessment (pre and post) |
| **RQ2:** How does learning about cultural intelligence from SF leaders (either face-to-face or through a podcast) influence SWCS students' motivation to work in a deployed environment across cultures? |
| Data Source: Group interviews (one per study group) with participants |
| **RQ3:** How does learning about cultural intelligence from SF leaders (either face-to-face or through a podcast) influence SWCS students' intent to improve their cultural intelligence in ways that are different from instructor-led, face-to-face classroom interaction? |
| Data Source: Group interviews (one per study group) with participants |

**Quantitative Data and Analysis**

I spoke to all four of the small group instructors at Clay Hall on 29 March 2023,

explained the intervention as well as the data collection methods, and detailed the

differences between the three comparison groups. Additionally, I requested that the

instructors not share any of this information with their students. Since the instructors

would act as observers and provide feedback for their respective students through the CQ

Observer assessments, I shared the recruitment material and consent form found in

Appendix E. All four of the instructors consented to participate by typing their names and

date into the consent form via an ASU Qualtrics Link.

Also on 29 March 2023 at Clay Hall, I spoke to all of the students in the CCC and

shared the recruitment material and consent form found in Appendix F. Additionally, I

shared my background as an Afghan-American and U.S. Naval Intelligence Officer with

multiple deployments alongside U.S. and NATO Special Operations Forces in

Afghanistan. I shared this information in order to establish my bonafides as a member of

the Special Operations community and explain my interest in CQ as part of the study. A

total of 66 students (a mix of Special Forces, Civil Affairs, and Psychological

Operations) provided consent by typing their names and date into the consent form via an

ASU Qualtrics link. Upon providing consent, they were redirected to a separate ASU

Qualtrics link with the Cultural Intelligence self-assessment (T1 Self) and they had 30

minutes to complete it in class. This separate link was to ensure that their consent

information (name) could not be tied to their assessment results. Instead. students

entered an alphanumeric code of their choosing rather than using any personally

identifiable information. Approximately six weeks later, I sent the ASU Qualtrics link

with the Cultural Intelligence observer assessment (T1 Observer) to the ARSOF CCC

Course Lead for distribution to the students and the instructors. For this assessment, each

student provided their self-generated identification code (SGIC) to their small group

instructor and two of their class peers so those three observers could complete the T1

Observer assessment on behalf of the student. In dialogue with the instructors, six to eight

weeks was deemed an appropriate amount of time to allow for the instructors and the

peers to observe the students so that the observer ratings would be meaningful. This

assessment was open from 17 May to 24 May. All the students completed their peer

observer assessments during this time, as did the face-to-face and podcast small group

instructors. However, the control group instructor was on personal vacation from 19 May

to 2 June. Therefore, he completed the T1 Observer Assessments for his students from 3

June to 9 June.

Of note, students were asked to identify one peer from their same occupational

specialty (e.g. Special Forces) and one peer from a different specialty (e.g. Civil Affairs

or Psychological Operations). In operational environments, these various specialties work

together to execute special operations missions so in dialogue with the instructors, I

included all the students as peer observers so that the Special Forces candidates could

receive feedback from not only their Special Forces peers but also from Civil Affairs and

Psychological Operations candidates. Therefore, only the data collected on the Special

Forces candidates will be used for this study.

During the week of 17-21 July, the students completed the second round of their

self-assessments (T2 Self) through another ASU Qualtrics link and was identical to what

they completed during T1. From 20-28 July, students and instructors completed the

second round of observer assessments (T2 Observer) for the same students who had asked them to complete the T1 Observer assessments.

The CQ military self-assessment and observer assessments provide quantitative data on each study participant's self-reported and observer feedback on the CQ factors of motivation, cognition, metacognition, and behavior. The self-report version of the assessment allowed the study participants to reflect on their level of readiness to work effectively in unpredictable cross-cultural situations. Additionally, the observer data provides an individual with insight into the perceptions of others across the same CQ factors. There are aspects of an individual's CQ that are more easily assessed by the individual, such as their understanding of differences and similarities across cultures (measured as part of CQ cognition). However, there are aspects of an individual's CQ that are more easily assessed by observers, such as their adaptation behaviors during a key leader engagement (measured as part of CQ behavior). By combining the two sets of CQ scores – self-report and observer average – one can gain a clearer understanding of CQ capabilities as measured by their own perceptions as well those of others.

The only quantitative measurement tool used in this study is the CQ military assessment. The internal reliability of the CQ scale (CQS) is strong, with reliability of each of the four factors and the corresponding subdimensions exceeding the standard Cronbach Alpha cutoff of .70 (Van Dyne et. al, 2008, p. 22). Additionally, the internal reliability of the DoD version of the CQS is also strong, exceeding the standard Cronbach Alpha cutoff of .70 (L. Van Dyne, personal communication, September 15, 2023).[1]

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[1] Cronbach Alpha for DoD 2020 Data:

According to Matsumoto and Hwang (2013), two independent scholars who do not have an affiliation with the Cultural Intelligence Center and conducted a review of various cultural competency assessments, "there is considerable evidence for the concurrent and predictive ecological validity of the CQ with samples from multiple cultures" (p. 856). Additionally, Rockstuhl and Van Dyne (2018) conducted a meta-analysis of all the research (44,155 participants from 199 samples) that used the CQS and their results replicated the basic findings from the initial construct validity study (Ang et al., 2007). They also found that CQ research was published in numerous peer-reviewed academic papers across various disciplines, to include leadership, management, diversity and inclusion, language studies, cultural studies, and psychology. This is important for Special Forces leaders since their occupational specialty requires multi-disciplinary expertise and skill.

I then conducted a group comparison by comparing each of the three groups' average CQ scores for each of the four factors (motivation, cognition, metacognition, and behavior). By having a control group that receives the pre-test (T1) and post-test (T2) before and after the traditional instructor-led training, I could compare that group's average scores for each of the four CQ factors against the two experimental groups' (face-to-face and podcast) T1 and T2 average scores "…to determine in the treatment had any effect" (Mertler, 2020, p. 101). I also compared the average CQ scores from T1 and T2 for both experimental groups to determine if face-to-face or podcast delivery methods

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N= 1178 (T1) - Motivational CQ = .78, Cognitive CQ = .90, Metacognitive CQ = .85, Behavioral CQ = .91
N=1178 (T2) - Motivational CQ = .85, Cognitive CQ = .93, Metacognitive CQ = .90, Behavioral CQ = .94

resulted in higher changes in CQ scores.

**Qualitative Data and Analysis**

I  conducted three separate group interviews with the students to explore their

perceptions of the instructor-led training (control group), leader-led training that was

delivered in person (face-to-face), and leader-led training that was delivered through an

audio-only recording  (podcast). The protocols for the three study participant group

interviews appear in Appendix F.

Students were asked to arrive at the conference room at Clay Hall without their

Army uniform shirt since it has their last name written on it. Additionally, students were

asked to write down a nickname on a tabletop name tent that they would like to be called

for the duration of the group interview rather than using their real names. Lastly, in an

effort to minimize social desirability bias, I asked students to anchor themselves to their

responses by writing them down on a notecard before the discussion began.

For the qualitative data, I took an abductive approach that incorporated both

inductive and deductive analysis. Since qualitative content analysis is "...typically

inductive, beginning with deep close reading of text and attempting to uncover the less

obvious contextual or latent content therein," I read all interview transcripts once through

without looking for any particular words so I can get an overall sense of the information

(Julien, 2012, p. 3). I then wrote memos in the margins in this preliminary exploratory

analysis that includes "…short phrases, ideas, concepts, or hunches…" (Creswell &

Guetterman, 2019, p. 243). I then re-read each of the three transcripts and conducted in-

vivo coding as well as applied a priori codes related to cultural intelligence related to the

four CQ factors and subcategories related to each CQ factor's corresponding

subdimensions. Using the a priori CQ codes organizes the data using deductive analysis rooted in theory and research. The CQ motivation items measure intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and self-efficacy. CQ cognition measures understanding of business/cultural systems, cultural values, sociolinguistics, and leadership. CQ metacognition measures an individual's level of planning, awareness, and checking. Finally, CQ behavior measures adaptability in verbal behavior, nonverbal behavior, and speech acts. After this process of at least two different types of coding focused on maintaining participant voice and incorporating a priori categories from CQ, I identified themes and included individual, anonymized direct quotes using pseudonyms to support each thematic finding.

**Table 2**

*Data sources and analysis for each research question*

| RQ | Data Source | Analysis |
|---|---|---|
| RQ 1 | CQ Military Assessment: Pre-and Post-survey | CQ scores (pre-test and post-test scores) for each individual study participant<br><br>Descriptive statistical analysis comparing the three study groups' scores (1 control and 2 experiment) |
| RQ2 | Group Interviews for each of the three groups: control, multimodal face-to-face, audio-only podcast | Thematic coding |
| RQ3 | Group Interviews for each of the three groups: control, multimodal face-to-face, audio-only podcast | Thematic coding |

**Timeline, Research Ethics, and Researcher Role**

Table 3 at the end of this section provides a detailed timeline of actions related to this study. I followed both ASU's IRB protocols as well as all requirements outlined by the Human Protections Officer at U.S. Army Special Operations Command. Study participants were advised that they may end their participation at any time for any reason. Each study participant was only identifiable through an alphanumeric SGIC that they chose so there is confidentiality of study participants' individual CQ scores. Each study participant entered this code into a demographic field when they began the assessment and shared that code with their observers. I used the SGICs to match the individual with observer-average assessment scores from T1 and T2. During the group interviews, students were asked to write down a nickname or call sign onto a name placard. I referred to the participants by those nicknames as did their fellow group interview participants. When I conducted the face-to-face debrief at the end of the course, each study participant shared their SGIC and then they received the report that matched the SGIC. At no time was I able to connect a named individual participant to a SGIC.

My role in this study was as an organizer of the intervention, a moderator, and group interview facilitator. I was able to "…observe and take notes on what is observed but also [have] the opportunity to interact with the participants in the study" (Mertler, 2020, p. 97). More specifically, my role is four-fold. First, I moderated the face-to-face and podcast interviews with the senior leaders that are the innovation/interventions of this study. Second, I interacted with all of the study participants since I recruited them into the study. Third, I facilitated the group interviews with each of the three comparison

groups. Fourth, I provided all of the study participants with a debrief of their T1 and T2

scores at the end of the study. While this participation afforded me the "…opportunity to

learn firsthand what is going on in that setting," I focused my efforts to analyze the data

through an objective and impartial lens rather than allowing my limited interactions with

the study participants to subjectively influence the findings (Mertler, 2020, p. 97).

**Table 3**

*Timeline of actions, per study group*

| Date | Action | Control (no intervention) | In-Person (senior leader mentors) | Podcast (audio recording) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 29 March | Recruitment/consent of all four small group instructors as assessment observers for their respective students | X | X | X |
| 29 March | Recruitment/consent of all ARSOF CCC students to complete self and observer assessments (as peers) | X | X | X |
| 29 March | ARSOF CCC students complete T1 Self-Assessment | X | X | X |
| 30 March | Senior Leader Session #1: 3rd SFG(A) - Former Commander and Command Sergeant Major (CSM) | | X | |
| 6 April | Audio-only recording of Senior Leader Session #1 provided to students | | | X |
| 20 April | Senior Leader Session #2: 10th SFG(A) - Incoming Commander and Current CSM | | X | |
| 28 April | Audio-only recording of Senior Leader Session #2 provided to students | | | X |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 May | Senior Leader Session #3: 7th SFG(A) - Current Commander | | X | |
| 3 May | Senior Leader Session #4: 5th SFG(A) - Current Commander | | X | |
| 5 May | Audio-only recording of Senior Leader Session #3 provided to students | | | X |
| 11 May | Audio-only recording of Senior Leader Session #4 provided to students | | | X |
| 17-24 May | Students (as peers) completed T1 Observer Assessments | X | X | X |
| 17-24 May | Face-to-Face and Podcast instructors completed T1 Observer Assessments | | X | X |
| 3-9 June | Control Group instructor completed T1 Observer Assessments (was on leave from 19 May to 2 June) | X | | |
| 8 June | Senior Leader Session #5: 1st SFG(A) - Current Commander | | X | |
| 9 June | Audio-only recording of Senior Leader Session #5 provided to students | | | X |
| 17-21 July | ARSOF CCC students complete T2 Self-Assessment | X | X | X |
| 20-28 July | Students (as peers) and Instructors complete T2 Observer Assessment | X | X | X |
| 1 August | Small group interviews (90 minutes per group) | X | X | X |

**Trustworthiness and Limitations**

Salkind and Frey (2020) note that "anyone who does research will tell you about

the importance of establishing the reliability and validity of your measurement tool..." (p.

105). Researchers must ensure that their tools consistently measure typical performance (reliability) and measure what they are supposed to measure (validity). As previously detailed, the CQ military assessment is both a reliable and valid tool for use at the ARSOF CCC to measure the CQ of aspiring Special Forces Captains.

To enhance the reliability and validity of the qualitative data obtained through group interviews, I pilot-tested the questions with three individuals and consistently asked questions in the same order. Specifically, this pre-testing phase allowed me to refine the questions to ensure clarity, comprehensibility, and the ability to elicit the intended responses. I began by developing the questionnaire in collaboration with active-duty and retired Special Forces officers to ensure the questions included the appropriate lexicon for face validity. This collaboration sought to determine the questionnaires' clarity, comprehensiveness, and acceptability (Rea & Parker, 2014, p. 38). Clarity determines if respondents understood the questions. Comprehensiveness determines coverage to ensure the questionnaire includes relevant and complete questions that generate the information required for the study. Lastly, acceptability refers to how acceptable the questionnaire is to respondents, especially as it relates to length, privacy, and ethical/moral standards. After piloting the questions and receiving feedback, the ARSOF CCC Course Director and Course Manager both reviewed the questions and approved them for use in the group interviews. During the interviews, I adhered to a structured introduction protocol and all participants received the questions in the same order, thereby enhancing the consistency and reliability of the data collection process.

Threats to validity include the Hawthorne effect and failure to complete assessments. First, since I recruited all the study participants through a face-to-face

discussion, all of them knew that an outside researcher was conducting research. This knowledge may have altered their responses and behavior due to social desirability. Additionally, the study participants may have lacked the confidence and experiences to engage with their instructors on the topic of cultural intelligence (control group) or the senior leaders who spoke to their group, which may have impacted the depth and breadth of the discussions during both the face-to-face experiment group as well as the podcast experiment group.

Additionally, while all the students completed the T1 Self-Assessment because they were provided time to do so in class, there was significant attrition in both the control and the podcast groups. In the control group, only four out of the nine participants have data for all four assessments (T1 Self, T2 Self, T1 Observer, and T2 Observer). More specifically, the majority of the missing data is from the T1 Observer assessment (17-24 May). A contributing factor may have been that the small group instructor for the control group was on vacation from 17 May to 2 June and without an emphasis from the instructor to complete the assessments, some of the students may have either chosen not to complete them or simply run out of time if they were not scheduled during a specific block during the day. In the podcast group, only four out of the 10 participants have data for all four assessments. More specifically, the majority of the missing data is from the T2 Observer assessment (20-28 July). Of the four students, two were from the small group led by the Civil Affairs Captain and two were from the small group led by the Special Forces Captain. While there is no immediate explanation for the attrition, the fact that this second round of observer feedback was at the end of the course may have contributed as the students are eager to finish their required assignments and graduate. In

the face-to-face group, eight out of the ten participants have data for all four assessments. The only missing data for each of the two study dropouts from the face-to-face group is the T2 Observer data.

Also the podcast group was the most concerning in terms of completion. While the other two groups will have face-to-face interaction with speakers, this group may or may not be fully present when listening to the podcasts. This may have an impact on their CQ scores at T2 as well as their qualitative responses during the group interview at the end of the study.

In terms of quantitative limitations, the small initial sample size of this study that was further reduced through attrition resulted in data analysis through descriptive statistics so the findings will not be generalizable since there are not enough participants for inferential statistics. Therefore, this study provided initial insights into the CQ of aspiring Special Forces Captains as well as the potential role that senior leader interaction can make on this population's CQ but more research with a larger sample size is required before making any predictions or major changes to the course.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

*"I think their [senior Special Forces leaders'] stories contain valuable context and lessons learned, which encouraged me to read and find more stories. To me, it seems like it's a free repetition - what mistakes have been made and what best practices have already worked."*
*(Face-to-Face Group Participant)*

The preceding three chapters described the problem of practice within the larger

context of U.S. national security interests related to culturally intelligence military

personnel, the situated context of developing culturally intelligent Special Forces

Captains, the theoretical perspectives of cultural intelligence and multimodality used to

frame this study, and the methods used to deliver the senior leader intervention and

collect quantitative and qualitative data. This chapter will focus on the analysis of both

the quantitative CQ self-assessment and observer assessments as well as the qualitative

group interviews. As noted in the previous chapter, I collected both types of data

concurrently in a convergent (parallel) mixed methods design. In this chapter, I will detail

how I analyzed the two types of data independently and then merged the data in order to

compare results.

This action research study sought to explore how learning from senior Special

Forces leaders impacts the CQ of aspiring Special Forces Captains at the ARSOF CCC

and was guided by the below research questions. Therefore, I have organized the analysis

according to each individual question:

RQ1: How does learning about cultural intelligence from experienced officers and

non-commissioned officer leaders (either face-to-face or through a podcast)

impact a student's cultural intelligence capability as measured through the CQ

military assessment?

RQ2: How does learning about cultural intelligence from SF leaders (either face-

to-face or through a podcast) influence SWCS students' motivation  to work in a

deployed environment across cultures?

RQ3: How does learning about cultural intelligence from SF leaders (either face-

to-face or through a podcast) influence SWCS students' intent to improve their

cultural intelligence in ways that are different from instructor-led interaction?

Quantitative data consisted of self-assessments and observer assessments

administered as pre-tests and post-tests, both using a 7-point Likert scale (1 - Strongly

Disagree, 2 - Moderately Disagree, 3 -Slightly Disagree, 4 - Neutral, 5 - Slightly Agree, 6

– Moderately Agree, 7-Strongly Agree).  The self-assessment, the 39-item E-CQS

detailed in Chapter 2, consists of statements related to an individual's personal cultural

intelligence and measures four constructs: motivation, cognition, metacognition, and

behavior (Appendix H). The motivation construct includes nine total items to measure

three subdimensions: three items measure intrinsic motivation, three items measure

extrinsic motivation, and three items measure self-efficacy. The cognition construct

includes 12 total items to measure four subdimensions: three items to measure cultural

values, two items to measure business systems, two items to measure socio-linguistics,

and five items to measure leadership. The metacognition construct includes  nine items to

measure three subdimensions: three items to measure planning, three items to measure

awareness, and three items to measure checking. Finally, the behavior construct includes

nine items to measure three subdimensions: three items to measure speech acts, three

items to measure verbal, and three items to measure non-verbal.

The observer-assessment, the 20-item CQS detailed in Chapter 2, consists of statements from the perspective of an observer and measures the aforementioned four constructs using fewer items per subdimension (Appendix I). Figure 2 below provides a visual comparison between the self and observer assessments.

**Figure 2**

*Comparison of CQ Self-assessment and Observer Assessments*
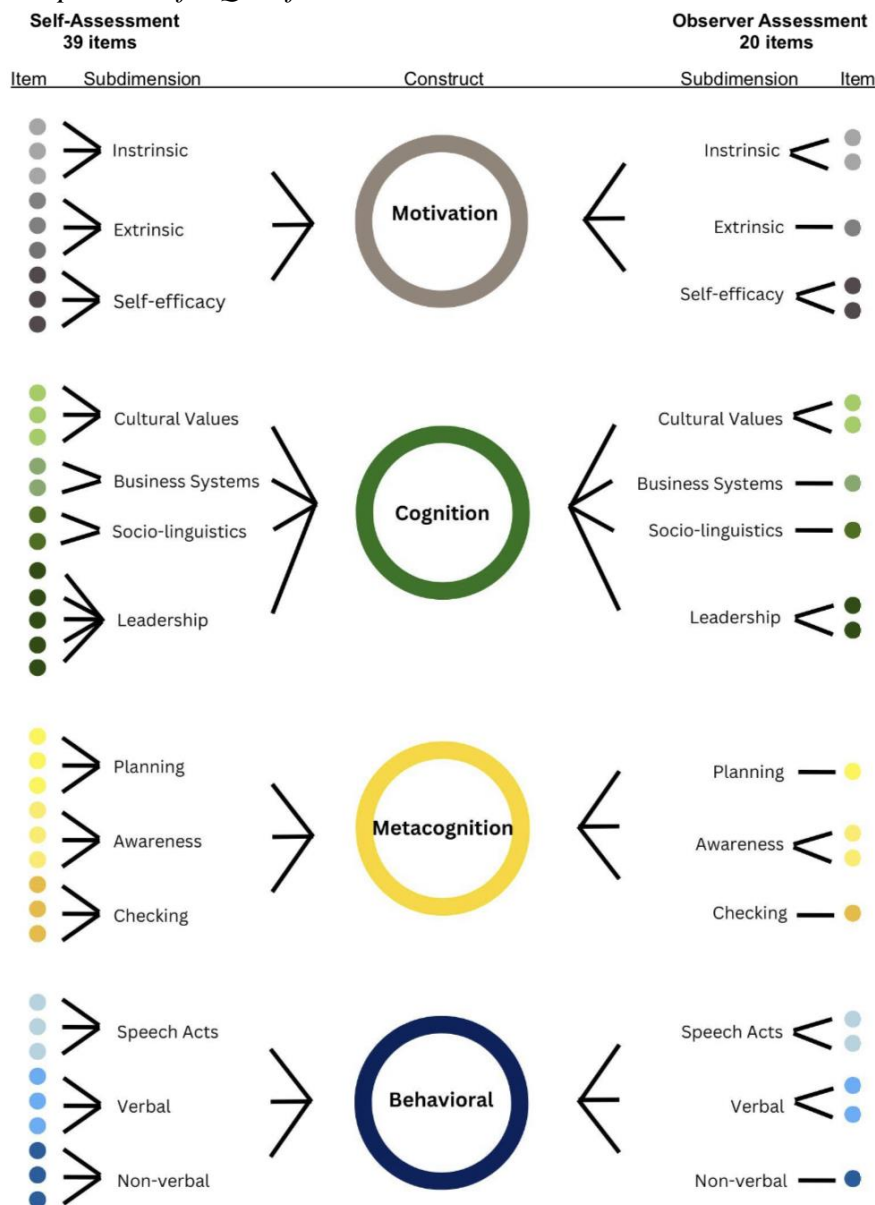
To determine an individual's CQ motivation score, I added up the scores for the three items measuring intrinsic motivation and divided them by three to obtain the average. I then added up the scores for the three items measuring extrinsic motivation and divided them by three to obtain the average. I then added up the scores for the three items measuring self-efficacy and divided them by three to obtain the average. I then added up the intrinsic, extrinsic, and self-efficacy scores and divided them by three to obtain the CQ motivation score. I repeated this same process to obtain the remaining construct scores for cognition, metacognition, and action. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the quantitative data used in the following analysis represents only the scores for those students who completed both the pre-test and post-test of the self-assessment and had observer data for both the pre-test and post-test. Therefore, I analyzed the quantitative data for four participants in the control group to obtain the control group mean scores, eight participants in the face-to-face group to obtain face-to-face group mean scores, and four participants in the podcast group to obtain podcast group mean scores.

Qualitative data consisted of three group interviews. I conducted separate interviews with each of the comparison groups and all the SF candidates in each group were invited to participate. Therefore, I analyzed the interview responses for nine participants in the control group, 10 participants in the face-to-face group, and 10 participants in the podcast group.

The following section lists each research question individually followed by the results from the study.

**Research Question 1**

The first research question examined the impact that learning about cultural intelligence from senior leaders, both officers and non-commissioned officers, has on a student's cultural intelligence capability as measured through the CQ self and observer assessments. Due to the small number of participants in each group, I chose to run only descriptive statistics rather than inferential statistics. Additionally, since cultural intelligence consists of four distinct constructs, I ran pre-test and post-test descriptive statistics for each construct separately.

The first construct is motivation. Descriptive statistics comparing the three groups' data at T1 and T1 on both the self and observer assessments appear in Table 4. Below, Figure 3 provides a visualization of the change in mean scores from T1 and T1 across all three comparison groups on both the self-assessment (SA) and observer assessment (OA).

**Table 4**

*Descriptive Statistics for Motivation at T1 and T2 by Comparison Group*

| Group | Assessment | T1 Mean | T1 SD | T1 Range | T2 Mean | T2 SD | T2 Range |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Control (n=4) | Self | 6.39 | 0.26 | 6.11-6.67 | 6.89 | 0.16 | 6.67-7.00 |
| | Observer | 6.85 | 0.14 | 6.67-7.00 | 6.67 | 0.16 | 6.44-6.83 |
| Face-to-Face (n=8) | Self | 6.06 | 0.56 | 5.33-6.89 | 5.83 | 0.53 | 5.11-6.56 |
| | Observer | 6.21 | 0.44 | 5.47-6.87 | 6.02 | 0.52 | 5.00-6.60 |
| Podcast (n=4) | Self | 6.28 | 0.29 | 6.00-6.67 | 6.44 | 0.70 | 5.56-7.00 |
| | Observer | 6.90 | 0.07 | 6.87-7.00 | 6.50 | 0.21 | 6.33-6.80 |

**Figure 3**

*Mean Scores for Motivation at T1 and T2 by Comparison Groups*



**CQ Motivation**
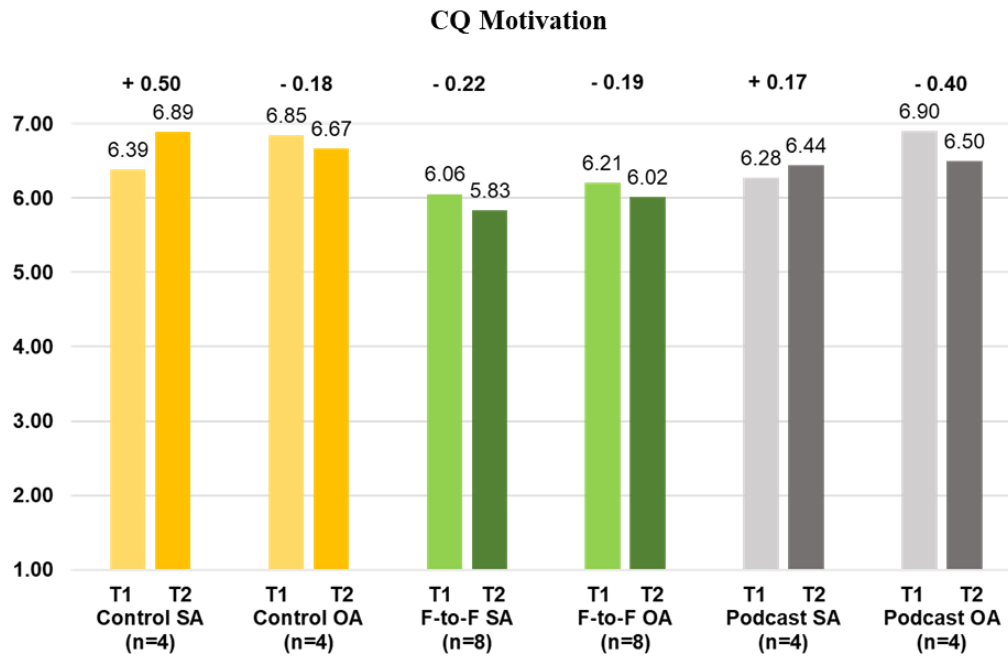
In terms of patterns, all mean scores for this construct are high for both assessment types and both time points, indicating that these aspiring Special Forces candidates are highly motivated. Additionally, all self-assessment mean scores are lower than the observer assessment mean scores at T1 across all groups. Lastly, all observer assessment mean scores declined from T1 to T2. In terms of differences, the control and podcast groups' self-assessment mean scores increased from T1 to T2 while both groups' observer assessment mean scores declined from T1 to T2. By contrast, the face-to-face group's self -assessment mean scores declined marginally from T1 to T2 as did the observer mean scores from T1 to T2. The face-to-face group also has lower mean scores compared with the control group and podcast group for both assessment types and both time points.

The second construct is cognition. Descriptive statistics comparing the three groups' data at T1 and T1 on both the self and observer assessments appear in Table 5. Below, Figure 4 provides a visualization of the change in mean scores from T1 and T1 across all three comparison groups on both the self-assessment (SA) and observer assessment (OA).

**Table 5**

*Descriptive Statistics for Cognition at T1 and T2 by Comparison Group*

| Group | Assessment | T1 Mean | T1 SD | T1 Range | T2 Mean | T2 SD | T2 Range |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Control (n=4) | Self | 4.72 | 1.16 | 3.56-6.29 | 5.30 | 1.46 | 3.97-7.00 |
| | Observer | 6.47 | 0.23 | 6.22-6.72 | 6.18 | 0.42 | 5.61-6.61 |
| Face-to-Face (n=8) | Self | 3.79 | 1.05 | 1.83-4.85 | 4.20 | 0.96 | 2.12-5.08 |
| | Observer | 5.43 | 0.45 | 4.49-5.83 | 5.37 | 0.50 | 4.44-5.89 |
| Podcast (n=4) | Self | 4.52 | 0.66 | 3.83-5.16 | 5.58 | 1.21 | 4.39-6.63 |
| | Observer | 6.40 | 0.19 | 6.22-6.67 | 6.19 | 0.29 | 5.78-6.44 |

**Figure 4**

*Mean Scores for Cognition at T1 and T2 by Comparison Groups*
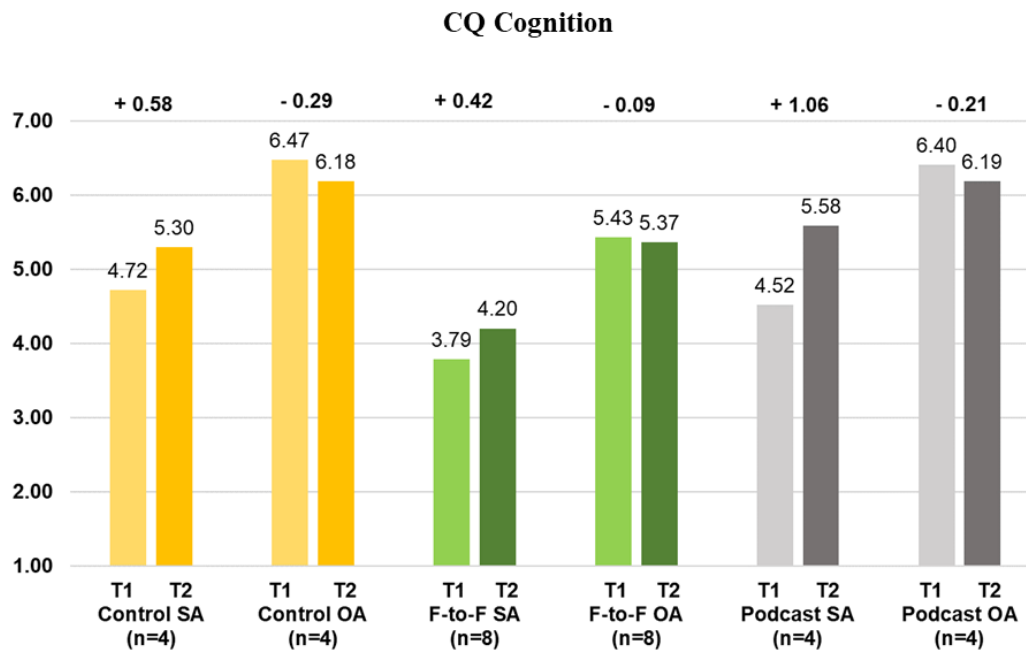
In terms of patterns, the self-assessment mean scores are lower than the observer assessment mean scores at T1 and T2 across all groups. Additionally, the self-assessment mean scores show a consistent increase from T1 to T2 for all groups. Conversely, the observer assessment mean scores show a consistent decrease from T1 to T2 for all groups. In terms of differences, the control group consistently has higher mean scores for both assessment types at both T1 and T2 while the face-to-face group has the lowest mean scores for both assessment types and time points. The podcast group's mean scores for both assessment types at T1 and T2 are in between the control and face-to-face groups but are closer to the control group's mean scores.

The third construct is metacognition. Descriptive statistics comparing the three groups' data at T1 and T1 on both the self and observer assessments appear in Table 6. Below, Figure 5 provides a visualization of the change in mean scores from T1 and T1 across all three comparison groups on both the self-assessment (SA) and observer assessment (OA).

**Table 6**

*Descriptive Statistics for Metacognition at T1 and T2 by Comparison Group*

| Group | Assessment | T1 Mean | T1 SD | T1 Range | T2 Mean | T2 SD | T2 Range |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Control (n=4) | Self | 6.06 | 0.45 | 5.67-6.67 | 6.06 | 0.63 | 5.67-7.00 |
| | Observer | 6.58 | 0.22 | 6.33-6.83 | 6.44 | 0.23 | 6.27-6.67 |
| Face-to-Face (n=8) | Self | 5.49 | 0.66 | 4.56-6.44 | 5.31 | 0.98 | 3.44-6.00 |
| | Observer | 6.30 | 0.37 | 5.83-6.83 | 5.88 | 0.55 | 4.67-6.50 |
| Podcast (n=4) | Self | 5.92 | 0.28 | 5.56-6.22 | 6.42 | 0.74 | 5.44-7.00 |
| | Observer | 6.52 | 0.29 | 6.17-6.83 | 6.27 | 0.42 | 5.75-6.75 |

**Figure 5**

*Mean Scores for Metacognition at T1 and T2 by Comparison Groups*
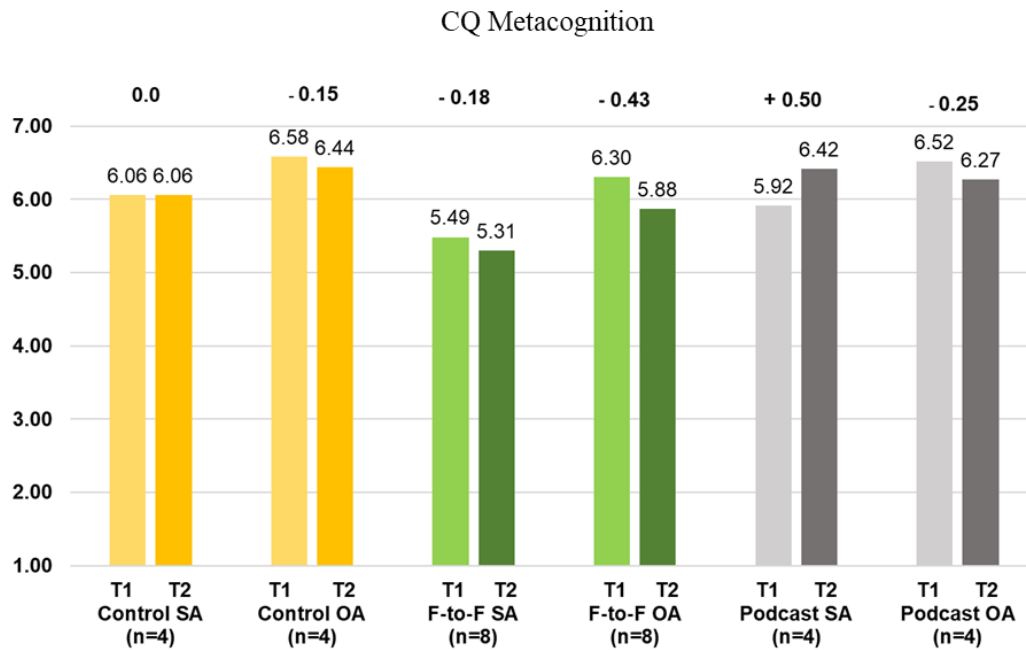


CQ Metacognition

In terms of patterns, the self-assessment mean scores are lower than the observer assessment mean scores at T1 across all groups. Additionally, the observer assessment mean scores decreased from T1 to T2 across all groups. In terms of differences, the self-assessment mean scores for the control group saw no change from T1 to T2 , decreased marginally for the face-to-face group from T1 to T2, and increased for the podcast group from T1 to T2.

The fourth construct is behavior. Descriptive statistics comparing the three groups' data at T1 and T1 on both the self and observer assessments appear in Table 7. Below, Figure 6 provides a visualization of the change in mean scores from T1 and T1 across all three comparison groups on both the self-assessment (SA) and observer assessment (OA).

**Table 7**

*Descriptive Statistics for Behavior at T1 and T2 by Comparison Group*

| Group | Assessment | T1 Mean | T1 SD | T1 Range | T2 Mean | T2 SD | T2 Range |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Control (n=4) | Self | 5.22 | 1.03 | 3.78-6.11 | 5.67 | 1.01 | 4.56-7.00 |
| | Observer | 6.50 | 0.20 | 6.33-6.73 | 6.12 | 0.18 | 5.87-6.27 |
| Face-to-Face (n=8) | Self | 4.46 | 0.47 | 3.67-5.11 | 4.58 | 0.49 | 4.00-5.11 |
| | Observer | 5.41 | 0.58 | 4.53-6.33 | 5.38 | 0.43 | 4.33-5.73 |
| Podcast (n=4) | Self | 5.33 | 0.74 | 4.33-6.00 | 5.86 | 1.15 | 4.67-7.00 |
| | Observer | 6.10 | 0.55 | 5.47-6.73 | 6.08 | 0.52 | 5.40-6.67 |

**Figure 6**

*Mean Scores for Behavior at T1 and T2 by Comparison Groups*
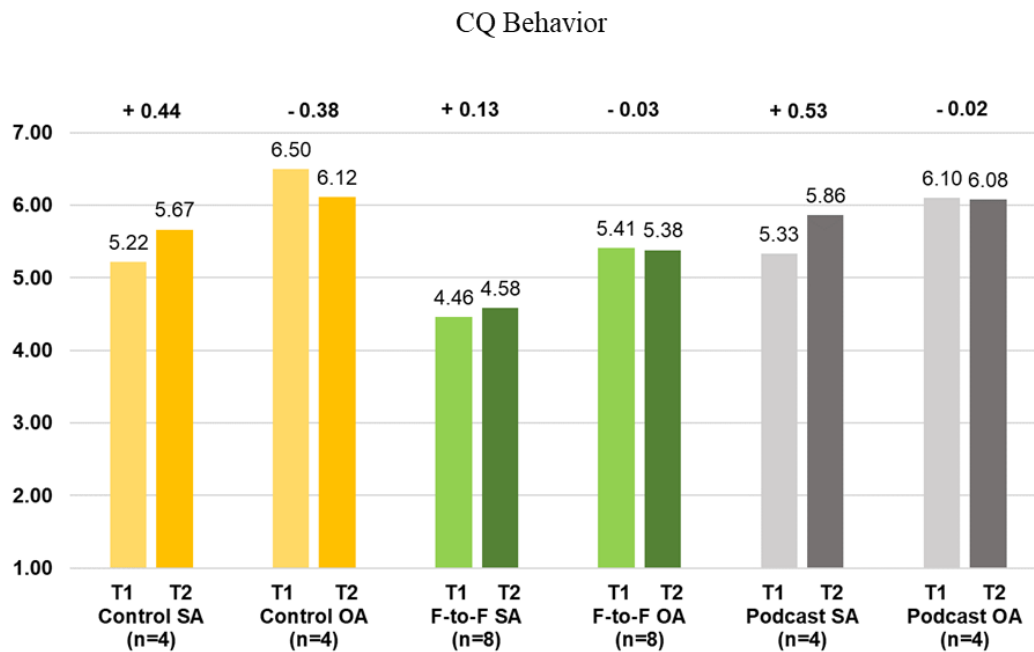


CQ Behavior

In terms of patterns, the self-assessment mean scores are lower than the observer assessment mean scores at T1 and T2 across all groups. Additionally, the self-assessment mean scores increased from T1 to T2 across all groups. Lastly, the observer assessment mean scores decreased from T1 to T2 across all groups. In terms of differences, the control group consistently has higher mean scores for both assessment types at both T1

and T2 while the face-to-face group has the lowest mean scores for both assessment types and time points. The podcast group's mean scores for both assessment types at T1 and T2 are in between the control and face-to-face groups but are closer to the control group's mean scores.

**Research Question 2**

The second research question examined the impact that learning about cultural intelligence from senior Special Forces leaders, both officers and non-commissioned officers, has on an aspiring Special Forces candidate's motivation to work in a deployed environment across cultures.

The main data source used to answer this question are the transcripts from the three study groups: control, face-to-face, and in-person. The control group had a total of 9 Special Forces candidates, and all 9 participated in the group interview. The face-to-face group had a total of 10 Special Forces candidates, and all 10 participated in the group interview. The podcast group had a total of 10 Special Forces candidates, and all 10 participated in the group interview. For ease of reference, all control group participants have pseudonyms starting with the letter C, all face-to-face group participants have pseudonyms starting with the letter F, and all podcast group participants have pseudonyms starting with the letter P.

As a prompt to elicit participants to share their thoughts, I asked the students to rate their motivation to work with a partner force through this question: "On a scale of 1-7 (1=highly unmotivated and 7= highly motivated), how motivated were you to work with a partnered force when you started the course and how motivated are you now as you are at the end of the course?" Therefore, the students reflected retrospectively about

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their motivation five months prior as well as reflecting on their current motivation. As each student shared their numerical values, I asked if they were also willing to share what impacted their before and after numbers.[2]

One major theme emerged from analyzing the limited data specific to this question exploring what impacted the students' self-reported motivation to work with a partner force: the senior Special Forces leaders sharing their stories of working with a partner force strengthened the students' understanding that Special Forces fundamentally achieve their missions by, with, and through partners in a deployed environment.

When discussing their scores, several students mentioned specific areas of the world; to maintain operational security, I have replaced any mentions of specific countries with regional geographic areas. I have also added clarifying remarks where needed for non-military readers as well as missing words to improve sentence structure and flow.

*Senior Leader Stories Strengthened Students' Understanding of Special Forces Identity*

Of the nine participants in the control group, five of them had previous experience working with partners and largely attributed their scores to those experiences. However, both those with and those without partner force experience mentioned that they would prefer to partner in the future with specific nation's forces on specific missions.

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[2] The control group's mean score for motivation to work with a partner force was 6.2 at the start of the course and was 6.8 at the end of the course, an increase of 0.6. The face-to-face group's mean score for motivation to work with a partner force was 4.5 at the start of the course and 6.4 at the end of the course, an increase of 1.9. The podcast group's mean score for motivation to work with a partner force was 4.9 at the start of the course and 5.9 at the end of the course, an increase of 1 point (see Appendix J for a visualization comparing the three groups).

Chi: "I was at a six before, mostly because I just had no idea what working with partner force even meant. Now a seven because I think it is a cool mission, especially with the Eastern European countries with how kinetic things are over there."

Cleon: "I just come out of the rotation to [the Indo-Pacific region)], which I really enjoyed. I put seven. And then I would say, I'm still a seven. But I think there's like a caveat to that. It would be what partner force. Like I'd be a lot more motivated to go to Poland, Ukraine, somewhere in Taiwan, something along those lines rather than Colombia to hunt like narcos, like I think there's a lot more real world applicable, meaningful impacts and stuff like that rather than a Colombia or a Kosovo or something along those lines."

Claus: "Obviously, I'm excited to work with partner force. I think it's cool mission set for SOF, but part of me is always like, it's easier when it's just yourself. And, you know, it's more fun when you get to hit the X [target] than watching someone else do it."

Of the 10 participants, only one mentioned how the course impacted his score.

Cairo: "So I started as a six. Now, I would say I'm at a seven, just having learned everything that we've gone through over the course of CCC opened my eyes a little bit more to you know what's out there."

Of the 10 participants in the face-to-face group, six of them had experience working with a partner force and reported mixed feelings towards those experiences. However, both those with and those without previous partner force experience

emphasized the positive impact hearing senior Special Forces leaders' stories made on their motivation to work with a partner force.

> Fox: "Four to six. So a lot of discussions from various people who worked with partner forces and how much they enjoyed it…I think I was open to it but [I was] also cool [with] just the idea of going out as a 12- man team kicking in doors or whatever I thought that we would do. And then hearing all the stories of how much fun they had working with partner forces."

> Forest: "I said five to six. I guess just hearing more stories about doing missions with partner forces and stuff."

> Ford: "Four to six as well. What changed my mind was just how [small group instructor] interacted with us and bringing in all these SF leaders that came to talk to us and kind of showed me the impact that it had on the mission, how that made a difference. Very exciting to me."

> Felipe: "Four to six…all the different mentors [senior leaders speakers] that came in throughout this course, it was inspirational."

Additionally, two of the other participants commented on how the course impacted their scores.

> Finn: "Five to seven. Prior experience with partner force in the conventional side. It was a good experience but we really didn't accomplish much. So I really didn't see too much of like how much benefit you can get from it and then through the course learning about how much SOF does with partner forces and how much you can achieve with them motivated me more."

Fumio: "Six to seven. I had deployed and worked with [partners in the

CENTCOM region] for five months. And I understood the importance of working

with partners. I enjoyed it and realize that's a good way for us to project powers is

through partners and their nations. And after this course, became a seven. Just

understood SF role and SOCOM better, as the only like purpose built force to

work with partners."

Only one out of the 10 podcast participants referenced previous experiences

working with a partner force and reported it not being a positive experience.

Additionally, six of the participants mentioned that the course and speakers' stories

improved their understanding of Special Forces personnel working with partner forces.

Paolo: "I think it went up slightly, because we had some firsthand accounts of

training [European partners] for years and years leading up to the war. And then

you see that training come to fruition and how they're able to, you know, at least

compete with  [adversary nation] now."

Pierre: "Six to six, no change to my motivation but I do have a better

understanding of…the emphasis there is on focusing efforts and resources into

a partner force."

Pedro: "Four to six…just understanding the mission set. And that's our primary

task, our priority is working with and training partner forces."

Paddy: "Four to six. Just education of what the Special Forces branch does.

Wasn't super aware before. One speaker said if you don't want to work with a

partner force then go be a Ranger, which that kind of stood out to me."

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Parker: "Four to six. Just really have a clear understanding. I'd worked with some partner forces before but it wasn't a great experience. But kind of hearing these stories now what maybe SF has the potential to be able to do with partner forces. I'm a little more motivated."

Peyton: "Five to seven. I knew SF worked with host nation forces but I didn't understand the extent until we heard firsthand."

One participant shared why his motivation decreased.

Pascal: "Seven to six. I don't know if there's any story in particular, but it would just be like say the team leader and then team Sergeant working with a partner force trying to motivate them to do training or do certain training events and no matter what they did, no matter what they offered, no matter what sort of assets they could provide to that partner force, the partner force still at the end of the day saying no, we don't want to train."

Overall, the control group attributed their increase in motivation to work with a partner force on their previous experiences. However, participants with and without previous partner force experiene noted a desire to partner with specific nations on specific missions. The majority of the face-to-face group, which experienced the largest increase of the three groups, expressed mixed feelings regarding their previous partner force expriences but attributed their increase in motivaton to work with a partner force on the senior Special Forces leaders sharing their personal stories of working alongside partners in various regions of the world. The podcast group attributed their increase in motivation to work with a partner force on the course more broadly as well as the stories

the heard. The one student who reported a decrease in motivation also attributed the change to stories.

**Research Question 3**

The third research question examined how learning about cultural intelligence from senior Special Forces leaders, either face-to-face or through a podcast, influences an aspiring Special Forces Captain's intent to improve their cultural intelligence in ways that are different from instructor-led interaction in the control group.

Two major themes emerged from analyzing the responses: stories provide specifics and experiences provide examples. Overall, senior Special Forces leaders' stories provided students with more specific and action-oriented means of improving their CQ . While students in the control group provided answers that were basic and generic,  the majority of students in the face-to-face and some of the students in the podcast groups provided answers that were more specific and action-oriented. Additionally, participants from all three groups discussed their intention to improve their CQ in their preparation to work more effectively with partner forces by learning from the experiences of others.

*Beyond the Basics: Senior Leader Stories Provide Specifics for Improving CQ*

In the control group, several of the participants provided basic and general examples of how they might prepare to work with partners forces. Many mentioned being open-minded and reading about the country to which they would deploy while some mentioned using media to gain a better understanding of the culture. Overall, the students' responses focused on improving their cognition without providing specifics.

Cleon: "I think the Alpha Course and Robin Sage and the rest of the Q Course will prepare us. And then also just being an active open learner."

Casper: "Continue to be open minded and learn about areas prior by conducting an area study either professionally or personally."

Claus: "Watch movies and media."

Cohen: "I would read a ton about where I was going."

Connor: "It's pretty simple. I said a YouTube pop culture references for that area. And then you just be yourself."

Chi: "Once I find out which [Special Forces] Group I'm going to, deep dive into the books, the history. And then really YouTube videos on the country."

In the face-to-face group, a noticeable difference as compared to the control group was that these participants specifically used the word "culture" in their responses rather than "area" or "country." Additionally, three mentioned the importance of language proficiency, which is one of the recommendations the senior Special Forces leaders made for working effectively with a partner force. Overall, the students' responses focused on improving their cognition, with mentions of improving socio-linguistics and an understanding of business systems.

Frank: "Reading on culture, investing in the AOR. I would like to go to Africa, trying to stay in touch with what's happening in Africa and the influences that are external to it."

Fox: "Learning the culture of my assigned area, their history, their customs, all that kind of stuff. Right now the thing that I should do then is probably a self assessment, determining what my own biases are and things like that."

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Forrest: "Studying your language, culture, history, news."

Faris: "Investing myself in that area of responsibility that I'll be assigned to. Just trying to understand what's going on in that area. But along with getting that first assignment, so for instance, 3rd Group, still studying French language, doing your daily homework to help better develop yourself."

Finn: "Self study the area. And just the language and what the people are like in that area."

In the podcast group, some participants provided basic and generic answers (similar to the control group) while others provided more specific and action-oriented answers (similar to the face-to-face group). Similar to the face-to-face group, these participants used "culture" in their respones and two mentioned the importance of learning area-specific languages.

Pierre: "Make friends from people within that culture."

Pedro: "Immerse in media and try to absorb as much of the culture through their media as possible."

Paulo: "Read about the culture, the history, the area. Learn the language to the best of my ability."

Ping: "Research history, pop culture, customs and norms and then understanding like our relationship with that country. The United States as a whole, the Special Forces and then just military to military."

Parker: "Just consume information through the use of tools we've received here."

Pascal: "One, do self learning about whatever partner force. And then two, use civilian language courses to interact with people from that country and also practice my language."

*Experiences as Examples: Searching for Stories*

In all three group interviews, the participants discussed their intentions to seek out mentorship and stories from those with experience. While the majority of those responses focused on stories from other Special Forces teammates within the specific Special Forces Group they would be assigned to in the future, some participants mentioned seeking stories from non-military personnel as well.

Of those within the control group, three discussed their intention of seeking to learn from their peers while one spoke about the learning he may experience by interacting with anyone who has been to or is from a specific country, to include immigrants in the U.S.

Cleon: "I know I will like if I'm going on deployment somewhere…I'd be like, hey, I know this guy's [peer] been there. I'll ask around."

Cohen: "Reach out to peers who have been there, or who are I'm going to be replacing to learn about what they can tell me."

Chi: "More than likely than that, then someone's been there at whatever [Special Forces] Group you're at. So there's plenty of people that can give me some information."

Cye: "Talk to people who've been there before, talk to people from that country. Find a  local restaurant…because most likely…they're probably immigrants, and

they have family members that are still there. So you're able to actually talk to them, and have a good understanding of their country."

Of those within the face-to-face group, there was a similar trend in finding sources from within the Special Forces community but also learning from people who identify as part of a cultural group.

Frank: "Find stories of, you know, American forces or any forces that work with a partner force. So kind of gives you context that you're not the first guy to have to go do something like this."

Femi: "Learning the lessons from those with more experience."

Felipe: "Talk to my peers or people on my team that have gone there in the past, and get as much as I can from the people who have already experienced it."

Fumio: "Seeking out conversations with those who are from different cultures. Just in day to day life, on an airplane, or Uber driver or something like that, asking them about their home."

The podcast group's comments were the briefest but three of the participants also mentioned their intent to learn from previous experiences by seeking out mentors.

Pierre: "Speak to predecessors that were there."

Pavel: "Seek mentorship from just people who work in your group that have experience."

Paulo: "Talk to other people who have been there."

Overall, the senior Special Forces leaders' stories positively influenced aspiring Special Forces Captains' intent to improve their CQ and provided specific and action-oriented means of improvement, which differs from the more basic and generic responses

shared by in the control group. Additionally, participants across all three groups expressed their intention to seek stories and mentorship from experienced individuals as a strategy for improving their CQ. This shared intention suggests a connection between cultural intelligence improvement and the participants' understanding of its relevance in collaborating with partner forces.

**Conclusion**

This chapter provided analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data collected as part of this pilot program. For the first research question, analysis of the quantitative CQ assessment data revealed differences in motivation, cognition, metacognition, and behavior among the three study comparison groups from T1 to T2. The senior Special Forces leaders' stories had varying impacts on the groups' mean scores. Futhermore, there was a consistent decline of observer averages across all groups from T1 to T2. These findings highlight the potentially complex set of influences on an aspiring Special Forces candidate's self-assessed and observer-assessed CQ capabilities.

For the second research question, which explored the impact of senior Special Forces leaders' stories on the aspiring Special Forces candidates motivation to work with partner force, qualitative analysis of the group interview responses revealed that the stories inspired and motivated the student by emphasizing the importance and benefits of working effectively across cultures with partner forces. Additionally, the stories contributed to a deeper understanding of the fundamental role of Special Forces in achieving their missions by, with, and through partners. However, while some students expressed enthusiasm for partnering more broadly, others expressed their desire to partner with specific nations or regions while others acknowledged the potential

challenges and complexities associated with partner forces. These themes highlight the complex nature of various factors that influence students' motivation to work with partner forces, including personal experiences, exposure to senior Special Forces leaders' stories, and their understanding of the Special Forces mission.

Lastly, the third research question explored how the senior Special Forces leaders' stories influenced the aspiring Special Forces candidates intent to improve their CQ. Analysis of the qualitative group interview responses revealed that scene or special forces leader stories provided a specific and more action oriented means of improving CQ. Additionally, participants across all three groups expressed intent to seek stories and mentorship from those with lived experience working across culture, underscoring the importance of narratives and learning from the past.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

The preceding four chapters described the problem of practice, the theoretical

perspectives of cultural intelligence and multimodality used to frame this study, the

methods used to deliver the senior leader intervention and collect quantitative and

qualitative data, as well as the quantitative and qualitative findings. This chapter will

provide a discussion of the findings, suggest areas for future research, describe issues of

transferability, provide recommendations for scalability of the intervention, and share

lessons learned for researchers seeking to conduct research with ARSOF students.

As this pilot program sought to explore how learning from senior Special Forces

leaders impacts aspiring Special Forces Captains at the ARSOF CCC and was guided by

the below research questions, I have organized the discussion of findings according to

each individual question:

RQ1: How does learning about cultural intelligence from experienced officers and

non-commissioned officer leaders (either face-to-face or through a podcast)

impact a student's cultural intelligence capability as measured through the CQ

military assessment?

RQ2: How does learning about cultural intelligence from SF leaders (either face-

to-face or through a podcast) influence SWCS students' motivation to work in a

deployed environment across cultures?

RQ3: How does learning about cultural intelligence from SF leaders (either face-

to-face or through a podcast) influence SWCS students' intent to improve their

cultural intelligence in ways that are different from instructor-led interaction?

**Discussion of Findings**

Using a mixed method design that combined quantitative and qualitative data sources from the three study comparison groups, this study provides insights into the varying factors that influence an aspiring Special Forces candidate's CQ, motivation to work with a partnered force, and intentions to improve their CQ.

*Research Question 1*

This question explored the impact that learning from senior Special Forces has on Special Forces candidates' CQ scores with a focus on four distinct constructs: motivation, cognition, metacognition, and behavior. Analysis of the descriptive statistics for both self-assessments and observer assessments at T1 and T2 for each of the three comparison groups revealed that students across all groups experienced a change in both self-assessment and observer assessment scores over time.

Motivation

At T1, all three comparison groups self-assessment group averages were high, with all groups' averages exceeding 6 points on a 7 point scale. The observer assessment group averages at T1 (approximately six weeks after the students completed their T1 self-assessment) were also high, with all groups' averages exceeding 6 points on a 7 point scale. Additionally, observer assessment scores were higher than self-assessment scores at T1 across all three comparison groups. At T2, both the control group and the podcast groups experienced an increase in self-assessment averages on motivation while the face-to-face group experienced a marginal decrease. The observer group averages decreased from T1 to T2 across all three comparison group averages.

Cognition

At T1, all three comparison groups self-assessment group averages were moderate, with all groups' averages below 5 points on a 7 point scale. Additionally, the observer assessment group averages at T1 (approximately six weeks after the students completed their T1 self-assessment) exceeded the self-assessment averages across all three comparison groups. At T2, all three comparison groups experienced an increase in self-assessment averages on cognition. However, the observer group averages decreased from T1 to T2 across all three comparison group averages.

Metacognition

At T1, all three comparison groups self-assessment group averages were high, with all groups' averages slightly below or slightly above 6 points on a 7 point scale. Additionally, the observer assessment group averages at T1 (approximately six weeks after the students completed their T1 self-assessment) exceeded the self-assessment averages across all three comparison groups. At T2, the self-assessment scores remained constant for the control group, decreased marginally for the face-to-face group, and increased for the podcast group. Additionally, the observer group averages decreased from T1 to T2 across all three comparison group averages.

Behavior

At T1, all three comparison groups' self-assessment group averages were moderate to high, with the range of group averages from 4.46 to 5.33 on a 7 point scale. Additionally, the observer assessment group averages at T1 (approximately six weeks after the students completed their T1 self-assessment) exceeded the self-assessment averages across all three comparison groups. At T2, the self-assessment scores remained constant for the control group, decreased for the face-to-face group, and increased for the

podcast group. Additionally, the observer group averages decreased from T1 to T2 across all three comparison group averages.

These findings provide insights into the impact that senior Special Forces leaders' stories have on the CQ capabilities of aspiring Special Forces candidates. First, the differing self-assessment group averages across the four constructs align with the multiple loci of intelligence theory. As noted in the literature review, this theory posits that intelligence extends beyond cognition and includes motivation, metacognition, and behavior. This pilot program leveraged this theoretical foundation to explore how these factors of intelligence are influenced by the senior Special Forces leaders' stories. Second, while the control group and the podcast group consistently experienced an increase in self-assessment scores from T1 to T2 across all four constructs (except for metacognition, as the control group averages remained stable from T1 to T2), the face-to-face group was the only group to experience a marginal decrease in both motivation and strategy scores from T1 to T2. This decline challenges previous intelligence scholarship that posits a positive relationship between learning from experience and improved cultural intelligence. Additionally, since the observer assessment scores consistently decreased from T1 to T2 across all three groups, the face-to-face group is also the only group that experienced decreases in both self-assessment scores and observer assessment scores, as shown below.

**Figure 7**

*Mean Scores for All CQ Factors at T1 and T2 by Comparison Groups*
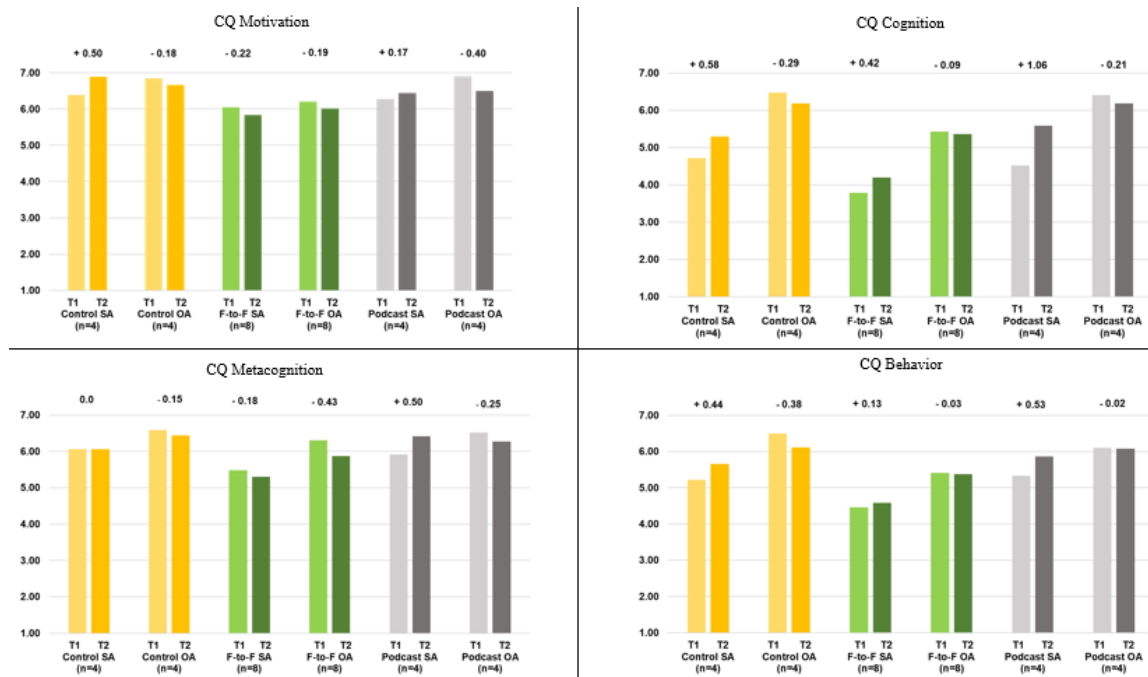


There are several potential explanations for why the face-to-face group experienced a marginal decrease in both motivation and metacognition. First, given the relatively small sample size in this research, it is possible that this decrease is artificial rather than an accurate representation of the students' actual perceptions of their CQ capabilities. The 7-point Likert scale used in the CQ self-assessment inherently presents opportunities for measurement error due to variability in individual responses based on how each student understands and interprets the scale options. For example, students may interpret labels such as "strongly," "moderately," and "slightly" differently. Furthermore, the small sample size due to the specialized population resulted in limited data points where slight fluctuations in respondents' answers can become more pronounced since the smaller the n, the more sensitive the data is to individual responses.

Second, while the students across the three groups had extremely high motivation levels at the start of the course, it is possible that they were overconfident in their capabilities. As the students in the face-to-face group listened to the stories from the senior special forces leaders and better understood the complexities and challenges associated with partner forces, it is possible that their self-assessment scores marginally declined as they became more aware of what was required to be successful and came to believe that they were not yet ready to work alongside partners in a deployed environment. Additionally it is possible that with an increased understanding of the focus on partnerships within the Special Forces branch and hearing senior Special Forces leaders emphasize the need to successfully partner with forces in order to achieve their missions, students may have set higher expectations for themselves and self-assessed lower metacognition at T2.

Fundamentally, a decrease in CQ scores should not be viewed negatively. In fact, a decrease in CQ scores may signify increased self-awareness. This self-awareness suggests that the students were able to critically evaluate their capabilities, which is a necessary for growth and development and may lead to these aspiring Special Forces leaders actively seeking additional education, training, and mentorship to improve their CQ. Through this self-reflection, which is a critical component of leadership inside of the Special Operations community and is necessary for cultural intelligence, students may approach their educational journey with greater humility and commit the time necessary to develop their CQ skills so they can effectively meet the expectations placed upon them as Green Berets.

As previously noted, observer assessment averages often exceeded self-assessment averages but decreased across all constructs and across all groups from T1 to T2 while the self-assessment averages mostly increased across all constructs across both the control and podcast groups from T1 to T2. The higher observer ratings may be influenced by several factors specific to the ARSOF CCC context. This pilot program incorporated diverse observers: a Special Forces peer, a peer from another branch (Civil Affairs or Psychological Operations), and the small group instructor. While this diversity can lead to a more comprehensive and well-rounded assessment of cultural intelligence, it can also contribute to variation in observer CQ ratings. Additionally, some key factors that may have contributed to the higher observer ratings are varying levels of knowledge and experiences. Regarding variation in knowledge, instructors and peers who have greater familiarity with the expectations of Special Forces candidates may possess a deeper understanding of what constitutes effective CQ in the context of becoming a Green Beret. This knowledge, specific to the role of Special Forces, may allow observers to provide more informed and accurate assessments. Regarding variation in experience, instructors who have completed extensive training and deployed with partners overseas may be best positioned to objectively evaluating a candidates' CQ capabilities while student peers have varying degrees of operational experience working with partners overseas. The same could be true for peers who have deployed overseas with partners. Overall, the variations in the knowledge and experiences of the diverse set of observers may have contributed to the differences in self-assessment versus observer assessment group means.

Lastly, the differences in self-assessment and observer assessment group means may be the result of the difference in the instruments' number of items. While the longer (39 item) self-assessment measures a broader range of an individual's perceived CQ capabilities, the shorter (20 item) observer assessment focused on external observations.

*Research Question 2*

The question sought to explore the motivation of the aspiring Special Forces candidates to work with a partner force through group interviews. The broad theme that emerged from thematic analysis of the transcripts was that the senior leader stories helped strengthen the students' understanding of Special Forces identity. For example, several of the students across the three comparison groups expressed that when they started the course, they did not fully understand that the Special Forces mission was to work by, with, and through partners. They made comments about their choice to join the Special Forces community as influenced by seeking a "challenge," being a part of the U.S. Army's "elite forces," and having the opportunity to work in "small teams."

Specific to the each of the three comparison groups, analysis of the transcripts revealed that the majority of students in the face-to-face group attributed their motivation to work with partner forces on listening to the stories shared by the senior Special Forces leaders. For example, students mentioned that the senior leader stories showed the "impact" of partnerships and were "inspirational." In the control group, students primarily referenced their previous partner force experience while also discussing their desires to work with specific nations on specific missions. For example, students mentioned specific countries such as "Poland" and "Ukraine" while also expressing their desire to deploy in support of kinetic missions where they could engage in direct action

against an enemy force. The podcast group found their increased motivation through both the course content as well as the various stories they heard. For example, students mentioned that the senior leader stories increased their "understanding" that the "primary task" of Special Forces is to work with partners. Overall, these findings suggest that while positive firsthand experiences working with partners may be a great motivator because it is firsthand exposure, senior Special Forces leaders sharing their stories of success working alongside partners may be a valuable tool to motivate aspiring candidates as well.

*Research Question 3*

This question sought to investigate the influence of learning about CQ from senior Special Forces leaders on the intent of aspiring Special Forces Captains to improve their cultural intelligence, specifically in comparison to instructor-led interactions in the control group. Analysis of the group interview transcripts revealed two themes: senior leader stories provided specificity, and all students intended to seek experiences as examples for learning.

In the control group, participants often presented generic strategies for improving their cultural intelligence, focusing primarily on cognitive knowledge. For example, students' strategies included "just do a lot of reading," "talk to other people," "be open-minded," "be an active listener," and "watch YouTube videos." However, the responses from the face-to-face group demonstrated greater specificity, such as using the term "culture" and recognizing the importance of socio-linguistic skills, cultural norms and values, business systems, and geopolitics. Students expressed that "it's important to invest in the region," "understand the history," and "understand the customs." Additionally,

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three of the students emphasized the importance of learning language(s).  Similarly, the podcast group exhibited a mix of generic and action-oriented responses, with some participants aligning with the face-to-face group's level of specificity.

These findings suggest that listening to senior Special Forces leaders' stories improved participants' understanding of CQ and provided them with more actional steps for improvement. Overall, the greater specificity expressed by the face-to-face group over the podcast group suggests alignment with multimodality theory. This theory emphasizes the importance of combining multiple modes, such as visual and audial, to communicate information in an effort to increase understanding. The face-to-face students were able to both see and hear the stories of the senior Special Forces in real-time and were better able to recall and apply what they learned to their own improvement plans.

Additionally, participants across all three groups expressed strong intentions to seek mentorship and stories from individuals with greater levels of experience. While the majority of participants mentioned seeking stories from within the Special Forces community, some also acknowledged the value of learning from civilians, specifically immigrants with connections to various countries. This shared intention across all three groups suggests the significance of experiential learning and the power of stories to shape both attitudes and actions.

**Implication for Practice**

While the total number of Special Forces candidates that completed the quantitative assessment is small (n=16), a total of 29 aspiring Special Forces candidates participated in the qualitative group interviews. Therefore, the findings from this pilot program offer insights for the future of educational programs within ARSOF CCC as

well as follow-on education with the Special Forces Qualification Course. First, they highlight the power of storytelling and firsthand experiences in impacting candidates' cultural intelligence capabilities, which was most notable for the face-to-face group as their marginal decrease in both CQ motivation and metacognition may be the result of acknowledging that they have more to learn and experience in order to be successful Special Forces Captains. Second, the impact of senior Special Forces leaders' stories on the face-to-face group's motivation to work with a partner force suggests that these learning opportunities can be a valuable tool in motivating candidates. Furthermore, the control group's emphasis on previous partner force experience highlights the importance of practical exposure in shaping an aspiring Special Forces candidate's motivation to work in the future with a partner force. Third, the findings suggest that senior Special Forces leaders' stories provide aspiring candidates with more actionable and specific means to improve their cultural intelligence and that all students value experiential and story-based learning opportunities.

Based on these findings, SWCS could enhance students' learning experiences by offering increased opportunities to interact with senior Special Forces leaders who can draw on their years of experiences growing and utilizing their cultural intelligence capabilities in order to work and relate more effectively with partner forces. This approach is potentially preferable to relying on aspiring Special Forces candidates to learn from their peers or those who have more experience within their respective Special Forces Groups. While learning from peers and sharing advice can be valuable, especially in the Special Operations community where building camaraderie and trust begins at the Team level between the Captain in charge and the rest of the Soldiers, relying solely on

those "peer" teammates without first learning about CQ through a structured training program may results in varying levels of capability and lead to potentially risky situations. First, aspiring candidates would be wise to acknowledge that not all of their peers may have received the same level of cultural intelligence training or had similar experiences. Without that acknowledgement, they may focus on the experiences of one peer or group of peers and treat that as emblematic of a culture, which is risky and dangerous because it may further biases and misconceptions. Therefore, SWCS could promote seeking advice from multiple individuals who have successfully navigated partner force situations or received specific cultural intelligence training, with a focus on formal education. Additionally, to supplement peer advice, SWCS might explore the possibility of incorporating continued mentorship from experienced leaders or subject matter experts who can provide valuable guidance based on their expertise and real-world experiences. Lastly, SWCS can emphasize that cultural intelligence is an ongoing process that requires continual learning and adaptation. During their interactions with the candidates, all senior Special Forces leaders spoke about the need to constantly learn and adapt. Fundamentally, while peer input can be valuable, those informal mechanisms of learning would be a complement the required, structured, and formal training that SWCS provides to equip students with the necessary CQ skills they need to successfully partner across the globe.

To illustrate these points, I witnessed numerous active duty Green Berets who lacked knowledge of Afghan culture and history during the decade (2010 to 2020) that I provided cultural intelligence training to them before they deployed. These cultural misunderstandings led to unintended negative outcomes, from diplomatic incidents to

mission failures to physical harm. The most disturbing aspect of these situations were that these were "seasoned" Green Berets, meaning they had completed the entirety of their training and education pipeline at SWCS, completed the Special Forces Qualification Course which is supposed to evaluate their ability to work alongside partners, and had deployed to Afghanistan previously. However, countless Green Berets lamented to me that they wished they had learned what I taught them before their last deployment and that they did not fully grasp the complexities of Afghan culture. There was no formal cultural intelligence training through their training pipeline and while each unit may have conducted an "academic week" as part of their pre-mission training, there was no standardized process by which to leverage academic and experiential experts who had years of experience working with individuals across cultures. By incorporating a formal educational program that equips aspiring Special Forces leaders with the culture-general principles of the CQ model, students can develop their motivation to deploy alongside partners forces in each specific region, improve their knowledge about the various cultures where they will be operating, enhance their strategic capabilities so they can prepare for and learn from their cross-cultural engagements, and practice their behavioral adaptation so they can be more effective during their deployments.

**Transferability and Scalability**

As previously mentioned, the CCC has approximately 30 Special Forces candidates in each iteration so by design, this dissertation includes a small-n population in an effort to provide initial insights into the specialized pathway of aspiring Special Forces officers. I chose this small-n approach for this pilot program due to the unique nature of this research setting (ARSOF CCC as the first educational program in the multi-

90

year journey to becoming a Special Forces Captain) and the need to explore the experiences and perspectives of these candidates regarding CQ and leadership development. Therefore, the findings are context-specific to Special Forces candidates in ARSOF CCC and may not universally apply. Specifically, numerous factors limit transferability of the findings. First, the small population size at the start of the course was further reduced due to attrition. In the control group, only four out of the nine students had complete data across all four assessments (T1 Self, T2 Self, T1 Observer, and T2 Observer). In the face-to-face group, eight out of the 10 students had complete data across all four assessments. In the podcast group, only four out of the 10 students had complete data across all four assessments. Therefore, since there was a small number of participants who had complete self-assessment and observer-assessment data for both T1 and T2 in each of the three study comparison groups, this sample is not representative of the population that completes ARSOF CCC. Furthermore, with these small sample sizes, I was only able to run descriptive statistics rather than inferential statistics. Therefore, future research with larger data sets is needed in order to make inferences or predictions about aspiring Special Forces candidates. Second, the population is unique within the U.S. military because they are junior officers who have decided to depart the general purpose forces of the U.S. Army and complete an approximately two year training pipeline to become a Special Forces leader. Third, the students at ARSOF CCC are at the very beginning of this training pipeline. Therefore, due to the specific training curriculum of ARSOF CCC coupled with the specific population of aspiring Special Forces Captains, the findings from this study are most applicable to future iterations of the CCC and are not easily transferable to other parts of the Special Forces training

pipeline since each portion has its own content and objectives. However, it is likely that practical experiences and senior leader engagements across all future phases of the Special Forces pipeline will serve to further enhance the educational journey of aspiring Special Forces and help them better prepare for the intercultural complexities they will experience once they take command of their operational detachments.

Regarding scalability of the intervention, effective scaling can spread "...constructive beliefs and behaviors from the few to the many" (Sutton & Rao, 2014, p. ix). The process requires a longer-term time orientation and grit, akin to fighting a ground war rather than an air war in which students are bombarded with a few days of training or inspirational speeches, because effective scaling is best achieved through small changes in mindset over time and should be viewed as a marathon, not a sprint (Sutton & Rao, 2014, p. 4). Scaling excellence is a challenge for any leader in any context because leaders may see excellence in one part of their organization but struggle to spread that excellence to more people and more parts of the organization. Therefore, scaling excellence requires leaders to engage and connect as many people as possible around a common vision.

The ARSOF CCC is a small-scale educational environment, with approximately 400 total students annually, but it is a critical part of developing Special Forces candidates' skills to lead their teams and work effectively with others. To ensure these candidates are better prepared for their fundamental role – working with partners in a deployed environment to achieve their missions – it is important that the entirety of the Special Forces educational pipeline continuously articulates a vision of culturally

intelligent leaders and provides concrete lived experiences that reinforce that vision and skillset.

The podcast comparison group was in part an exploration of scaling access to the lived experiences of senior leaders as aspiring Special Forces candidates begin their journey to join the Special Forces community. These study findings suggest that audio-only versions of the engagements result in moderate impacts on CQ, motivation to work with a partner force, and specific intentions to improve CQ. The podcast group students expressed varying perspectives on their experiences with the audio-only recordings. First, seven of the 10 students commented that they either "did not" remember, "vaguely" remembered, or "faintly" remembered the content they heard. Second, three students noted that the poor recording quality, which was described as "terrible" and inaudible if "more than two feet away from the computer," dissuaded them from actively listening to the content and affected their overall comprehension of the senior leaders' key points. Third, three of the students commented that they prefer face-to-face interaction or more visuals and one of these students further added that he finds it difficult to focus on audio-only material.

Based on this feedback from the podcast group, as well as the positive comments from the face-to-face group regarding their in-person interactions with the senior Special Forces leaders, scalability could focus on using multiple modes of communication to enhance the students' experiences and improve their learning outcomes. First, SWCS could ensure that professional recording equipment is available in the future to capture the senior Special Forces leaders' storytelling sessions to the live audience. Second, senior Special Forces leaders could conduct their storytelling at a professional video and

audio recording studio. For example, U.S. Special Operations Command produces SOFCast, a podcast that shares the stories of Special Operations personnel as they discuss leadership and current issues within the community. Each interview is video recorded with simultaneous high-quality sound recording. The interviews are shared on multiple podcast platforms and on SOFCast's YouTube channel so individuals have the option to watch or listen to the content. Additionally, SWCS' official podcast is Pineland Underground and the Senior Special Forces, who routinely visit Ft. Liberty, NC where SWCS is located, could schedule to conduct their podcast interviews when they are already traveling to Ft. Liberty for business reasons. This would alleviate additional resource expenditures such as travel funding and time. Third, if a professional recording studio is unavailable, senior Special Forces leaders could share their stories through video conferencing tools such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams since both platforms offer government accounts. The sessions could be video recording with the audio-only recording saved as a separate file. Both files could be uploaded so individuals have viewing and listening options. These various recordings could be incorporated into e-learning modules related to cross-cultural topics and shared with the entire Special Forces community. Fourth, SWCS could host monthly webinars with senior Special Forces leaders through Zoom or Microsoft Teams accounts that require registration using a military (.mil) or government (.gov) email address. This would allow SWCS to control access and the number of participants. While this is more restrictive than the previous two options, it may allow both the senior leaders to speak more freely and honestly and allow the participants to ask specific questions. Fifth, as the Special Operations community continues to invest in virtual reality and augmented reality, SWCS could

consider using these technologies to create immersive experiences where students can engage with senior leaders to learn from their lived experience no matter where they are deployed across the world. Ultimately, senior Special Forces leaders have both depth and breadth of cross-cultural experiences that can inform training curriculum and improve the learning journey of aspiring Special Forces candidates.

**Future Research and Lessons Learned**

There are myriad opportunities for future research. For example, since USASOC is the three-star headquarters that oversees both educational and operational U.S. Army Special Operations forces, it could conduct a longitudinal study that begins when the aspiring Special Forces candidates first begin their educational journey and continues as they join the operational force. Specific to the group of Special Forces candidates who participated in this pilot program, SWCS could measure their CQ before (T1) and after (T2) the Q course to explore the impact of that training program. Observer feedback could include their fellow Special Forces candidates as well as instructors. Following the candidates' assignments to their operational Special Forces Groups, USASOC could ask the Special Forces Captains to complete another CQ assessment after they complete their operational deployment working alongside a partner force (T3). Additional assessments could measure change over time as these Special Forces Captains continue to deploy throughout their careers. Observer feedback could include each Captain's Team Sergeant, other members of their 12-person ODAs, their Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations peers, Special Operations personnel, conventional military personnel, State Department personnel, and perhaps most importantly, their partner force. While the observers would change as the candidates' progress through the years, the observer

assessments would provide these Special Forces leaders with feedback so they can explore the similarities and differences between their self-perception and how others view their CQ capabilities.

Additionally, USASOC could use the CQ assessments to compare the capabilities of Special Forces Captains (officers) and Special Forces Team Sergeants (enlisted) as they progress through their careers. Further, USASOC could conduct a comparison of Special Forces personnel, Civil Affairs personnel, and Psychological Operations personnel.

Should USASOC or SWCS decide to use the CQ assessments in the future, there are multiple lessons learned from this pilot study that can inform future research efforts within SWCS. First, if future research incorporates assessments, instructors should provide time for the respondents/participants to complete the assessments in the classroom at a designated time. This would potentially improve retention because as previously noted, there was significant attrition in both the control and podcast groups. All of the students completed the initial self-assessment because I recruited all of them to participate during a large group session on 29 March. However, many of the Special Forces candidates did not complete the second round of self-assessments in July nor did they have complete observer feedback at both T1 and T2, meaning that several of their peers (Special Forces, Civil Affairs, and Psychological Operations candidates) did not complete the observer assessments on their behalf. In my conversations with the small group instructor for the face-to-face group, he mentioned that he provided class time for all of his students to complete their various assessments at the same time. By contrast, the

other small groups instructors asked the students to complete the assessment during school hours rather than providing dedicated class time.

Second, if there are future research efforts to investigate the impacts of Multimodality, a comparison group might receive transcripts from the senior leader storytelling sessions so the study could compare groups that received text-only as compared to face-to-face and audio-only. While I considered including a text-only option in lieu of a control group for this pilot program, it would have resulted in additional complexity and turnaround time since the recordings were done with a video camera. Without the proper recording equipment or use of outside software, transcribing five 90-minute sessions would have required extensive time. However, with the use of real-time transcription software, it would be possible for the instructors to capture the senior Special Forces leaders' engagements and provide the students with the transcripts shortly after the engagement was complete.

Third, students may assess their CQ capabilities more accurately if they were provided a deeper understanding of cultural intelligence as a four-factor model with the accompanying 13 subdimensions prior to taking their self-assessments. Rather than focusing on measuring the impact of an intervention, this research would focus on emphasizing the developmental nature of CQ as a capability that can and should change over time, encouraging students to engage in greater self-reflection and critical thinking about their capabilities rather than focusing on the assessment being an evaluation. Additionally, learning about CQ before taking any assessments may result in more nuanced and accurate observer feedback. For example, in this pilot program, the peers completed the T1 observer assessments six weeks into the course and had to think

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retrospectively about what they observed in order to provide an assessment. However, if observers are more attuned to the what the CQ assessments measure, they may be able to gather their reflections about an individual's CQ capability in order to arrive as an assessment score that more accurately reflects that individual's typical performance.

**Conclusion**

This dissertation explored the impact of senior special forces leaders on aspiring special forces candidates. Regarding CQ scores, all three comparison groups experienced changes in their CQ capabilities before and after ARSOF CCC. While the control group and the podcast group displayed either stable or increasing scores from T1 to T2, the face-to-face group was the only group to experience a marginal numeric decrease in both motivation and metacognition. The exact reasons are unknown, but it is possible that the stories they heard led to increased self-reflection and critical thinking in assessing their cultural intelligence capabilities. Regarding motivation to work with a partner force, all three comparison groups expressed an increase from T1 to T2. The face-to-face group, which experienced the largest increase, attributed their motivational increase to their interactions with senior Special Forces leaders. Finally, regarding intentions to improve CQ, the senior Special Forces leaders' stories provided more specific and actionable insights that aspiring Special Forces candidates could incorporate into their CQ improvement plans. Overall, this study illuminates the transformative power of stories and demonstrates that candidates benefit from the learned experience and wisdom of others.

Additionally, this dissertation provided recommendations for practice, specifically the continuation of learning opportunities with senior Special Forces leaders. While the

findings are most applicable to ARSOF CCC, senior Special Forces leaders sharing their experiences so that future generations of special forces leaders can learn from both their successes and challenges would be valuable to all other aspects of the Special Forces educational and operational journeys.

While this study provided insights into the impact of senior Special Forces leader interactions on aspiring Special Forces candidates' CQ, several design issues and caveats are important to acknowledge. First, the relatively small sample size of this specialized population allowed for only descriptive statistics. The lack of inferential statistics means the findings are not generalizable beyond Special Forces candidates at ARSOF CCC. Additionally, the 7-point Likert scale used in the CQ self-assessment is inherently susceptible to interpretation variability and may have contributed to measurement error. Furthermore, the decision to use a 20-item CQ scale for observers and a 39-item scale for students, while driven by practicality, may have introduced variation in the data collected. Moreover, the qualitative findings rely on the students' recollection of experiences and may be subject to recall bias. Lastly, the decision to use a control group and two experimental groups, though motivated by a utilization-focused design, requires a careful consideration of the size and representativeness of each group to ensure meaningful comparisons. These design limitations should be recognized when interpreting the results and considering the implications for practice and future research.

When considering future research, there are multiple possibilities. Longitudinal studies could track Special Forces' CQ development from the beginning of their educational pipeline through their operational leadership roles. Comparisons between the three occupational specialties within ARSOF (Special Forces, Civil Affairs, and

Psychological Operations) as well as between officer and enlisted may illuminate areas for improvement within cultural training curriculum and practical application. These comparison studies may also highlight the populations within ARSOF who have higher levels of CQ so they can help others to grow their capabilities.

As the world continues to change and conflicts become more unpredictable, ARSOF must be motivated, knowledgeable, strategic, and adaptable leaders so they can execute the nation's most difficult and complex missions. All of the senior Special Forces leaders expressed high levels of enthusiasm when I requested their participation, highlighting the value that they place on being able to pass down what they have learned. Additionally, all of them expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to share their experiences with the students, noting that they enjoyed mentoring future leaders.

As SWCS continues to educate aspiring leaders within the Special Forces community, I hope these findings provide some insights that enhances the capabilities of Special Forces personnel and provides increased opportunities for senior Special Forces leaders to support the next generation's growth and development. By ensuring that senior Special Forces leaders continue to invest in the educational journey of future members of their own community, aspiring Special Forces candidates will have a greater number of perspectives and lesson learned they can draw upon in the future. Additionally, as these aspiring Special Forces candidates become senior leaders and commanders, I hope they will take every opportunity to share their lessons learned with the next generation. This cycle of experienced leaders sharing their stories with future generations could lead to a stronger culture of knowledge transfer and mentorship so that collectively, they succeed in the uniquely Special Forces way – by, with, and through partners.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR MILITARY INSTRUCTORS

1. Tell me how you learned about cultural intelligence.

2. Tell me why you chose to use cultural intelligence as part of your curriculum.

3. Tell me about how you incorporated cultural intelligence into your curriculum (method of delivery, number of hours, types of activities, etc.).

4. What went well?

5. What did not go well?

6. If you could go back and redesign the curriculum, what would you do differently?

7. Do you have any questions for me?

APPENDIX B

CQ CERTIFICATION LEARNING ASSESSMENT

1. A colleague asks you to describe CQ in a brief sentence. Which of the following would you choose?

    a. CQ describes how successful a person is in culturally diverse settings

    b. CQ, like a personality trait, describes a person's cultural preferences

    c. CQ is a belief of how one should interact with people from different cultures

    d. CQ is a capability that can be improved with training, education, travel, and multicultural experiences

2. A family member asks you to explain the components of CQ. Which of the following would you share with them?

    a. Motivation to engage in intercultural situations

    b. Knowledge and strategies to make sense of multicultural interactions

    c. Behavioral flexibility to adapt to different cultural contexts

    d. All the above

3. You overhear members of your team talking about "culture" and each person on the team responds with a different description. Which of the following statements is NOT true?

    a. Culture is created by humans

    b. Culture can apply to different levels of analysis (e.g., group, organizational, national,
    etc.)

    c. Genetics play a role in determining one's cultural values and orientation

    d. Culture is reflected in behavior, language, technology, food, and the arts

4. An academic researcher asks you if CQ is based on theory. Which one of these answers would you choose as your response?
    a. CQ is based on Mayer and Salovey's conceptualization of EQ
    b. CQ is based on Hofstede's cultural value dimensions
    c. CQ is based on Sternberg's multiple loci perspective on intelligence
    d. CQ is a new construct that is not rooted in existing literature

5. People who recognize some cultural norms and have started to incorporate them into their thinking and behavior are an example of:

a. Low CQ
b. Moderate CQ
c. High CQ

6. People who react to and judge external stimuli (e.g., what is seen, heard, etc., in a new cultural context) through their own cultural context and largely ignore cultural differences are an example of:

a. Low CQ
b. Moderate CQ
c. High CQ

7. People who adapt and adjust their thinking and behavior to other cultural norms are an example of:

a. Low CQ
b. Moderate CQ
c. High CQ

8 Which of the following BEST describes people with high CQ behavior?
a. They demonstrate a variety of nonverbal behaviors in different cultural settings
b. They understand several different languages
c. They adapt to whatever context they are in
d. They know a lot about appropriate and inappropriate behaviors of many different
    cultures

9. All the following are benefits of CQ Cognition EXCEPT:
a. Good understanding of multicultural interactions
b. Knowledge of what is "cultural" and what is not
c. Awareness during multicultural interactions
d. Understanding what cues to look for in an unfamiliar cultural environment

10. Suspending judgment is more difficult for a person who has low scores in which of the four

CQ capabilities?
a. CQ Motivation (drive)
b. CQ Cognition (knowledge
c. CQ Metacognition (strategy)
d. CQ Behavior (action)

11. You are discussing a feedback report with one of your participants. They ask you how to determine the "worldwide norm." The correct response is:

a. Add up your scores for each of the four CQ capabilities and divide by four

b. The worldwide norm is always the 50% mark for each of the four CQ capabilities

c. The worldwide norm is the center of each CQ capability's "moderate" category. Therefore, the worldwide norm varies for each of the four CQ capabilities.

d. The worldwide norm fluctuates daily based on the number of people who are alive versus deceased

12. A colleague explains to you that their motivation to learn about and work effectively with other cultures is low. They ask you to provide a list of strategies they can implement to improve their CQ motivation. Which one of the below options would not be on your list?

a. Identify an opportunity for your organization in a new cultural market (domestic or international). Research the size of the market and calculate the tangible benefits of being able to effectively saturate the market.

b. Find a peer who works in a different cultural group (e.g., a different department, a different geographic area, a group with a different age distribution, etc.) and learn about the norms of that group with assistance from your peer. Think about how understanding different norms can increase your confidence for working and relating with different groups.
c. Study the cultural values of the ten largest global clusters in the world.

d. Write down three ways you could gain more enjoyment from multicultural interactions. Consider how you could build on your current interests by sharing a hobby or sport with someone from a different culture.

13. A colleague explains to you that they would like to learn more about how cultures are similar or different to each other. They ask you to provide a list of strategies they can implement to improve their CQ cognition. Which one of the below options would not be on your list?

a. Read *Expand Your Borders* (Livermore, 2013) to gain an understanding of how geography, history, family systems, etc. influence the way various cultural clusters go about day-to-day work.

b. Next time read an article from a leadership magazine, pay attention to any aspects of the article that may be ethnocentric or biased towards or against a particular culture.

c. Make a list of acronyms and idioms you use regularly in your communication. Write down alternative ways of communicating in plain language so that you do not confuse those outside of your in-group.

d. Imagine that it is five years from now and you arere being rewarded for the way your CQ has benefitted your organization. Consider what people would say and how they would describe your accomplishments. Now, write down a goal that can make this a reality.

14. You are discussing a feedback report with one of your participants. They ask you how to determine which one of the four CQ capabilities is their strongest and which one of the four CQ capabilities is their weakest. Which one of these responses is correct?

a. The highest numerical value is your strongest CQ capability, and the lowest numerical score is your weakest CQ capability

b. The score that is furthest to the right of the worldwide norm is your strongest CQ capability and the one that is furthest to the left of the worldwide norm is your weakest CQ capability

c. Identify the worldwide norm for each of the four CQ capabilities. The score that is highest in relation to the worldwide norm is your strongest and the score that is lowest in relation to the worldwide norm is your weakest.

d. Do not focus on strengths and weaknesses. Focus instead on whether you are in the low, moderate, or high categories.

15. As you prepare for a one-on-one person feedback session, you review the participants cultural value profile. You learn that this individual prefers high power distance and high uncertainty avoidance. Therefore, you plan to:

a. Refer to them by their first name and casually go through the debrief session without an agenda

b. Refer to them by their title/last name and send an agenda ahead of time

c. Refer to them by their first name and send an agenda ahead of time

d. Refer to them by their title/last name and casually go through the debrief without an agenda

APPENDIX C

PRE-INTERVIEW WITH SENIOR SPECIAL FORCES LEADERS

My name is Lyla Kohistany and I am a doctoral student under the supervision of Dr. Sherman Dorn in the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College (MLFTC) at Arizona State University (ASU). I am conducting a research study on cultural intelligence (CQ) - defined as the capability to work and relate effectively across cultural differences - among aspiring Special Forces Captains who are at the ARSOF CCC at SWCS. The purpose of this interview is to explore your experiences as a Special Forces senior leader related to cultural intelligence.

I am asking to interview you because you have extensive experience working with a partnered force in a deployed environment. Your participation in the interview will focus on your experiences related to cultural intelligence. I anticipate this interview to take 30 minutes total. I would like to record this interview. The interview will not be recorded without your permission. Audio recordings will be deleted from the original recording device upon transfer to the password protected computer and then deleted from the computer once transcribed. Please let me know if you do not want the interview to be recorded. You may change your mind after the interview starts as well. We can pause recordings and restart if there is a portion you do not want recorded. Please let me know your preference.

Your participation is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or withdraw from the interview at any time, there will be no penalty whatsoever. You must be 18 years of age or older to participate.

The benefit to participation is the opportunity for you to reflect on and think more about CQ in the SF context. Your responses will inform a new module I am developing with SWCS instructors, specifically an interview protocol that we will use to conduct live training with Special Forces senior leaders for the SF candidates at the ARSOF CCC from March through August2023.

Interview responses will also inform future iterations of the ARSOF CCC and how SF candidates can improve their CQ. Thus, there is potential to enhance the experiences of your military colleagues, SWCS students, the Army, the military, and our global partners as military service members work and live overseas. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation.

Your responses will be confidential. Results from this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications but your name will not be used. To reiterate, the interview recording will be labeled with a study ID rather than your name, transferred to a password protected computer, and deleted from the original recording device.

If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788. Please let me know if you wish to be part of the study by signing below.

Name:

Signature:                                              Date:

1. Why did you decide to become a Green Beret?

2. How do you define cultural intelligence?

3. Think back on your experience during SWCS. What do you remember learning about how to work and relate effectively across cultural differences? (If they don't remember anything, "what would have helped prepare you for working with a partnered force?")

4. Think back on a successful cross-cultural experience working with a partnered force overseas. What made it successful?

5. Think back on an unsuccessful cross-cultural experience working with a partnered force overseas. What would have made it successful?

6. When was a time during deployment when you intentionally chose not to adapt to the local culture? Why did you make that choice?

7. As a senior SF commander, you have had years of experience working with Captains who have recently graduated from SWCS and been assigned to SF Groups. As a collective, what is your assessment of their readiness to work and relate effectively across cultural differences with a partnered force? What are they doing well? What needs improvement?

8. What recommendations would you make to SWCS instructors about preparing students for working with a partnered force?

9. Do you have any questions for me?

APPENDIX D

LIVE INTERVIEW WITH SENIOR SPECIAL FORCES LEADERS

1.) Tell us the story that ended with you thinking "this is why I joined Special Forces."

2.) Talk to us about the dynamics of an ODA. How should it work? How did you integrate into the team?
- How about the dynamic between a Team Leader, Team Sergeant, and Team Warrant?

3.) Tell us how you prepared your ODA for a deployment.

4.) Think back on your most successful partnered force mission. What challenges did you face and how did you overcome them?

5.) How did you actually build rapport with a partnered force?

6.) Think about the people in ARSOF that you admire the most. What attributes do they have in common?

7.) What do people get wrong about your community?

8.) What's the best advice anyone ever gave you about leadership?

9.) Thinking about your career as a Special Forces leader, please finish this sentence: "If I knew then what I know now, I would have…"

APPENDIX E

CONSENT FORM FOR INSTRUCTORS

My name is Lyla Kohistany and I am a doctoral candidate at the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College (MLFTC) at Arizona State University (ASU) under the direction of Dr. Sherman Dorn.  I am conducting a research study on cultural intelligence (CQ) - defined as the capability to work and relate effectively across cultural differences - among aspiring Special Forces Captains who are at the ARSOF CCC at SWCS.

As part of this study, you will be asked to complete a **developmental** cultural intelligence assessment for each of the Special Forces candidates in your small group twice during the course - once at approximately eight weeks into the course and one at the end of the course. The purpose of the pre and post assessment is to measure if there is a change in CQ scores based on the cross-cultural content they learn during ARSOF CCC. The CQ assessment has been used at SWCS to assess Special Forces, Civil Affairs, and Psychological Operations personnel as well as through the U.S. Army War College to assess Army senior leaders' capability to work and relate effectively across cultures.

This fully online assessment is administered through Arizona State University using Qualtrics. The Special Forces candidates who choose to take the assessment will provide you with their self-generated identification code (SGIC) rather than using their name, email, or any other personally identifiable information (PII). It is this code that will allow me to generate a pre and post feedback report for each study participant and align your observer data to their self-reported scores without attribution to any PII.  At the end of the course, I will bring hard copies of the feedback reports to your classroom in sealed envelopes marked with only SGICs. Each study participant will verbally tell me their SGIC, and I will hand that individual their feedback report. I will then conduct a debrief to explain the feedback report and to offer strategies they can use to improve their CQ. As instructors, you will not have access to an individual's scores. Instead, I will share aggregate group averages based on small group assignments.

The observer assessment takes approximately 15 minutes to complete. For each of your students who chooses to participate and provides you with a SGIC, you will spend approximately 30 minutes completing the initial (T1) assessment and the end-of-course (T2 assessment). If you have 15 students, you will spend approximately 3 hours and 45 minutes completing all the T1 assessments (15 minutes per each of your 15 students) and approximately 3 hours and 45 minutes completing all the T2 assessments (15 minutes per each of your 15 students). However, you will have a week to complete all the T1 assessments (approximately eight weeks into the course) and you will have a week to complete all of the T2 assessments (towards the end of the course). All the above activities will be performed during regularly scheduled working hours. You will not be asked to spend any time outside of class on these activities.

Your participation is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty whatsoever. You must be 18 years of age or older to participate.

The benefit of participation is the opportunity for you to reflect on and provide feedback on the cultural intelligence of the Special Forces candidates in your small group. Each

candidate who chooses to participate will receive a feedback report that provides data on their cultural intelligence capability using the same assessment that has been used by the U.S. Army War College. Thus, there is potential to enhance the experiences of SWCS students, the Army, the military, and our global partners since SF work and live overseas. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation.

Results from this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications but your name will never be used.

If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788. Additionally, you may contact Dr. Sherman Dorn at Sherman.Dorn@asu.edu.

If you choose to provide observer feedback to your Special Forces candidates as part of this study, please **type your name and date into the below box to confirm your consent to participate in this study.**

APPENDIX F

CONSENT FORM FOR STUDENTS

My name is Lyla Kohistany and I am a doctoral student under the supervision of Dr. Sherman Dorn in the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College (MLFTC) at Arizona State University (ASU). I am conducting a research study on cultural intelligence (CQ) - defined as the capability to work and relate effectively across cultural differences - among aspiring Special Forces Captains who are at the ARSOF CCC at SWCS.

During this study, you will be asked to complete a **developmental** assessment of your cultural intelligence twice - once at the beginning of the course and once at the end. The purpose of the pre and post assessment is to measure if there is a change in CQ scores based on the cross-cultural content you learn during ARSOF CCC. The CQ assessment has been used at SWCS to assess Special Forces, Civil Affairs, and Psychological Operations personnel as well as through the U.S. Army War College to assess Army senior leaders' capability to work and relate effectively across cultures.

This fully online assessment is administered through Arizona State University using Qualtrics. If you choose to participate in this study, you will be prompted to enter an alphanumeric code of your choice when you take the pre-test rather than using your name, email, or any other personally identifiable information. This is to ensure anonymity of responses. When you take the post (end-of-course) test, you will use the same alphanumeric code. It is this code that will allow me to generate a pre and post feedback report for each study participant. At the end of the course, I will bring hard copies of the feedback reports to your classroom in sealed envelopes marked with only alphanumeric coded. Each study participant will verbally tell me their alphanumeric code and I will hand that individual their feedback report. I will then conduct a debrief to explain the feedback report and to offer strategies you can use to improve your CQ. You will never be asked to share your individual scores with anyone. Your instructors will not have access to your individual scores. Instead, I will share aggregate group averages based on your Small Group assignments.

Additionally, you will also be asked to take the CQ assessment twice as an observer for one of your peers. You will complete the first observation/peer assessment approximately two months into the course and the second observation/peer assessment towards the end of the course.

Lastly, you will be invited to participate in a group interview with your class peers. The purpose of this interview is to explore your experiences with cultural intelligence while you were a student at the ARSOF CCC. Your participation in the group interview with other students from your class will focus on your experiences related to cultural intelligence during your time at ARSOF CCC. I anticipate this group interview will last 90 minutes total. I would like to audio record this interview. The interview will not be recorded without your permission. Audio recordings will be deleted from the original recording device upon transfer to the password protected computer and then deleted from the computer once transcribed. Please let me know if you do not want your portion of the interview to be recorded. You also can change your mind after the interview starts, just let me know.

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**All of the above activities will be performed during regularly scheduled course times. You will not be asked to spend any time outside of class on these activities.**

Your self-assessment will take approximately 30 minutes. Your observer assessment for one of your peers will take approximately 20 minutes. The group interview will be no more than 90 minutes.

Your participation is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or withdraw from the group interview at any point, there will be no penalty whatsoever. You must be 18 years of age or older to participate.

The benefit of participation is the opportunity for you to reflect on and think more about cultural intelligence as part of your education process at SWCS. You will receive a feedback report that provides data on your cultural intelligence capability using the same assessment that has been used by the U.S. Army War College. Also, group interview responses will inform future iterations of the ARSOF CCC and how SF candidates can improve their CQ. Thus, there is potential to enhance the experiences of SWCS students, the Army, the military, and our global partners since SF work and live overseas. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation.

Results from this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications but your name will not be used since you will use an alphanumeric code for identification purposes. To reiterate, the interview recording will be labeled with a study ID rather than your name, transferred to a password protected computer, and deleted from the original recording device.

If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788. Please let me know if you wish to be part of the study by signing below.

Name:

Signature:                                                    Date:


**Group Interview Questions (end of study)**

Opening question: (easy to answer)

1. Why did you decide to become a Green Beret?

Introductory question: (about the topic)

2. You're talking to a friend outside of the military. How would you define cultural intelligence and describe its role in being an effective Green Beret?

Transition questions:

3. How motivated were you when you started the course, on a scale of 1 (highly unmotivated) to 7 (highly motivated), to work with partner forces? And how motivated are you now, on a scale of 1 (highly unmotivated) to 7 (highly motivated), to work with a partner force?

4. (Distinct questions for each of the three groups)
   a. FOR CONTROL GROUP: Out of all the speakers during ARSOF CCC, which speaker most effectively made the case for cultural intelligence and its role in mission success? How was this speaker the most effective?

   b. FOR FACE-TO-FACE LEADER INTERACTION: How did engaging live with senior SF leaders impact your intentions to improve your cultural intelligence?

   c. FOR PODCAST LISTENERS: How did listening to the podcasts of senior SF leaders impact your intentions to improve your cultural intelligence?

Key questions (Activity - think, pair, share)

5. Thinking back on your training over the last five months at the ARSOF CCC, what is the clearest concept that you remember learning about how to work and relate effectively across cultural differences with a partnered force? Why is the clearest concept that you remember learning?

6. How might you apply that concept in the future when working with a partnered force?

7. Thinking back on your training over the last five months at the ARSOF CCC, what is the one question that is still burning in your mind about working and relating effectively across cultural differences with a partnered force?

Ending questions:

8. What recommendations would you make to SWCS about preparing students for working with a partnered force?

9. What are the next steps you will take to improve your cultural intelligence so you can effectively work with a partnered force?

APPENDIX G

INSTRUCTIONS FOR OBSERVER ASSESSMENTS

You completed a self-assessment of your cultural intelligence on 29 March 2023. Now, it's time to participate in the multi-rater portion of the study. This is the first multi-rater feedback opportunity. The second feedback opportunity will occur towards the end of the course. You'll then receive a report that shows the average of your observers' feedback. Please read these instructions carefully! You will be asked to identify peer observers and give them instructions to complete the assessment on your behalf.

**A. Background**
In order to link your self-assessments and your observer assessments but also maintain confidentiality of your results, you created a self-generated identification code (SGIC) using the prompts below when you took your self-assessment on 29 March 2023. The researcher asked you to write it down so you could share it with your observers in the future. Today is that day so please find your SGIC!

To refresh your memory, here are the prompts:
*The first letter of your mother's maiden name
*The total number of siblings (living and deceased) as a 2-digit number
*The number of the month you were born as a 2-digit number
*The first letter of both the make and model of your first car

For example, if:
Your mother's maiden name is Rahim: "R"
You have 1 sibling: 01 (if you have none, it would be 00)
You were born in July: 07
Your first car was a Honda (make) Civic (model): HC
Then your SGIC would be: R0107HC

**B. Selecting Peer Observers**
Both peer observers must be individuals from your small group, and you should select peers that you have interacted with most throughout the course. Your third observer will be your small group instructor.
Please see below for information about selecting your observers:
        1.) Observer 1: peer from small group that is seeking to join the SAME branch as you. For example, if you chose Special Forces, then your Observer 1 should be a peer who also chose Special Forces.
        2.) Observer 2: peer from your small group that is seeking to join a DIFFERENT branch as you. For example, if you chose Special Forces, then your Observer 2 should be a peer who chose Civil Affairs or Psychological Operations.
        3.) Observer 3: your small group instructor
*Note that since each small group has a fixed number of participants, each student will likely be asked by multiple people to act as their peer observers. Keeping that in mind, if you ask a peer to be an observer and they are already completing multiple assessments for other students in your small group, please consider asking someone else to be your peer observer so that no student is completing more than four peer assessments.*

## C. Next steps

       1.) Grab three sheets of paper.

       2.) On the first sheet, write "Observer 1". Then write down your first name, last name, and your SGIC. Give this sheet of paper to your Observer 1 (peer from same branch). Ask that peer to complete the 360/multi-rater version of the assessment on your behalf by visiting https://bit.ly/ARSOF2

       3.) On the second sheet, write "Observer 2". Then write down your first name, last name, and your SGIC. Give this sheet of paper to your Observer 2 (peer from different branch). Ask that peer to complete the 360/multi-rater version of the assessment on your behalf by visiting https://bit.ly/ARSOF2

       4.) On the third sheet, write "Observer 3". Then write down your first name, last name, and your SGIC. Give this sheet of paper to your Observer 3 (your small group instructor). Ask your instructor to complete the 360/multi-rater version of the assessment on your behalf by visiting https://bit.ly/ARSOF2

*Please note: your observers need both your name and your SGIC. This is because although your observers will only input your SGIC into the assessment (NOT YOUR NAME), they still need to connect the SGIC to a person so they can be thinking about you while they take the assessment. As a reminder, only you will see your final assessment results.*

*Also, you will need all three observers to complete the assessment in order to receive your observer feedback reports at the end of the course.*

# APPENDIX H

# CQ SELF-ASSESSMENT FOR DOD PERSONNEL ©[1]

<u>Motivational CQ (9 total items)</u>

| | |
|---|---|
| Intrinsic Motivation cultural | I really enjoy interacting with people from different backgrounds. |
| Intrinsic Motivation cultural | I proactively seek out opportunities to improve my understanding beyond required training. |
| Intrinsic Motivation deployment rather | Given a choice, I would prefer an overseas than staying in my home country. |
| | |
| Extrinsic Motivation overseas in a | I value the reputation I would gain from serving hostile environment. |
| Extrinsic Motivation might have | I value the impact that intercultural engagements on my career success. |
| Extrinsic Motivation intercultural | I value the credibility I would gain from building relationships that serve mission objectives. |
| | |
| Self-Efficacy toward | I am confident I can remain unbiased in my attitudes another culture. |
| Self-Efficacy with different | I am confident I can handle the stress of interacting people who have cultural backgrounds that are than mine. |
| Self-Efficacy have objectives. | I am confident I can build rapport with members who different cultural backgrounds to fulfill mission |

<u>Cognitive CQ (12 total items)</u>

| | |
|---|---|
| Values across | I can describe different views of beauty and aesthetics different cultures. |
| Values that | I can describe the different cultural value frameworks explain the behaviors of people who have different cultural backgrounds. |
| Values gender | I can describe differences in family systems and varied role expectations across different cultural groups. |
| | |
| Business views and/or | I can describe similarities and differences in political across cultural groups (e.g., national, regional, gender, ethnic groups). |

| | |
|---|---|
| Business | I can describe the legal and economic systems of other cultural groups. |
| Socio-linguistics | I am proficient at a 1+\1+ or above in two or more languages. |
| Socio-linguistics | I use my knowledge of other languages to help achieve mission objectives. |
| Leadership across | I can describe the ways that leadership styles differ cultural settings. |
| Leadership ease. | I know how to put people from different cultures at |
| Leadership different | I can describe effective negotiation strategies across cultural groups. |
| Leadership different | I know how to motivate and reward people from cultural groups. |
| Leadership in | I can describe effective ways for dealing with conflict different cultures. |

Metacognitive CQ (9 total items)

| | |
|---|---|
| Planning from | I develop action plans before interacting with people different cultural backgrounds. |
| Planning to objectives. | I anticipate the perspectives of others and think of how engage with them effectively in light of mission |
| Planning have | I plan my objectives before I meet with people who different cultural backgrounds. |
| Awareness interactions with | I am aware of how my culture influences my people who have different cultural backgrounds. |
| Awareness influence what | I pay very close attention to how culture may is happening in a situation. |
| Awareness influences | I am aware of how people's cultural background their Thoughts, feelings, and actions. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Checking with | I adjust my understanding of a culture while I interact people from that culture. |
| Checking during | I double check the accuracy of my cultural knowledge intercultural interactions. |
| Checking after a | I check and carefully adjust my cultural knowledge cultural misunderstanding to prevent future mishaps. |

Behavioral CQ (9 total items)

| | |
|---|---|
| Speech Acts cultural | I modify the way I disagree with others to fit the setting. |
| Speech Acts

objectives. | I change how I give orders depending on the cultural background of the individual(s) and the mission |
| Speech Acts compliments | I vary the way I express appreciation and accept based on the cultural context. |
| Verbal Behavior cultural | I change my use of pause and silence to suit different situations. |
| Verbal Behavior specific | I vary my accent, tone, and/or rate of speaking to fit cultural contexts. |
| Verbal Behavior cultural | I modify the amount of warmth I express to fit the context and desired outcomes. |
| Non-Verbal Behavior interacting with | I modify how close or far apart I stand when people who have different cultural backgrounds. |
| Non-Verbal Behavior head | I change my non-verbal behaviors (e.g., hand gestures, movements) to fit the cultural situation. |
| Non-Verbal Behavior nod) | I vary the way I greet others (e.g., shake hands, bow, when in different cultural contexts. |

# APPENDIX I

## CQ OBSERVERASSESSMENT FOR DOD PERSONNEL ©[1]

Motivational CQ (5 total items)

| | |
|---|---|
| Intrinsic Motivation<br>who have | This individual really enjoys interacting with people<br>different cultural backgrounds. |
| Intrinsic Motivation<br>rather | This individual would prefer an overseas deployment<br>than staying in their home country. |
| Extrinsic Motivation<br>from | This individual values the credibility they would gain<br>building intercultural relationships that serve mission<br>objectives. |
| Self-Efficacy<br>of<br>that | This individual is confident they can handle the stress<br>interacting with people who have cultural backgrounds<br>are different from their own cultural background. |
| Self-Efficacy<br>with<br>fulfill | This individual is confident they can build rapport<br>members who have different cultural backgrounds to<br>mission objectives. |

Cognitive CQ (6 total items)

| | |
|---|---|
| Values<br>value<br>have | This individual can describe the different cultural<br>frameworks that explain the behaviors of people who<br>different cultural backgrounds. |
| Values<br>systems and<br>cultural | This individual can describe differences in family<br>varied gender role expectations across different<br>groups. |
| Business<br>systems | This individual can describe the legal and economic<br>of other cultural groups. |
| Socio-linguistics<br>area as<br>cultural | This individual knows the terms used in their specialty<br>well as the jargon and slang that are used in different<br>contexts. |
| Leadership<br>styles | This individual can describe the ways that leadership<br>differ across cultural settings. |
| Leadership<br>with | This individual can describe effective ways for dealing<br>conflict in different \cultures. |

Metacognitive CQ (4 total items)

| Planning | This individual anticipates the perspectives of others |
| and | thinks of how to engage with them effectively in light |
| of | mission objectives. |

| Awareness | This individual is aware of how their culture |
| background | influences their interactions with people from different |
| | cultures. |

| Awareness | This individual is aware of how people's cultural |
| background | influences their own thoughts, feelings, and actions. |

| Checking | This individual checks and carefully adjust their |
| cultural | knowledge after a cultural misunderstanding to |
| prevent future | mishaps. |

Behavioral CQ (5 total items)

| Speech Acts | This individual modifies the way they disagree with |
| others to | fit the cultural setting. |

| Speech Acts | This individual changes how they give orders |
| depending on | their cultural background of the individual(s) and the |
| mission | objectives. |

| Verbal Behavior | This individual changes their use of pause and silence |
| to suit | different cultural situations. |

| Verbal Behavior | This individual varies their accent, tone, and/or rate of |
| | speaking to fit specific cultural contexts. |

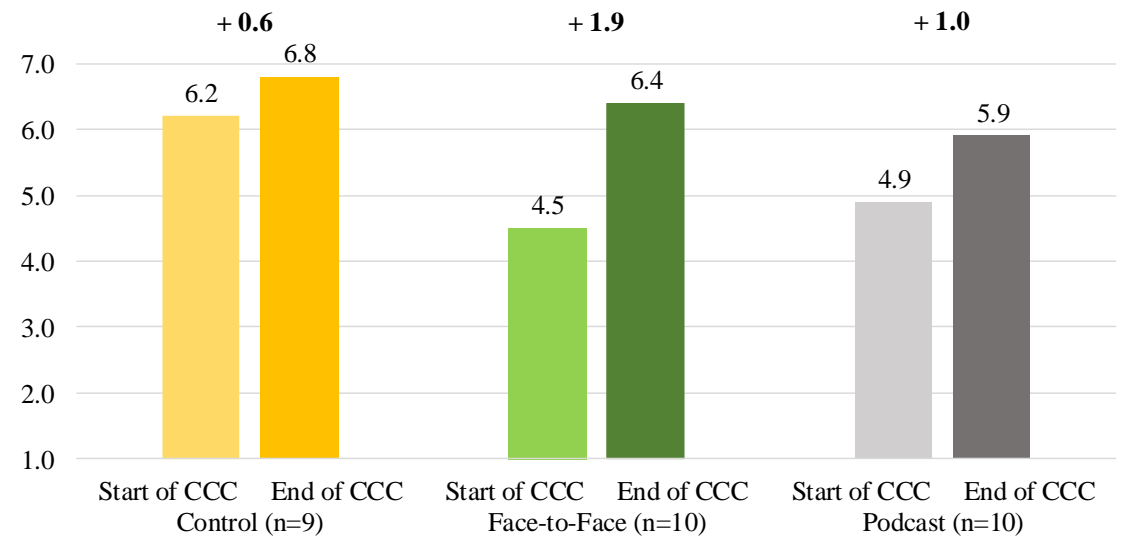| Non-Verbal Behavior | This individual changes their non-verbal behaviors |
| (e.g., hand | gestures, head movements) to fit the cultural situation. |

than academic research (e.g., consulting, program evaluation, non-academic organizations), send an email to cquery@culturalq.com.

APPENDIX J

MOTIVATION TO WORK WITH A PARTNER FORCE

APPENDIX K

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD EXEMPTION

**ASU** | **Knowledge Enterprise Development**

EXEMPTION GRANTED

Sherman Dorn
Division of Educational Leadership and Innovation - Tempe
602/543-6379
Sherman.Dorn@asu.edu

Dear Sherman Dorn:

On 1/26/2023 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

| | |
|---|---|
| Type of Review: | Initial Study |
| Title: | Listening to Leaders: Expanding Cultural Intelligence Learning Opportunities for U.S. Army Special Forces at the Captain's Career Course |
| Investigator: | Sherman Dorn |
| IRB ID: | STUDY00017175 |
| Funding: | None |
| Grant Title: | None |
| Grant ID: | None |
| Documents Reviewed: | • Kohistany_IRB_Instruments and Interview Questions_Jan2022.pdf, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); <br> • Kohistany_IRB_Overall Consent Form_26Jan2023.pdf, Category: Consent Form; <br> • Kohistany_IRB_Protocol_26Jan2023.docx, Category: IRB Protocol; <br> • Kohistany_IRB_Recruitment Material_24Jan2023.pdf, Category: Recruitment Materials; <br> • Kohistany_U.S. Army_2SWTG (A) Academic Study Letter of Intent for ASU.pdf, Category: Off-site authorizations (school permission, other IRB approvals, Tribal permission etc); |

The IRB determined that the protocol is considered exempt pursuant to Federal Regulations 45CFR46 (2)(ii) Tests, surveys, interviews, or observation (low risk) on 1/26/2023.

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

If any changes are made to the study, the IRB must be notified at research.integrity@asu.edu to determine if additional reviews/approvals are required. Changes may include but not limited to revisions to data collection, survey and/or interview questions, and vulnerable populations, etc.

Sincerely,


IRB Administrator

cc:     Mahboba Kohistany

# BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Lyla Kohistany is an inclusion strategist, cultural intelligence advisor, and former U.S. Naval officer. She has a distinguished career in the national security sector, working with various military, government, and civilian organizations on issues such as counterterrorism, counterinsurgency, all-source intelligence operations, and innovative leadership. She is also an accomplished corporate facilitator and educator, designing and delivering training on cultural intelligence, organizational performance, and inclusive leadership. Her lived experiences as a refugee and veteran led her to launch two national-level nonprofits: PROMOTE focuses on inclusive and innovative leadership development in the national security sector and Honor the Promise focuses on long-term refugee resiliency in the U.S. She has spoken about the power of inclusive teams at numerous events and has been featured in media outlets such as CNN, NPR, PBS, and The Washington Post. Lyla holds a M.A. from Georgetown University and a B.A. from Penn State University and has completed fellowships at the George W. Bush Presidential Center, Veterans in Global Leadership, and the Atlantic Council. She is also a member of several professional and civic organizations, such as the Global Special Operations Foundation, The Honor Foundation, Truman National Security Project's Defense Council, U.S. Global Leadership Coalition's Veterans in Smart Power, Global War on Terror Memorial Foundation, Virginia Board of Veterans Services, and more. Lyla is an avid Star Wars aficionada, enjoys international travel, and spends every free moment with her niece and nephews.