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NAVY SEALS – CROSSING CULTURES:
CROSS-CULTURAL COMPETENCE AND DECISION STYLES

By

Robert A. Newson

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for

the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

May 2020

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TITLE OF DISSERTATION: NAVY SEALs – Crossing Cultures: Cross-Cultural
Competence and Decision Styles

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ABSTRACT

U.S. military cross-cultural competence is currently deficient, as Special Operations Forces (SOF) personnel assessments fail to explicitly consider aspects related to cross-cultural competence and lack processes specifically tailored to cross-cultural personnel assignments. Researchers, however, have identified eleven attributes that contribute to military cross-cultural competence; this study uses these attributes to explore whether decision styles and demographics correlate with cross-cultural competence. Building on existing work on the attributes of military cross-cultural competence (defined in this study as the ability to quickly and accurately assess, then effectively act, in a culturally complex environment to achieve mission results), I first examined the attribute profiles of experienced Navy Sea, Air, and Land Forces (SEALs) to distinguish between cross-cultural superior and substandard scorers. Logistic regression analysis was then used to estimate relationships between several demographic and decision-style factors and individual scores in cross-cultural competence. The analysis concluded with a comparison of attribute profiles of experienced and newly minted SEALs. Throughout the analyses, all statistical testing was done at the 5% level of significance or stronger.

Although 7.5% of the entire active SEAL community participated in the research ($n = 253$), the empirical results are suggestive but far from conclusive. For example, results revealed statistically significant correlations among the 11 factors associated with cross-cultural competence and decision-style factors (especially the need for cognition) and two demographic traits. Based on the attribute profiles of superior and substandard scorers, it appears SEALs have registered strong cross-cultural competence baselines. Furthermore, mean scores for the entire SEAL population in the study revealed a strong

cognitive style attribute profile from a cross-cultural competence perspective. Additional analysis indicated newly minted SEALs, especially those with high scores in need for cognition, may be better positioned than the average experienced SEAL to perform well when engaging with foreign partners.

Although this is the first study that assesses a decision-style model for correlation with cross-cultural competence (and more research is needed), it suggests decision styles may be a useful tool for selection, assessment, and assignment of military personnel who deal extensively across cultures (e.g., Army Green Berets, Foreign Area Officers, and SOF Liaison Officers).

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my children and my better half, my partner and teammate. These four have been my reason, my inspiration, and my support system.

I started the University of San Diego (USD) PhD Program in leadership studies as a single parent raising three children. In addition to enduring my military service and the time commitments and absences that entails, they endured my added absence for class and an additional time commitment for my studies. They never complained, and they were always supportive.

Throughout my long PhD “career,” my wife was a constant source of motivation—even when I lost my own. She makes me better, and she has made this work better through her example of excellence, grit, and engagement.

I am a better man because of these four, and I dedicate this work in their honor.

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The School of Leadership and Education Science faculty and staff have been so gracious, professional, and supportive. They have been there for anything I have needed—through multiple leaves of absence for military service and deployments to the Horn of Africa, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Yemen (3 years away); five moves across the United States; and a battle with cancer. Dr. George Reed began as my committee chair and guided me through my dissertation proposal. He is a friend, a mentor, and a role model. Dr. Fred Galloway took over as my chair and has taught me so much about quantitative research and quality thinking. He stepped right in behind George, not only as my committee chair, but as a friend, mentor, and role model. Truly, this dissertation would not be written and would not be completed with the quality and scholarship that it was without them. Dr. Eric Potterat was a teammate within Naval Special Warfare and brings that insight into his role as committee member. I am grateful for his friendship and gift of time and focus on the committee. My mother-in-law, a woman of great humility, knows her contributions and my gratitude. My parents are my foundation and touchstone.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

When roused to energy, they may be induced to act, but, with pompous promises and grandiloquent phrases, postponement and the fear of troubling, their lazy intellects predominated. It was always *manana*, but never today with them. To put off everything seemed looked upon as the acme of all that was clever, and never to do that which another could do for them was the perfection of dexterity. Their whole mind, in short, seemed bent upon doing nothing and—they did it. (Esdaile, 2007, p. 161)

This epigraph is from a British officer complaining about his Spaniard partners during the Napoleonic Wars. It was humorous to my Special Operations teammates and me that this description from the 1800s appeared so appropriate for our current partners in Yemen, Iraq, and Afghanistan. However, Esdaile (2007) highlighted in memoir after memoir from the Napoleonic Wars the “tremendous prejudice” (p. 161) of British service members toward all foreigners. Perhaps the issue, here and now, does not solely lie with foreign partners but also with U.S. military members’ abilities to interact and partner across cultures.

In this study, I focused on U.S. Navy Sea, Air, and Land Forces (SEALs) operating in a cross-cultural environment. The word SEAL is both an acronym for SEa, Air, and Land (a descriptor of the operational environment in which SEALs work) and a noun, the name of U.S. naval commandoes. In a 2012 visit to Afghanistan, the U.S. Department of State political advisor assigned to the Naval Special Warfare Command, headquarters to all U.S. Navy SEALs, received an unexpected answer to a question she asked a senior SEAL leader (J. Patterson, personal communication, 2013). She asked the second highest ranking officer of a deployed SEAL team why his team was not attempting to drive a wedge between local villagers and the Taliban by highlighting the

very recent murder of several small children perpetrated through an improvised explosive device planted by the Taliban. The SEAL leader responded that doing so would not be effective because “these people don’t care about their children.”

The political advisor asked him to explain. A local man, the SEAL Lieutenant Commander said, brought two of the victims—his children—to the nearby U.S. military hospital. His children died on the operating table, and the man did not shed a tear; he was emotionless about his loss as he walked from the hospital. The political advisor, a midgrade foreign service officer and a Pashtu speaker with significant experience in Afghanistan, was taken aback. She explained to the SEAL officer that refusing to express grief in public does not indicate an absence of grief. Pashtun men do not show emotion in public—it would bring them dishonor and shame (J. Patterson, personal communication, 2013).

This story is one vignette that underscores a recognized shortfall in cultural awareness and cross-cultural competence in the U.S. military (Bezhan, 2012; McFate, 2005a). This story highlights a lack of specific and localized cultural knowledge, the most readily apparent cross-cultural shortfall. However, in the literature review (Chapter 2), I will show language and culture-specific information—and the related education and training—are only two factors in the multifaceted nature of cross-cultural performance.

The genesis of this study springs from personal experience and an acknowledged need (U.S. Special Operations Command [USSOCOM], 2012a, 2012b) to improve U.S. Special Operations Forces’ (SOF) capacity in “managing [intercultural] interaction in ways that are likely to produce more appropriate and effective individual, relational, group, or institutional outcomes” (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009, p. 6). My experience as

a SEAL deployed to Kenya, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Yemen provided the personal motivation for this research. The requirement for cross-cultural competence in SOF provides the justification and significance for this research.

Background to the Study

From the broadest perspective, beyond the military application, there are increasing opportunities to interact and work across cultures (Chhoakar, Brodback, & House, 2007; Deardorff, 2006; Earley & Ang, 2003; Earley & Gibson, 2002; Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkoff, 2010; House, Dorfman, Javidan, Hanges, & Sully de Luque, 2014; House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004; Walker & Mansour, 2013). This increased opportunity to interact across cultures is driven by an increasingly diverse workforce at home, global commerce, networked or partnered organizations, global immigration, and international travel. Earley, Ang, and Tan (2006) underscored the pressing need for cross-cultural competence in all fields:

It is urgent to build individual and organizational capacity to meet the social, relational, and communication needs thrown up by globalization. Among the twenty-first century skills frequently talked about are the ability to adapt constantly to different people from diverse cultures and the ability to manage the interconnectedness of today's world. Interactions in the global workplace require individuals to be sensitive to different cultures, capable of analyzing them as they are encountered, identify what is required of people from other cultures, and engaging in appropriate interactions with them. (p. 2)

While expanding in scope and pace in recent years, cross-cultural interaction is not a new phenomenon. Cross-cultural engagement has a conceptual foundation that has been established across 60 years of scholarly effort (Allport, 1954; Benson, 1978; Ezekiel, 1968; Harris, 1977; Smith, 1966; Smith, Fawcett, Ezekiel, & Roth, 1963; Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009).

Beyond the original research contexts of business, education, and civil-government relations, cross-cultural competence is particularly important in the military context. For more than 18 years, the United States has been engaged in combat operations, with notable shortfalls that moved senior leaders to prioritize a focus on cross-cultural competence. According to Ross, Thornson, McDonald, and Arrastia (2010):

Instances of stereotyping, racism, and abuse of power by military personnel have further showcased the ways in which military members have alienated the local populations. For these reasons, the Department of Defense has recently made the assessment and training of cross-cultural competence a top priority for the military. (p. 1)

Military operations for extended periods in other countries place a high premium on successful cross-cultural interaction. Cross-cultural competence, therefore, is a matter of significant importance to the military. Relating to and engaging foreign allies and partners, understanding the issues important to the local populace, mitigating negative consequences of military operations in their neighborhoods (Finney, 2008), and understanding the motivations and priorities of the enemy are facilitated with some degree of cross-cultural insight and competence (Langewiesche, 2004; Lucas, 2009; Putman, 2004; Rubinstein, Fosher, & Fujimuru, 2013; Selmeski, 2007).

Outside of defined theaters of war, the military requirement for cross-cultural competence is just as significant. Special Operations Forces work with partner forces in more than 149 countries around the world (Toft, 2018). These deployed forces coordinate closely with and follow the lead of the U.S. ambassador and the interagency country team in each embassy. As a result, the military crosses national and ethnic cultures in dealing with foreign partners and host nation governments and crossing organizational cultures.

Each embassy has its own organizational culture, and each of the agencies that combines to form the U.S. national security infrastructure has its own unique culture.

The U.S. military has sought to develop cross-cultural competence through a number of approaches, one of which is the development of specialists with regional expertise. Foreign area officers comprise a specialty field with the Department of Defense (DOD) with master's degrees in regional studies and extensive language training. Foreign area officers serve as cultural, political, and strategic affairs experts in the DOD (Foreign Area Officer Association, 2020). In 2009, the DOD established a program "to develop a cadre of military and senior civilian experts specializing in the complexities of Afghanistan and Pakistan—the language, culture, processes and challenges" (Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2009, p. 1). In December 2013, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff mandated a similar program for the Asia Pacific region (U.S. Navy, 2020). The U.S. Special Operations Command created a cadre of senior special operations officers imbedded with foreign headquarters and partner special operations units. These programs focus on area specific knowledge. This is a general trend in DOD cross-cultural efforts—seeking improvement in cultural competence through culture-specific academic education and training in addition to long-term focus on a specific area or country. As I discuss in Chapter 2, this is only one aspect of cross-cultural competence.

The U.S. Navy SEALs have developed a program to acquire deep microregional expertise through the accession of foreign-born naturalized citizens to create the Naval Special Warfare Cultural Engagement Unit (Coover, 2016). These language and regional experts are native speakers who possess insiders' knowledge and perceptions of specific

cultures. This insight is deeper and broader than nonnatives educated on a specific region or country, and their military training and integration with Navy SEALs provides them with the ability for technical translation not available with most linguists/translators.

Another approach to address the requirement for military cross-cultural competency is to develop small teams of experts or develop unit-level cross-cultural capacities and expertise. This “expert and focus” approach might include teams of social scientists and cultural experts (Finney, 2008; McFate, 2008), army battalions focused on a specific region (“Regionally Aligned Brigades,” 2013), or a unit dedicated to training foreign partners in boat operations and maintenance and small unit combat skills (“Naval Small Craft Instruction and Tactical Training School,” 2020).

In addition to developing specialists or teams primarily focused on cross-cultural interaction, efforts have also focused on broader development of individual cross-cultural capacities. For example, at the peak of the DOD’s SOF cross-cultural focus in 2012, USSOCOM mandated increased training and raised standards for language proficiency. It also mandated cultural training and education across SOF.

Compared to conventional military units, U.S. SOF have a high degree of interaction with foreign counterparts and other agencies and departments in the U.S. government (e.g., interagency groups and processes). As a result, cross-cultural competence is especially important for SOF. Three of the four special operations components include a high frequency of cross-cultural interaction. The U.S. Army Special Operations Command, and primarily its Special Forces (also known as Green Berets), is the only USSOCOM element that specifically selects personnel for cross-cultural interaction (Turnley, 2011). Special Forces assess and select for their primary

mission of unconventional warfare, which uses surrogates and proxies and requires significant human interaction (U.S. Army, 2008). The Marine Special Operations Command and Naval Special Warfare (e.g., Navy SEALs), while not specifically selecting for cross-cultural capacities, have significant cross-cultural interactions in Iraq, Afghanistan, and across the globe in their roles as advisors and trainers to foreign partners. The fourth element of U.S. Special Operations, the Air Force Special Operations Command, has little cross-cultural interaction with the exception of a relatively small unit of trainers who work with foreign air forces (Turnley, 2011).

The DOD emphasis on cross-cultural understanding and competence has waxed and waned. The DOD reached a high watermark during the Vietnam conflict (Abbe & Gouge, 2012; Deitchman, 2014) but largely lost interest until the wars in Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003. After a review of the *2018 Annotated Bibliography of Military Cross-Cultural Competence* (Mackenzie, Gualdin, & Tarza, 2018), it is arguable the cross-cultural competence DOD emphasis has peaked and is again in decline. Of the 219 documents in the bibliography, 165 were published in 2012 or prior with the bulk from 2008-2012; since 2013, only 54 have been published. This trend of declining emphasis and focus applies to U.S. Special Operations as well. Annually, the commander of USSOCOM provides a statement to both the U.S. House and U.S. Senate Armed Services Committees. Recently, USSOCOM commanders (Clarke, 2019; Thomas, 2018, 2019) briefly mentioned working with partners and education in culture and language, but cross-cultural issues did not receive the emphasis or focus they did in 2012. Despite the inevitable institutional shift in priorities and focus away from cross-cultural competence,

the requirement for cross-cultural competence is well established and is not likely to abate.

Relevance to Leadership

This research was conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a PhD in leadership studies. Cross-cultural competence in the SEAL Teams is closely related to leadership. In combat and in training, SEALs and other Special Operations Forces are often leading combined elements, composed of U.S. and partner forces. There is no more difficult leadership challenge than to lead while crossing cultures. This leadership takes place at all levels—from the most senior member leading a mission to the most junior member of the team acting as an instructor for basic and advanced training or mentoring guiding partner nation forces in mission execution. Faced with different cultures and their corresponding values and judgments—as well as often contrasting motivations and allegiances—leading across cultures can be frustrating. A leader must manage their own personal frustration, the frustration of their U.S. teammates, and the frustration of partner nation forces. Having the capacity, motivation, and focus on cross-culture competence will help improve results for military members leading across cultures.

Problem Statement

Price (2011) underscored the root of the U.S military's cross-cultural shortcomings in a comment about a 2004 *Initial Impressions Report* on operations in Mosul, Iraq, from a U.S. Army Stryker brigade: “The residual image is of a pelagic military only beginning to become aware of the depths of their own ignorance of the complex environment they are trying to occupy and dominate” (pp. 133-134). That

awareness continued to grow and be expressed by senior military leaders (Fitzgerald, 2010; Mak, 2011).

While arguably more cross-culturally competent than conventional forces (Turnley, 2011), U.S. SOF have no explicit conceptualization or framework to guide the development of cross-cultural capacity. As interest and awareness in cross-cultural competence grew, U.S. Special Operations strategy and guidance documents (SOCOM, 2012a, 2012b) identified a requirement to operate in the human domain (implying cross-cultural interaction). The 2012 strategy included significant discussion of working with allies, partners, and interagency and proposed an invigorated effort in formal education. However, there was no discussion of how to develop, improve, and maintain the cross-cultural capacity necessary to meet the identified requirements beyond establishing language competency goals across the force and mandating undefined cultural education and training. In USSOCOM documents, there was no reference to any cross-cultural-related academic research and no discussion of metrics necessary to measure the progress or effectiveness of culture-related education and training efforts.

Despite the significant and increasing requirement to effectively function across cultures, SOF have no clear framework to design cross-cultural training and education, no clear method to measure progress and effectiveness in this area, no process of personnel assessment that considers cross-cultural competence and no process specifically tailored to personnel assignment related to high-frequency, cross-cultural positions.

Purpose of the Study

In this research, I used demographics to explore whether decision style and personal background correlate to cross-cultural competence. The core question was: Are

some people more primed to excel in a cross-cultural environment? If so, perhaps this insight into personal capacity or limitations for cross-cultural competence can help focus selection and training for these types of missions toward those individuals.

In this study, I focused on experienced U.S. Navy SEALs and new SEALs who recently completed basic SEAL training. I am a retired Navy SEAL who, at the beginning of the study, was an active duty senior SEAL officer assigned to Naval Special Warfare Command, the higher headquarters for all SEAL commands. My position offered unique research access to the SEAL community. Using self-reported instruments of cross-cultural relevance, I examined the relationships of key variables captured in these instruments to individual performance in cross-cultural competence assessments. Two objectives were identified for this study. The first objective was to identify personal traits (factors) with high correlations to superior or lagging performance in cross-cultural competence assessments. If identified, these factors could assist with the design of SOF training and education focused on cross-cultural capability and the related measurement of program effectiveness. The second objective was to compare new SEAL graduate profiles with associated factors related to success or underperformance in cross-cultural assessments to help identify areas of education and training to advance recent graduates to the level of cross-cultural high performer. Additionally, correlations of demographic factors for superior cross-cultural scorers could help identify relatively stable personality factors (traits) that might contribute to cross-cultural performance, highlighting both a need and a method for cross-cultural-related personnel screening. Understanding personality factors that potentially correlate to cross-cultural competence could assist with related personnel assignments or perhaps screening of SEAL candidates.

Research Questions

In this research, I posed two primary research questions:

1. Focusing on experienced SEALs, what are the attribute profiles, defined by cohort mean scores, of cross-cultural superior and substandard scorers, and what is the relationship between demographic and decision style factors and individual scores in cross-cultural competence?
2. Focusing on recent SEAL selection course graduates in the selection course, what is the attribute profile, as defined by mean cohort scores, for SEAL selection graduates, and how does this profile compare with the profile of an experienced SEAL cross-cultural high performer?

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this literature review, I begin with an examination of the concept of culture and then discuss the recent emphasis and issues related to the importance of culture for the military. On this foundation, I defined and examined cross-cultural competence from a historical and military perspective. A review of cross-culture competence models and assessments completes this chapter.

Culture

Before cross-cultural competence is examined, it is important to explain what is meant by *culture*, a common but “very muddied concept” (Hall, 1959, p. 20) and to discuss how the concept of culture was applied in this research. While the culture literature is vast, dating back to the 19th century, the culture concept is framed in the two quotations that follow from the perspective of operating across cultures (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009), primarily in a military context (Lucas, 2009; McFate, 2005a; Price, 2011; Salmoni & Holmes-Eber, 2008; Sands & Sands, 2014; Schmorrow & Nicholson, 2013; Selmeski, 2007; Turnley, 2011; van Driel, 2011). Hall (1959) underscored the “muddiness” of the culture concept:

For anthropologists culture has long stood for the way of life of people, for the sum of their learned behavior patterns, attitudes, and material things. Though they subscribe to this general view, most anthropologists tend to disagree however, on what the precise substance of culture is. . . . In sum, though the concept of culture was first defined in print in 1871 by E.B. Taylor, after all these years it still lacks the rigorous specificity which characterizes many less revolutionary and useful ideas. (p. 20)

Price (2001) described it this way:

Today, anthropologists debate not only the nature (and existence . . .) of culture, but there is a greater acknowledgement of such a diversity of specific cultural

traits, today few anthropologists would be comfortable with the sort of vulgar generalizations that are the basis of [efforts to identify national character or broad culture types as attempted by Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961), among others]. (p. 144)

Spitzberg and Changnon (2009) considered culture

a primitive theoretical term, concerned with enduring yet evolving intergenerational attitudes, values, beliefs, rituals/customs, and behavioral patterns into which people are born but that is structurally created and maintained by people's ongoing actions. Thus, intercultural competence is the appropriate and effective management of interaction between people who, to some degree or another, represent different or divergent affective, cognitive, and behavioral orientations to the world. These orientations will most commonly be reflected in such normative categories as nationality, race, ethnicity, tribe, religion, or region. (pp. 6-7)

Acknowledging the debate surrounding culture's definition and accepting that generalizations are prone to inaccuracy, the culture concept should be framed and its boundaries established to better understand interactions across cultures. Selmeski (2007) provided a useful overview. Culture is not a thing, a social group, a material object, an activity, or an officially articulated statement. Culture is dependent upon the whole—not isolated parts. Culture is passed across generations—learned, shared, patterned, and transmitted in daily life, in taboo and preference, in spoken and unspoken ways. Culture is relatively stable but is not static; it is adaptive to biological, political, environmental, or social requirements, but not always adapted as might be expected. Culture is influential but not predictive. Culture is expressed in multiple forms: (a) embedded as meanings, (b) embodied as feelings, and (c) enacted as behaviors.

Historian Barak Salmoni and anthropologist Paula Holmes-Eber (2008) defined culture as “the shared worldview and social structures of a group of people that influence a person's and a group's actions and choices” (p. 36). Anthropologist Jessica Turnley (2011), in an assessment of cross-cultural competence of SOF, framed culture as sense-

making strategies that help define what is relevant, the value of those relevant things, and subsequently creates assumptions that guide behavior. Turnley (2011) defined culture as

a set of dynamic, ever changing frames of reference. It is a set of perspectives and assumptions created, maintained, and changed by a group of people about the way the world works. These assumptions allow people in this group to create shared expectations about the behavior of others. They tell us what is relevant. These assumptions also color the way in which group members interpret and value what they see. These perspectives apply moral weight to behavior. They tell us what is good and bad, right and wrong. In short, these frames of reference help make sense of the world for us. (p. 15)

In the *Counterinsurgency (COIN) Manual*, Petraeus (2006) suggested:

Culture might also be described as an “operational code” that is valid for an entire group of people. Culture conditions the individual's range of action and ideas, including what to do and not do, how to do or not do it, and who to do it with or not do it with. Culture also includes under what circumstances the 'rules' shift and change. Culture influences how people make judgments about what is right and wrong, assess what is important and unimportant, categorize things, and deal with things that do not fit into existing categories. Cultural rules are flexible in practice. (p. 7)

It is closer to the truth to say, “People live culturally rather than people live in cultures” (Selmeski, 2007, p. 4). Those living in culturally different ways have “a completely different way of organizing life, of thinking, and of conceiving the underlying assumptions about the family and the state, the economic system, and even of mankind” (Hall, 1959, p. 23).

This research is not about culture but rather about crossing cultures—interacting and working with others with a different “operational code” or worldview. The most comprehensive of the research includes the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) project studies (Chhokar et al., 2007; House et al., 2004; House et al., 2014) and Javidan’s work on the global mindset and leadership (Walker & Javidan, 2013). Their work provides ways to characterize culture and

determine the effects of cultural differences with a focus on leadership. Cross-cultural military operations hinge on military members not only to cross cultures but also to lead across cultures. Military personnel deploying to a cross-cultural mission would be well advised to have this research in their kit bag. Before the literature on cross-culture competence is reviewed, however, the unique aspects of culture and the military are considered.

Culture and the Military

The connection between military operations and culture is ancient, tenuous, and contentious. By tenuous, I mean, while the importance of cultural knowledge is widely recognized by military practitioners, deep understanding of the culture concept and examination of specific cultures are rarely pursued. Indeed, it is the rare military specialist who pursues an understanding of different cultures with the same focus and emphasis as more traditional martial skills. When pursued to improve the military's success in combat, the use of social science and academic cultural knowledge can be controversial. According to McFate (2005):

Cultural knowledge and warfare are inextricably bound. Knowledge of one's adversary as a means to improve military prowess has been sought since Herodotus studied his opponents' conduct during the Persian Wars (490–479 BC). Although "know thy enemy" is one of the first principles of warfare, our military operations and national security decision making have consistently suffered due to lack of knowledge of foreign cultures. pp. 42-43)

As Price (2011) wrote:

I find extraordinary continuities of roles, status, and economic contingencies between the military and the academy as many of the present efforts to use anthropology for conquest mirror specific failed efforts to use and abuse American anthropology during the Second World War and the Vietnam War with little realization of these continuities of failure. (p. 5)

The invasions of Afghanistan (October 7, 2001; “The History of the Afghanistan War,” 2012) and Iraq (March 20, 2003; “Timeline: The Iraq War,” 2016) and the resulting resistance by irregular local forces, the recognized difficulty U.S. and allied forces had defeating these irregular fighters and the apparent inadequate or inappropriate interactions with local civilians highlighted the need for improved abilities to interact across cultures. According to Ross, MacNulty, Bencaz, Thornson, and Johnston (2010):

Concerns that the military as a whole is not prepared to conduct operations in a way that understands cultures has sparked an influx of research into areas related to cross-cultural competence. Instances of stereotyping, racism, and abuse of power by military personnel have further showcased the ways in which military members have alienated the local populations. For these reasons, the Department of Defense has recently made the assessment and training of cross-cultural competence a top priority for the military (e.g., Langewiesche, 2004; McFarland, 2005; Putman, 2004). (p. 1)

Drawing lessons learned from 46 studies and operational war reports from 2003 through 2012, the Joint and Coalition Operational Analysis Center (2012) in the DOD Joint Staff identified 11 recurring themes in its *Decade of War* analysis. Under the first theme—Understanding the Environment—the authors recommended developing a nuanced understanding of the environment through, among other things, improving language and culture proficiency.

By 2005, language and culture became a major area of emphasis in U.S. military strategy. The Defense Language Transformation Roadmap (DOD, 2005) and the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (DOD, 2006a) signaled a top-down emphasis on increased cultural capabilities: “Developing broader linguistic capability and cultural understanding is . . . critical to prevail in the long war and meet 21st century challenges” (DOD, 2006a, p. 78). The Quadrennial Defense Review Execution Roadmap(s) for Irregular Warfare (DOD, 2006b) and Building Partnership Capacity (DOD, 2006c) further underscored the

importance of cultural and regional expertise and language. According to van Driel (2011), “A substantial amount of policy and strategy exists regarding the development and institutionalization of cross-cultural competence within the Department of Defense” (p. 11). This includes DOD directives on Irregular Warfare (DOD, 2008) and Stability Operations (DOD, 2009), which place a premium on cultural understanding. In response to DOD guidance and emphasis, military services have developed their service-unique strategy and a dedicated organization focused on culture and language (see Table 2.1). In addition to these service strategies and centers, the Defense Language Institute, located in Monterey, California, provides language training and related culture specific education to all services.

Table 2.1

Military Service Culture Centers and Strategies

Service	Center	Strategy
U.S. Army	U.S. Army Culture Center, Ft. Huachuca, Arizona	Culture and Foreign Language Strategy (2009)
U.S. Air Force	USAF Culture and Language Center, Maxwell AFB, Alabama	Culture, Region, and Language Flight Plan (2009)
U.S. Marine Corps	USMC Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning, Quantico, Virginia	Vision and Strategy 2025 (2011)
U.S. Navy	USN Center for Language, Regional Expertise, and Culture, Corry Station, Florida	Language Skills, Regional Expertise, and Cultural Awareness Strategy (2008)

The combination of military operations and cultural study is not without controversy and ethical debate. Concerns over “harnessing anthropology and culture for the domination of others” (Price, 2011, p. 1) have been expressed in the academic community. According to Price (2011):

As others have pointed out, while World War I was the Chemists' War and World War II the Physicists' War, the current wars with their heavy reliance on the cultural knowledge needed for counterinsurgency and occupation are envisioned by many Pentagon strategists as the Anthropologists' War; yet many in Washington seemed truly surprised at the push-back from anthropologists upon news of the formation of Human Terrain Teams and other efforts to adapt anthropology for counterinsurgency and asymmetrical warfare. (p. 2)

Some (Gonzales, 2007, 2010; Jamail, 2010; Lutz, 2008; Price, 2000, 2001, 2007a, 2007b, 2008, 2011) reject most, if not all, association of the social sciences, in general, and anthropology, specifically, with the military and object to the "militarization" of anthropology (Lucas, 2009, p. 7). Other anthropologists advocate for social science support to work closely with the military and provide related education and advice (Holmes-Eber, 2013; McFate, 2005a, 2005b; Rubinstein, 2013; Salmoni & Holmes-Eber, 2008; Turnley, 2011, 2013; Varhola, 2013).

Lucas (2009) examined opposing perspectives on moral and ethical grounds. They pointed out there are clearly prohibited activities, including illegal interrogation and torture, and acknowledged the valid concerns surrounding the protection and security of those who are the subject of academic study. However, they argued social science support to the government and the military cannot be summarily rejected on moral grounds. The moral participation by anthropologists and social scientists extends even to wars that might be considered illegal or unjust. According to Lucas (2009):

It would be possible in principle for the participation by anthropologists in such wars [those wars found to be proscribed by international law and failing to satisfy just war criteria] to be morally justified, if that participation were aimed at what is increasingly termed *just post bellum*: that is, if anthropological expertise were sought solely for the purposes of *minimizing casualties, ending conflict, restoring peace, and extricating the invading troops as quickly as possible*. (p. 186, emphasis added)

Lucas (2009) acknowledged the existence of past moral and ethical failures related to social science and anthropologic support to the government and the military and the potential for shortfalls and excesses in the future, but Lucas maintained the potential for immoral acts does not suggest all acts associated with military operations are morally proscribed.

The applied ethics argument that Lucas (2009) made—using cultural knowledge and developing cross-cultural competence in the military is morally and ethically acceptable—addresses the controversy of academic support to the military. Regardless, the military application of cross-cultural competence will never be easy or without potential controversy. The military is inextricably entwined with armed conflict. In this environment, with a significant power differential between the military and the local civilians (Selmeski, 2007), some element of the local population is likely to be unhappy with the activities or presence of U.S. military personnel. From the extreme cases of invasion and occupation to training with military forces where not every citizen supports the local government or the local military to the most benign of humanitarian assistance operations, there may be distrust of U.S. intentions and outright resistance to military activities and external intervention. As compared to the more traditional applications of cross-cultural competence (i.e., travel, education, and business), the military application of cross-cultural competence will likely face a much broader range of interaction and reception as well as more difficulty. More than any other profession, cross-cultural competence in the military can save lives (DOD, 2011).

Cross-Cultural Competence

While the nature and existence of culture may be debated by anthropologists, there is no debate that those traveling abroad, conducting international business or military operations overseas, interact with people, who in obvious and subtle ways, are different from themselves. Successful interaction with those who view the world differently requires some level of competence with crossing cultures. This topic has a rich research history of almost 60 years. Seminal works include Hofstede's (1980) *Culture's Consequences* and the *GLOBE Studies*, led by House (Chhokar et al., 2007; House et al., 2004; House et al., 2014).

Research History

Research on interacting across cultures has roots in the 1950s (Lysgaard, 1955) and 1960s (Ezekiel, 1968; Guthrie & Sektick, 1967; Mischel, 1965; Smith, 1966; Smith et al., 1963). Early researchers examined Peace Corps volunteers and students studying abroad and focused on their capacities to adjust to assignments in foreign countries, character traits that may assist in adjustment and performance and the ability to predict performance based on assessed traits. Terms like intercultural *competence*, *effectiveness*, and *adaptation* can be found in studies from the 1970s (Hammer, Gudykunst, & Wiseman, 1978; Ruben, 1976; Ruben & Kealey, 1979) and 1980s (Wiseman & Abe, 1986). As stated by Spitzberg and Changnon (2009), "By this time, the need for interculturally competent government, educational, and business representatives was well recognized" (p. 9).

Hofstede's (1980) *Culture's Consequences*, based on his work with an IBM research team studying IBM employee morale in more than 70 countries in the late 1960s

and early 1970s, is foundational in cross-cultural psychology. The cultural dimensions and follow-on efforts (House et al., 2004) provide a schema for understanding how cultures differ. The GLOBE studies further refined these cultural dimensions and shed a light on how culture affects leadership and broader society. The GLOBE studies will be discussed further in the culture and leadership subsection. In this sense, research and literature about how cultures differ can inform training and education focused on cross-culture competence, but they do not provide insight into the competence required to cross-cultures.

Recent Military Research

Over the last decade, the U.S. DOD has invested significant resources into understanding and enhancing cross-cultural competence (Gabrenya, Moukarzel, Pomerance, Griffith, & Deaton, 2012). The Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, the Defense Language Office (DLO), and the Army Research Institute have been major sponsors of this research (Abbe, 2008; Abbe, Gulick, & Herman, 2007; Caligiuri, Raymond, Nolan, Ryan, & Drasgow, 2011; Johnston et al., 2010; McCloskey, Beymer, Papaustksy, Ross, & Abbe, 2010; McCloskey, Gandjean, Behymer, & Ross, 2010; McDonald, McGuire, Johnston, Selmeski, & Abbe, 2008; Paris, 2012; Reid, Kaloydis, Sudduth, & Greene-Sands, 2012; Reid, Steinke, et al., 2012; Ross & Thornson, 2008a, 2008b). This sponsorship and the integration and progressive design of these studies have resulted in a notable maturation of military-related, cross-cultural competence models and assessments.

Characterization of Cross-Cultural Competence

Gabrenya, Moukarzel, et al. (2012), Selmeski (2007), and Spitzberg and Changnon (2009) highlighted semantic and conceptual issues with the construct of competence. For example, competence is sometimes equated to a set of skills and abilities; discussions of knowledge, skills, and abilities are common. However, competence has also been discussed as a subjective evaluative impression (Abbe & Bortnick, 2010; Turnley, 2011). Selmeski (2007) made a distinction between competencies as knowledge, skills, abilities, other and competence as a level of performance. Selmeski (2007) argued knowledge, skills, and abilities can be too focused on action rather than comprehension and that observable and measurable standards are “poorly applied to culture; [they are] too often applied to surface level behavior [and ignore] middle and deep levels of culture” (p. 6).

Furthermore, context can undermine an attempt to establish standards and measures of cross-cultural competence (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984, 2002). One skill or behavior may be assessed as competent in one context but not another—“Thus no particular skill is likely to ever be universally competent” (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009, p. 6). In this research, I used the definition of competence presented by Abbe and Bortnick (2010): “A set of behaviors that describes excellent performance” (p. 14), where that set of behaviors requires knowledge, supporting skills and abilities, and complementary personality traits.

As with culture, Selmeski (2007) provided a useful frame of what cross-cultural competence is and is not. It is not merely knowledge of international relations or additional language training, although cross-cultural competence is complemented by

foreign language capability. Cross-cultural competence is not merely cultural awareness or knowledge of specific cultures. It requires a balance between general knowledge and specialization, a firm grasp of the culture concept rather than expertise in a particular culture, and an appreciation for the importance of language and the ability to use a translator as opposed to the capability to become a linguist. Cross-cultural competence requires ongoing, active learning developed through training, education, and development. This learning leads to a greater understanding of other people's way of thinking and acting and requires the recognition and acceptance of diversity. Cross-cultural competence entails a "conversion of this knowledge to action through cultivation of positive behaviors, the ability to adapt and integrate awareness to action" (Selmeski, 2007, p. 12).

Defining Cross-Cultural Competence

Cross-cultural competence refers to a combination of culture-general knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes (Paris, 2012), including affect and motivation (Abbe et al., 2007). Cross-cultural competence is developed through education, training, and experience (Ross, 2008) and is considered a lifelong process (Reid, Kaloydis, et al., 2012). Maximizing and leveraging inherent characteristics such as personality traits (Reid, Kaloydis, et al., 2012) are also considered a part of cross-cultural competence.

Cross-cultural competence is "the ability to quickly and accurately comprehend, then appropriately and effectively act, in a culturally complex environment to achieve the desired effect" (U.S. Air Force, 2009, p. 19). This rapid and accurate comprehension and appropriate and effective action should take place despite the lack of in-depth knowledge of the other culture (Abbe et al., 2007) and though "fundamental aspects of the other

culture may contradict one's own taken-for-granted assumptions and deeply held beliefs" (Selmeski, 2007, p. 12).

Military Cross-Cultural Competence

Cross-cultural competence research has been focused on health and social sciences (D'Andrea, Daniels, & Heck, 1991; Holcomb-McCoy & Myers, 1999; LaFromboise, Coleman, & Hernandez, 1991; Ponterotto et al., 1996; Sodowsky, Kuo-Jackson, Richardson, & Corey, 1998), diplomacy and international development/aid (Ezekiel, 1968; Guthrie & Sektick, 1967; Harris, 1973, 1977; Lysgaard, 1955; Mischel, 1965; Smith, 1966; Smith et al., 1963), and business (Koester & Olebe, 1988; Matsumoto et al., 2001; van der Zee & van Oudenhoven, 2000). However, there are significant differences between these sectors and the military (Selmeski, 2007) that require military-specific focus (Abbe et al., 2007). The consequences of military operations are life and death; for business, they are profit and loss; and, even in the medical field, cross-cultural competence is focused on patient interaction rather than life and death care. Military operations create a greater power differential with the local populace and increase the likelihood of local grievances such as occupation, destroyed property, and killing (intentionally or unintentionally). While past research on cross-cultural competence provides a useful foundation, research specifically focused on the military is needed to account for these unique contexts and circumstances.

Renstch, Gunderson, Goodwin, and Abbe (2007) highlighted negative military consequences of cultural ignorance and insufficient cross-cultural competence. These negative consequences include deadly consequences at the tactical level of engagement.

At the organizational level, negative public opinion may be generated, and at the strategic level, destructive policies may be developed and implemented.

Cross-cultural competence in the military is not only required for operational and tactical success, but it contributes to institutional strength and professional wellbeing (Selmeski, 2007). On the tactical and operational front, cross-cultural competence can aid in the assessment and management of multicultural diversity with allies and foreign partners, and in U.S. units and interactions with sister U.S. services (who maintain a different organizational culture). Interaction with noncombatants, including nonmilitary government actors, nongovernmental organizations, international organizations, and civilians, can also be positively impacted with cross-cultural competence. This interaction with nonmilitary personnel and organizations can be even more difficult than interacting with foreign militaries. As Abbe et al. (2007) stated:

Cross-cultural competence provides capability for a range of settings, including but not limited to interactions between two nations. This culture-general capability is particularly relevant when knowing one particular foreign culture or region is insufficient, such as in multinational operations, and when cultural difference are not just national or ethnic, but also organizational in nature Some findings even suggest that differences at the organization level, between military services and civilian organizations, may be more influential than differences at the national/societal level, between the militaries of different nations. (p. 1)

On the institutional front, cross-cultural competence can instill a greater public trust and respect and contribute to an increase in self-regulation (making better decisions and taking more appropriate action), thereby increasing the degree of autonomy granted by stakeholders, including politicians and U.S. citizens (Selmeski, 2007). According to Abbe, 2008):

The ability to look past gender, racial, or cultural differences to find common ground contributes to collaboration and teamwork as well as positive intergroup

relations more generally. Cultural understanding is important in considering the impact of the local population on military operations, as well as predicting and understanding adversary intent in planning and conducting . . . operations. (p. 6)

Special Operations Forces and Cross-Cultural Competence

The USSOCOM, the headquarters in charge of all U.S. SOF, has placed a significant emphasis on the ability to operate across cultures. In *SOCOM 2020* (SOCOM, 2012a), a strategic vision for the future of SOF, the need to partner with others and operate across cultures was highlighted:

It is an undeniable reality the U.S. cannot address the challenges of tomorrow alone. In an era of increasing responsibilities, competing priorities and reduced resources, we must build a Global SOF network of like-minded interagency, allies, and partners who proactively anticipate threats and are prepared to operate toward cooperative security solutions in cost effective ways. (p. i)

It is critical to maintain robust and frequent collaboration with the Geographic Combatant Commanders, interagency, allies, partner nations, coalitions, and our military services to ensure this comparative advantage is realized and sustained. (p. 2)

Operating in the Human Domain [defined as the totality of the physical, cultural, and social environments that influence human behaviors] is a core competency for SOF and we are uniquely suited for successful operations or campaigns to win population centric conflicts. (p. 1)

In the USSOCOM (2012b) Commander's Training Guidance, key tasks are assigned related to cross-cultural competence, including being culturally attuned and operating with foreign partners. This 2012 Commander's guidance was the first significant emphasis on cross-cultural competence, and it continues today in various guidance documents. In response, some USSOCOM service components have an increased their focus on cross-cultural competence, particularly the U.S. Army Special Operations Command and the Naval Special Warfare Command. Reviewing USSOCOM service components' focus on culture and the diplomat side of the *warrior-diplomat*

construct used by former SOCOM Commander, Admiral Eric Olson, Turnley (2011) singled out the Army and their Special Forces (e.g., Green Berets):

Army SF was the only special operations component that put a heavy emphasis on selecting candidates who have an aptitude for the diplomat component of the warrior-diplomat construct. In addition to testing for physical fitness, SF also looked for candidates who could handle situational and moral ambiguity, had strong interpersonal skills, and other attributes that component believed contributed to effective cross-cultural interaction. (p. 41)

Not surprisingly, the Special Forces are the first special operations service component to develop a tailored training program. The Foundations of Cross-Cultural Competence is a 16-day course taught at the U.S. John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School.

The Naval Special Warfare Command recently directed its Naval Special Warfare Center (NSWC, 2013) to develop cross-cultural competence training imbedded in the assessment and selection course for SEALs. This is a departure from the traditional focus for Naval Special Warfare through which “SEALs [are] . . . selected and assessed primarily on physical fitness and on psychological qualities that would help candidates get through BUD/S (teamwork and the ability to complete tasks under stress)” (Turnley, 2011, p. 41).

Cross-Cultural Models

Spitzberg and Changnon (2009) described five models used in attempts to frame and explain cross-cultural competence. These models are not mutually exclusive, and other types may exist, but most will fit in this typology. The individual is the unit of analysis for most cross-cultural models. The models most common in military cross-cultural literature are the development and compositional models, with the most recent military-related models combining aspects of both. These military-related, cross-cultural

competence models will be discussed and related literature highlighted at the end of this section. The first three models discussed are *co-orientation*, *adaptation*, and *causal*.

Co-orientation models (Byrum, 1997; Fantini, 1995; Kupka, 2008) have a focus on shared meaning and interaction between people of different cultures who develop common references and mutual understanding over time and through multiple interactions. These models stress relationships, time, and iterative adjustments. Any cross-cultural interaction is co-oriented and defined by not one but two (or more) individuals. In response to the other from another culture, adjustment and interpretation is required. Spitzberg and Changnon (2009) underscored this co-management of a cross-cultural relationship: “The maintenance of intercultural relationships depends in part, therefore on the deft management and balancing of directness and indirectness, understanding and misunderstanding, clarity and ambiguity” (p. 20).

Adaptation models (Berry, Kim, Power, Young, & Bujaki, 1989; Kim, 1988; Navas, Rojas, Garcia, & Pumares, 2007) have a focus on adjusting to foreign cultures through interacting in them. Expatriates, business personnel assigned overseas, and study abroad students are often the focus of these models. Adaptation models underscore a foundational assumption of almost all cross-cultural competence models. Adaptability is critical to achieving competence; however, “adaptation, in and of itself is a questionable criterion for competence” (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009, p. 29).

Causal path models (Arasaratnam, 2006; Griffith & Harvey, 2000; Ting-Toomey, 1999) specify interrelationships among components in a linear system. These models are most easily translated into testable propositions; however, the complexity,

multidimensionality, and nonlinear nature of cross-cultural interaction make any causal path exceedingly difficult to map and verify.

Development models (Bennett, 1986; Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1962; King & Magdolda, 2005) have an emphasis on stages of progression or maturity over time and are commonly used when training and development are the primary focus. According to Spitzberg and Changnon (2009), “Developmental models . . . tend to be strong in modeling systemic states of change but corresponding weak in specifying the interpersonal and intercultural competence traits that facilitate or moderate the course of such evolution” (p. 24).

Selmeski (2007), McDonald et al. (2008), Reid, Kaloydis, et al. (2012), and the U.S. Air Force Language and Culture Flight Plan (U.S. Air Force, 2009) have emphasized stages or levels of progression common in development models. However, very recent military-related models can be considered both developmental—in their focus on training and progression of cross-cultural competence through a career—and compositional.

Compositional models (Deardorff, 2006; Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998) list relevant traits, characteristics, and skills, but, unlike causal path models, they do not specify relationships among these components. The DLO framework for cross-cultural competence (Johnston, Paris, McD Coy, Severe, & Hughes, 2010) represents “the most carefully constructed conceptualization of 3C for the U.S. Military at this time” (Gabrenya, Moukarzel, et al., 2012, p. 3). The DLO framework is considered a compositional model (Gabrenya, Moukarzel, et al., 2012), and, as with any model, there are advantages and disadvantages. According to Spitzberg and Changnon (2009):

Compositional models have been very useful in defining the basic scope and contents that a theory on intercultural communication competence needs to incorporate. They are theoretically weak, however, in their ability to specify conditional relations among the components. They are also theoretically weak in leaving fundamentally undefined the precise criteria by which competence itself is defined. It is generally not clear, in other words, what constitutes competence in these models—what levels of proficiency, what specific combination of criteria or outcomes, would be determinative of competence? (p. 15)

This weakness of compositional models underscores the previous discussion of competence and the difficulty of translating or mapping competencies (e.g., KSAOs) into competence (e.g., outcomes and overall/holistic performance). However, the DLO framework for cross-cultural competence, using a hybrid compositional-development model, does attempt to characterize proficiency at various stages and identifies combinations of KSAOs that contribute to competency at each stage.

Abbe et al. (2007) provided the first theoretical cross-cultural competence model focused on the military, and their work served as the foundation for ensuing related military research (Reid, Kaloydis, et al., 2012). In Abbe et al.'s (2007) framework, cross-cultural competence consisted of three main components: (a) knowledge and cognition, (b) affect and motivation, and (c) skills. These components contained multiple subcomponents (see Table 2.2).

Table 2.2

Cultural Competence Framework

Knowledge and Cognition	Affect and Motivation	Skills
Cross-Cultural Awareness	Empathy	Interpersonal Skills
Cross-Cultural Schema	Need for Closure	Self-Regulation
Cognitive Complexity	Attitudes & Initiative	Flexibility

Note. Adapted from “Cross-Cultural Competence in Army Leaders: A Conceptual and Empirical Foundation,” by A. Abbe, L. M. V. Gulick, and J. L. Herman, 2007. Copyright 2007 by the U.S. Army Research Institute for Behavioral and Social Sciences.

Abbe et al. (2007) identified antecedents as a contributor to cross-cultural competence. Antecedents include life history and experience, stable dispositional (personality) traits, and self-identity (ego strength and self-efficacy).

Researchers of subsequent studies (Hardison et al., 2009; McCloskey, Behymer, et al., 2010; McCloskey, Gandjean, et al., 2010; McDonald et al., 2008; Ross et al., 2010) have refined and restated critical components of military cross-cultural competence and identified related learning objectives and supporting competencies and behaviors.

Johnston et al. (2010) developed and Johnston, Paris, Wisecarver, Ferro, and Hope (2011) later refined a framework for cross-cultural competence. In this framework, six core competencies and 13 core enablers were identified and are depicted in Table 2.3.

Core competencies can be characterized as abilities—cognitive, behavioral and attitudinal characteristics—while enablers are akin to personality traits. These enablers provide motivation and behavioral “traction;” skills can be taught and attained but without the motivating/enabling personality traits people will not always use their skills effectively. Paris (2012) underscored, “Personnel with good core competencies, who lack the accompany core enablers, may be at risk in situations with extensive and stressful social interactions” (p. 4). Abbe et al. (2007) took this line of thought further: “When individuals are operating in these ambiguous situations [with many unknowns regarding the norms of behavior, social roles, and expectations], personality may be the dominant factor that guides individual behavior” (p. 4). Reid, Kaloydis, et al. (2012) identified six core competencies and 10 supporting enablers in the latest iteration of the DLO framework (see Table 2.4).

Table 2.3

Framework of Cross-Cultural Competence Core Competencies and Core Enablers

Core Competencies		Core Enablers	
<u>Thinking Factors</u>	<u>Connecting Factors</u>	<u>Resilience Factors</u>	<u>Engagement Factors</u>
Applying Cultural Knowledge	Communication	Cognition Tolerance for Ambiguity Low Need for Closure Suspending of Judgment Inclusiveness	Learning Learning Through Observation Inquisitiveness
Organizational Awareness	Interpersonal Skills	Emotion Stress Resilience Emotional Regulation	Interaction Social Flexibility Willingness to Engage
Cultural Perspective Taking	Cultural Adaptability	Self Self-Confidence Self-Identity Optimism	

Note. Adapted from “Framework for Cross-Cultural Competence and Learning Recommendations,” by C. Paris, 2012, p. 8. Copyright 2012 by Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute.

Table 2.4

Framework for Understanding Cross-Cultural Competence

Core Competencies	Supporting Enablers
Inclusiveness	Tolerance for ambiguity Self-efficacy
Patience	Inquisitiveness Willingness to engage Openness to Experience
Tolerance for Uncertainty Cultural Learning	Self-efficacy Inquisitiveness Openness to experience
Self-Regulation	Self-efficacy Resilience Emotional stability
Self-Awareness	Leveraging personal attributes Self-efficacy

Note. Adapted from “A Framework for Understanding Cross-Cultural Competence in the Department of Defense,” by P. Reid, F. O. Kaloydis, M. M. Sudduth, and A. Greene-Sands, 2012, p. 7. Copyright 2012 by Lexington Books.

Reid, Kaloydis, et al. (2012) for the first time in the framework, as depicted in Table 2.4, associated supporting enablers (directly under supported core competencies) with specific core competences; some supporting enablers apply to multiple core competencies. Since 2008, significant work and steady progress has been accomplished in refining a model for military cross-cultural competence. However, shortfalls remain. As Gabrenya, Griffith, et al. (2012) observed:

Competence models of 3C [cross-cultural competence] share several limitations that persist within the intercultural adjustment and performance literature: (1) imprecision in defining constructs, often in the absence of operationalization; (2) conceptual overlap and unsatisfactory distinctions among key model components such as antecedents, KSAOs, and performance outcomes; (3) imprecision in specifying the causal order among constructs; and (4) imprecision or poor articulation of competencies with respect to the U.S. Military's practical selection needs due to insufficient attention to MOS [Military Occupational Specialty], rank, and service variables. These shortcomings limit the predictive and explanatory ability of existing 3C models, and consequently limit the predictive ability of existing 3C assessments, making them less than ideal for military use. (p. 4)

Cross-Cultural Assessments

A number of DOD-sponsored studies reviewed existing measures related to cross-cultural competence (Abbe, Geller, & Everett, 2010; Abbe et al., 2007; Gabrenya, Griffith, et al., 2012; Gabrenya, Mouskarzel, et al., 2011; Ross & Thomson, 2008b). These measures were derived primarily from business and the medical/mental health industry, and the vast majority were self-report measures. According to Gabrenya, Griffith, et al. (2012), "Self-reports of cross-cultural skills and abilities have been criticized on methodological grounds and may have questionable validity" (p. 7). However, no viable alternative exists; comprehensive peer or expert measurements do not exist and would involve significant amounts of time, effort, and potential intrusion upon, or disruption of, military operations.

Measures in these DOD-sponsored studies were selected based on the reliability and validity evidence in the research literature. Across all studies, no existing measure of cross-cultural competence was deemed sufficient to measure military cross-cultural competence as depicted in the DLO framework. Gabrenya, Griffith, et al.'s (2012) analysis was the most comprehensive, identifying 33 instruments and evaluating each instrument for face, construct, and criterion validity:

In depth examination of the instruments available for assessing 3C [cross-cultural competence] competencies and enablers revealed a serious paucity of good instruments. Instruments commonly put forth as available to 3C researchers proved to be inadequate or of little use; and several of the most highly visible instruments were found to have serious shortcomings. (p. iv)

Overall, these findings indicate that insufficient instrumentation is available to assess the DLO Framework, in particular its core competencies. While many candidate instruments were judged to be of insufficient quality, others were rejected because sufficient validation evidence is currently unavailable. (p. 73)

Abbe et al. (2007) found none of the 11 measurements examined in their study were uniquely suited to measure military cross-culture competence:

Although existing measures are available to measure some aspects of cross-cultural competence, the validity of these measures has not been established for a military population. Context and population differences warrant the development of measures specifically for the population of interest, with an emphasis on constructs and methods for use in training and development. (p. viii)

Abbe et al. (2010) compared four leading measures in a population of U.S. Army soldiers and military cadets and questioned their application in a military context. Most of the existing measures have not been used in a military context and, due to differences in context and roles, their utility is unclear. The characteristics required for a soldier working in a cross-cultural environment are largely different from students studying in a foreign country (Abbe et al., 2010). Although many instruments exist, researchers have little basis to choose among existing measurements because little comparison among

measures has been conducted, and corresponding overlap and redundancies among them has not been established (Abbe et al., 2010).

Abbe et al. (2007) underscored the likely necessity of a tailored measurement for military purposes. An excellent example is the Global Mindset Inventory. Described as “the world’s first and only psychometric assessment tool that measures and predicts performance in global leadership positions” (Mansour, Hough, & Bullough, 2010, p. 1), the Global Mindset Inventory was developed primarily from a corporate business perspective with items that include global business savvy. This inventory is a well-researched and scientifically developed tool that can be applied to military personnel but would need to be significantly improved if adapted to a military context.

Military-Related Assessments of Cross-Cultural Competence

Three measures specifically focused on military cross-cultural competence have been developed: (a) Cross-Cultural Competence Self-Assessment (Sudduth, 2012), (b) Cross-Cultural Competence Inventory (Ross, Thornson, et al., 2010), and (c) Cross-Cultural Assessment Tool (C-CAT; McCloskey et al., 2012). Unfortunately, these tools have not been subjected to confirmatory research and validation. All of these measures are based upon the DLO framework. Specific validity and reliability data are discussed in Chapter 3.

The Cross-Cultural Competence Self-Assessment (Sudduth, 2012) is a 62-item survey measuring eight dimensions. This online survey takes 15-20 minutes to complete and uses dimension measurements derived from independently validated measures with proven validity and reliability. Three of the eight dimensions from Sudduth (2012) are replicated in Ross, Thornson, et al. (2010), McCloskey et al. (2012), or both. Of the five

items that are unique in Sudduth, three—stress resilience, inclusiveness, and inquisitiveness—map directly to the DLO framework; the other two—optimism and suspending judgment—are prominent factors in the broader military literature. As discussed in Chapter 3, these five dimensions are included in the cross-cultural competence instrument used in this research.

The Cross-Cultural Competence Inventory (Ross, Thornson, et al., 2010) is a 47-item survey measuring six dimensions. The Cross-Cultural Competence Inventory survey takes 10-15 minutes to administer. Unique among the military-related measures, Ross, Thornson, et al. (2010) introduced a lie scale (Webster & Kruglanski, 1994) that allows for the exclusion of responses that do not meet the lie-scale criterion. All dimensions from Ross, Thornson, et al. map directly to the DLO framework, and all but one dimension are replicated in McCloskey et al. (2012). The unique dimension in Ross, Thornson, et al. is self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is prominent throughout the military literature (Abbe et al., 2007; Reid, Kaloydis, et al., 2010) and is the only supporting enabler in the DLO framework that is considered to enable most (five of six) core competencies. Both the Ross, Thornson, et al. lie scale and the self-efficacy dimension are included in the cross-cultural competence instrument used in this research.

McCloskey et al. (2012) developed the C-CAT as the latest iteration of the DLO framework-inspired instrument and is the most comprehensive military-related instrument. The Situational Judgment Test (SJT) and a scenario-based assessment were added to address the limitations of only a self-report assessment approach (e.g., limited to measuring self-perceptions and social desirability bias). The SJT was developed based on critical task analysis and actual critical incidents drawn from soldiers' experiences. In

addition to the SJT, a scenario-based vignette measure was specifically developed based on the five dimensions in McCloskey et al.: (a) cultural maturity, (b) cognitive flexibility, (c) interpersonal skills, (d) cultural knowledge, and (e) cultural acuity.

Furthermore, peer and supervisor rating reports were developed as a measure of performance. This allows comparison between the assessment battery results and a measure of performance. Peer evaluations were chosen as a measure of performance instead of the SJT and vignette assessment to reduce the amount of time required of participants and broaden the frame of reference. The CI-CAT battery, without the omitted SJT and vignette assessment, takes between 30 to 40 minutes to complete, not including peer or supervisor assessments. The C-CAT displayed adequate reliability and validity, which are discussed in detail in Chapter 3. This research used the C-CAT with augmentation from specific elements of Ross, Thornson, et al. (2010) and Sudduth (2012). The individual factors with this instrument are discussed in Chapter 3.

Integrative Complexity

The literature includes numerous references to the cognitive aspect of cross-cultural competence, including references to metacognition (Lane, 2007), multicultural perspective taking (Paris, 2012; Reid, Kaloydis, et al., 2012; Rentsch, Gunderson, Goodwin, & Abbe, 2007), and cognitive complexity (Abbe et al., 2007). However, none of the iterations of the DLO cross-cultural competence framework (Abbe et al., 2007; Johnston et al., 2011; Reid, Kaloydis, et al., 2012) touch upon integrative complexity, and no known assessments of cross-cultural competence include integrative complexity as an element. *Integrative complexity* refers to the “capacity and willingness to acknowledge the legitimacy of competing perspective on the same issue (differentiation) and to forge

conceptual links among these perspectives (integration)” (Suedfeld, Tetlock, & Strefert, 1992, p. 254). According to Tadmor, Tetlock, and Peng (2009):

Forty years of psychological research has shown that integrative complexity affects performance on a variety of cognitive and interpersonal tasks. . . . Within a cross-cultural context, integrative complexity reflects the degree to which people accept the reasonableness of clashing cultural perspectives on how to live and, consequently, the degree to which they are motivated to develop cognitive schemas that integrate these competing world views by explaining who different people can come to such divergent conclusions or by specifying ways of blending potentially discordant norms and values. (p. 106)

Integrative complexity can be developed, and promising results (S. Savage & J. Lith, personal communication, 2013) have been reported in interventions for addressing radicalization and involvement in violent extremism such as Islamic/Al Qaida radicalization, Scottish sectarianism, and theological clashes (e.g., Northern Ireland). There is reason to believe integrative complexity could contribute to the development of military cross-cultural competence.

It is unclear why integrative complexity is relatively absent in the cross-cultural competence literature, but there is a good reason it is not included in related assessments. The assessment is time consuming and requires significantly more effort for both the respondents and the researchers. Two options for assessment of integrative complexity exist. The first is an in-depth interview that includes 12 questions and, on average, takes over 2.5 hours. The second includes four open-ended questions requiring three written paragraphs in response to each question. It was highly doubtful military respondents would have the time or inclination to complete either option; in addition, the scale requires obtaining generalizable results, which would most likely be overwhelming for a research team.

There are several factor assessments that have been shown to be negatively correlated with integrative complexity, namely personal need for structure and need for cognitive closure. While personal need for structure is not mentioned in the literature, need for closure is mentioned in early iterations of the framework (Abbe et al., 2007; Johnston et al., 2011). Personal need for structure was included in the research instrument as part of a cognitive styles assessment.

Cognition Styles

Cognition is a major theme running through the cross-cultural competence literature. While the three prominent military-related 3C assessments have integrated some degree of cognition (i.e., cognitive flexibility, suspending judgment, sense making) into their measurements, it seems worthwhile to focus part of the assessment on a cognitive style assessment. Thompson (1998) developed a cognitive style assessment and applied it to Canadian military forces: “Cognitive styles are differences that document individuals’ preferred information gathering and decision making styles” (p. i). This cognitive style assessment included a subscale for personal need for structure, which is negatively correlated with integrative complexity. Additionally, it has subscales for personal fear of invalidity, need for cognition, and rigidity. These factors are discussed in Chapter 3.

The Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness Project

The focus of this dissertation is what individuals bring to cross-cultural engagement—individual traits and abilities that enable or derail competence in a cross-cultural military mission. Although it is not a primary focus of this research, understanding the culture into which military personnel deploy is a mission-critical

information requirement. Additionally, the local expectations placed upon leaders and how leadership effectiveness is assessed in a culture is also important to success in military cross-cultural engagements. For these reasons, a summary of the GLOBE project is included in this literature review.

The GLOBE project is perhaps the most comprehensive cross-cultural competence research effort ever conducted and “could be considered the Manhattan Project of the study of cultures in relation to the concepts of leadership” (House et al., 2004, p. ix). More than 170 investigators from 62 cultures collected data from 17,300 managers in 951 organizations producing an encyclopedia of findings linking culture to leadership and societal functioning. To date, the project has produced hundreds of articles and three books, including *Culture, Leadership and Organizations: The GLOBE Study of 62 Societies* (House et al., 2004), *Culture and Leadership Across the World: The GLOBE Book of In-Depth Studies of 25 Societies* (Chhokar, Brodbeck, & House, 2007), and *Strategic Leadership Across Cultures: The GLOBE Study of CEO Leadership Behavior and Effectiveness in 24 Countries* (House et al., 2014).

Although focused on three non-military industries (financial services, food processing, and telecommunications), the insight generated from the GLOBE project should be leveraged by military personnel who cross cultures and should be well understood by military personnel who have a primary mission of crossing cultures (e.g., within DOD: Foreign Area Officers, AF-PAK Asia-Pacific Hands, and within SOF; U.S. Army Special Forces and Military Information Support Operations/Psychological Operations, and SOCOM Foreign Liaison Officers). The GLOBE project can be used as a guide for crossing cultures; it provides a structure to observe and interact within a

different culture. This structure applies directly to the findings related to the C3 attribute of cultural relativism.

The GLOBE Framework

The GLOBE project identified 10 cultural clusters, nine major attributes of culture, and six major global leader behaviors (see Tables 2.5, 2.6, and 2.7). The GLOBE project measured both practices (what was done) and values (what should be done) across 62 cultures divided into ten cultural clusters. For both practices and values, attributes of culture and leadership behaviors within these cultural clusters were generally consistent while across these cultures the GLOBE project discovered significant variations. Knowing what members of a foreign culture consider to be effective or ineffective behaviors can improve conflict resolution and cross-cultural performance (House et al., 2004). Cultural clusters can provide a useful framework for managing the complexities of multinational military operations. House et al. (2004) provided empirical findings for the nine cultural attributes. The comparisons of high and low scoring cultures for these attributes is instructive and can help set expectations for training and development, a key aspect of military cross-cultural missions.

Table 2.5

GLOBE Study Cultural Clusters

Region	Cluster
Latin American	Costa Rica, Venezuela, Ecuador, Mexico, El Salvador, Columbia, Guatemala, Bolivia, Brazil, and Argentina
Anglo	England (and societies dominated by the English), Australia, South Africa (White sample), Canada, New Zealand, Ireland, and USA
Latin Europe	Italy, Portugal, Spain, France, Switzerland [French-speaking], Israel
Nordic Europe	Kingdoms of Sweden, Norway, and Denmark; culturally and historically Finland and Iceland are often considered part of this area
Germanic Europe	The Netherlands, Austria, Switzerland, former West Germany, and former East Germany
Confucian Asia Sub-Saharan Africa	Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, South Korea, China, and Japan Namibia, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, and South Africa (Black sample)
Middle East	Qatar, Morocco, Turkey, Egypt, and Kuwait as well as North Africa—Mauritania, Western Sahara, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt
Southern Asia	Iran, India, Indonesia, Philippines, Malaysia, and Thailand
Eastern Europe	Hungary, Russia, Kazakhstan, Albania, Poland, Greece, Slovenia, and Georgia

Note. Adapted from *Culture, Leadership and Organizations: The GLOBE Study of 62 Societies*, by R. J. House, P. J. Hanges, M. Javidan, P. W. Dorfman, and V. Gupta, 2004. Copyright 2004 by Sage.

Table 2.6

GLOBE Study Culture Attributes

Attribute	Description
Power Distance	Degree to which members expect power to be distributed equally
Uncertainty Avoidance	Extent to which a society, organization, or group relies on social norms, rules, and procedures to alleviate unpredictability of future events
Humane Orientation	Degree to which individuals are encouraged and rewarded for being fair, altruistic, generous, caring, and kind to others
Institutional Collectivism	Degree to which organizational and societal institutional practices encourage and reward collective distribution of resources and collective action
In-Group Collectivism	Degree to which individuals express pride, loyalty, and cohesiveness in their organizations or families
Assertiveness	The degree to which individuals are assertive, confrontational, and aggressive in their relationships with others
Gender Egalitarianism	The degree to which a collective minimizes gender inequality
Future Orientation	The extent to which individuals engage in future-oriented behaviors such as delaying gratification, planning, and investing in the future
Performance Orientation	The degree to which a group encourages and rewards group members for innovation, high standards, performance improvement and excellence

Note. Adapted from *Culture, Leadership and Organizations: The GLOBE Study of 62 Societies*, by R. J. House, P. J. Hanges, M. Javidan, P. W. Dorfman, and V. Gupta, 2004. Copyright 2004 by Sage.

Table 2.7

GLOBE Study Leadership Dimensions

Dimension	Description
Charismatic/Value-Based Leadership	Reflects ability to inspire, to motivate, and to expect high performance outcomes from others based on firmly held core values
Team-Oriented Leadership	Emphasizes effective team building and implementation of a common purpose or goal among team members
Participative Leadership	Reflects the degree to which managers involve others in making and implementing decisions
Autonomous Leadership	Refers to independent and individualistic leadership attributes
Humane-Oriented Leadership	Reflects supportive and considerate leadership but also includes compassion and generosity
Self-Protective Leadership	From a Western perspective, focuses on ensuring the safety and security of the individual and group through status enhancement and face saving

Note. Adapted from *Culture, Leadership and Organizations: The GLOBE Study of 62 Societies*, by R. J. House, P. J. Hanges, M. Javidan, P. W. Dorfman, and V. Gupta, 2004. Copyright 2004 by Sage.

Leadership and Culture

Views of the importance, value, style, or delivery of leadership vary across cultures (House et al., 2004). However, there are some common perspectives on what constitutes good or poor leadership: “The portrait of a leader who is universally viewed as effective is clear; the person should possess the highest levels of integrity and engage in Charismatic/Value-Based behaviors while building effective teams” (House et al., 2004, p. 678). Conversely, “self-protective and malevolent (attributes or activities) are universally viewed as impediments to effective leadership” (House et al., 2004, p. 678). Other leadership dimensions are culturally contingent; some cultures view them positively, while other cultures view them negatively. These are the areas that warrant

close attention when crossing cultures. While the findings and useful insights of the GLOBE project are beyond the focus of this dissertation, their use to military leaders is significant, as House et al. (2004) highlighted:

For instance, military and civilian service members who enforce [United Nations]-mandated peacekeeping operations should find it useful to understand indigenous cultural dimensions and their effective leadership profiles to lead and function successfully within a foreign population. It seems that this information would be especially helpful to them because they act not only in the cultural context of their member nation, but also have the extra burden of a military culture to uphold. (p. 709)

Literature Review Summary

A review of the literature underscored that culture is fluid both conceptually and in practice. It is enduring yet evolving. People live culturally, in that culture can be seen as sense-making strategies or an operational code implemented by groups of people. Culture defines a group's range of ideas (what is important and unimportant) and actions (what is right and wrong) as well as how, when, and from whom in and outside the group actions are appropriate or inappropriate. These rules are flexible; culture also helps interpret when to implement rules and when they might not apply. All of this makes crossing cultures exceptionally challenging.

The relationship between the military and the study and use of cultural insight is ancient, controversial, and tenuous. Some have rejected any association between military efforts and anthropology and culture. Others have argued increased cultural knowledge and insight can minimize casualties, shorten conflicts, and help restore peace. The U.S. military interest in cultural insight and education has waxed and waned throughout its history. Recently, DOD-sponsored research into cross-cultural competence peaked from 2007 to 2012. Today, as focus shifts to near-peer competitors like Russia and China,

DOD interest in research into cross-cultural appears to be waning, based on the declining number of recent related academic studies. The U.S. Special Operations community, including Navy SEALs, have a high degree of foreign partner and local population interaction, especially when compared to conventional units in the Army, Navy, or Air Force. Cross-cultural competence is vitally important to special operations forces.

This dissertation is focused on what individuals bring to cross-cultural engagement—their individual traits and abilities. Nevertheless, a review of literature would be lacking without mention of the GLOBE project, which can be used as a guide for crossing cultures, offering a framework and structure to observe and interact with different cultures. This is especially relevant to the cultural relativism factor on C3.

This literature review has established competence is a set of behaviors of excellent performance—behaviors requiring knowledge, skills and abilities, and complementary personality traits as well as affect and motivation. For the purposes of this research, cross-cultural competence is defined as appropriately and effectively acting in a culturally complex environment to achieve mission results—through the ability to quickly and accurately understand and respond to cultural dynamics. Cross-cultural competence requires the recognition and acceptance of diversity and conversion of knowledge into action through cultivation of positive behaviors, adaptability, and integration of awareness into action.

The DLO cross-cultural competence framework (see Table 2.4) was the latest iteration of a C3 model when this study began and is the foundation for military-focused C3 assessments. The C3 assessment used in this research is a combination of three DOD sponsored assessment efforts: C3 Self-Assessment (Sudduth, 2012), C3 Inventory (Ross,

Thornson, et al., 2010) and the Cross-Cultural Assessment Tool (McCloskey et al., 2012). In Table 2.8, I identify the source of 11 specific C3 instruments used in this study.

Table 2.8

Research Foundation of C3 Instruments Used in This Study

Research	Instruments				
Sudduth (2012)	Stress Resilience	Inclusion	Inquisitiveness	Optimism	Suspending Judgment
Ross, Thornson, et al. (2010)	Self-Efficacy	Lie Scale*			
McCloskey et al. (2012)	Relationship Orientation	Cultural Acuity	Cultural Relativism	Interpersonal Skills	Cultural Interest

Note: *The lie scale is not considered an aspect of cross-cultural competence but is used in the C3 assessment to identify potential outlier responses.

The literature has numerous references to the cognitive aspects of military cross-cultural competence, including metacognition, multicultural perspective taking, and cognitive complexity. However, neither existing frameworks nor assessments address this aspect of C3. Integrative complexity is the ability to acknowledge competing perspectives on the same issues as legitimate and the ability to connect multiple and often competing perspectives into a coherent frame. Integrative complexity is a task of differentiation and integration. Tadmor, Tetlock, and Peng (2009) highlighted how integrative complexity can help in a cross-cultural context. Because assessing integrative complexity is challenging and time-consuming for both study participants and researchers, cognition styles are used as a proxy. Thompson (1998) provided four instruments to assess cognition styles: personal need for structure, fear of invalidity, need for cognition, and rigidity. Thompson was the first to explore correlations between cognition styles and assessment factors in cross-cultural competence.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I review the context and significance of this research, the research objectives, and the research design and methodology. Organized around two primary research questions, I define the study populations and samples, summarize the research instruments and instrument procedures, and present data analyses. The chapter closes with a review of research limitations.

Overview

The research was conducted through two parallel studies with integrated analysis across both studies. In the first study, I examined the SEAL selection course and established an attribute profile of recent graduates. In the second study, I examined experienced SEAL performance through an assessment of cross-cultural competence factors and established attribute profiles of (a) superior cross-cultural assessment scorers and (b) substandard cross-cultural assessment scorers. Institutional Review Board and Navy SEAL senior leader approval was obtained prior to the research.

Research Foundation

In this section, I review the objectives and context of this research. This research is unique in that it is the only known study focused on Navy SEAL cross-cultural competence and the only known study of cross-cultural competence that uses cognition style factors as independent variables.

Research Objectives

The goal of this research was to inform and potentially improve effectiveness of U.S Navy SEAL and other SOF cross-cultural-related selection, training, education and development, and personnel assignment. I sought to identify key attributes among SEALs that are correlated with performance in cross-cultural environments. Two supporting objectives were pursued to identify a baseline starting point and a benchmark objective of SEAL cross-cultural-related factors. The first supporting objective was to determine the attribute profile of recent graduates from SEAL selection based on mean scores across two assessment tools. The second supporting objective was to identify, in the SEAL community, personal attributes (demographic and cognition style factors) correlated with superior and substandard performances in cross-cultural competence factors.

This knowledge could assist with the design of SOF training and education focused on cross-cultural capabilities and the measurement of related program effectiveness. Comparing recent SEAL selection graduate profiles with detected attributes related to success or underperformance in cross-cultural environments could also help identify and prioritize areas of training and education to move recent graduates and low assessment scorers toward the level of cross-cultural superior assessment scorers. Furthermore, insight into cross-cultural superior-performer attributes may assist with improving personnel assignments to positions requiring high cross-cultural capabilities.

Research Context

This research was not about comparisons of cultures. Rather, my focus was on the relatively small community of U.S. Navy SEALs—3,394 were active duty at the time of this study (NSWC, 2013)—and the attributes of individual SEALs that may be correlated

to performance when SEALs work with foreign partners. This research was about cross-cultural competence factors at an individual level of analysis.

This research was conducted in the context of (a) unprecedented public attention on SEALs; (b) a contrast between an increasing cross-cultural engagement mission set and a traditional low prioritization of cross-cultural interaction in the SEAL community; (c) mission assignments across deployed SEAL platoons that vary in cross-cultural interaction; and (d) an increasing SEAL community focus on personal attributes and the potential of analytics to inform personnel assignments and training, education, and development.

The topic of U.S. Navy SEALs is increasing in popular culture, including recent books such as *No Easy Day*, *Lone Survivor*, *Fearless*, and *American Sniper*; movies, such as *Zero Dark Thirty*, *Lone Survivor*, *Act of Valor*, and *Captain Phillips*; and video games, such as *SOCOM 4: U.S. Navy SEALs* and *Medal of Honor* (“United States Navy SEALs in Popular Culture,” 2019). This attention has skyrocketed following widely publicized operations, including high-profile hostage rescues of Captain Richard Phillips of the *Maersk Alabama* from pirates off the coast of Somalia in 2009 (McFadden & Shane, 2009), aid workers held by Al Shabaab inside Somalia in 2012 (Lawrence, 2012), and the 2011 raid that killed Osama Bin Laden (“Bin Laden’s Death: How the Story Unfolded,” 2013). In response to this unprecedented public exposure, the SEAL community is scrutinizing all public interactions and engagement. It is only because I was a senior Navy SEAL officer that I was granted access to conduct this study.

Acculturation, which traditionally deemphasizes cross-cultural interaction, begins for Navy SEALs at the assessment and selection course. Officially titled Basic

Underwater Demolition/SEAL (BUD/S) training, the SEAL selection course is widely recognized as one of the most difficult in the world—a 21-week course with an attrition rate of 64%. Turnley (2011) observed, “SEALs [are] . . . selected and assessed primarily on physical fitness and on psychological qualities that would help candidates get through BUD/S (teamwork and the ability to complete tasks under stress)” (p. 38). However, as Turnley (2011) noted, capability for cross-cultural interaction is not a priority in SEAL selection:

Army Special Forces was the only special operations component that put a heavy emphasis on selecting candidates who have an aptitude for the diplomat component of the warrior-diplomat construct. In addition to testing for physical fitness, Special Forces [selection course] also looked for candidates who could handle situational and moral ambiguity, had strong interpersonal skills, and other attributes that component [Army Special Forces] believed contributed to effective cross-cultural interaction. [In contrast,] though there is a growing set of post-selection, region-specific courses on languages and cultures, the SEALs’ culture seems to be one that emphasizes the warrior portion of the [warrior-diplomat] equation. (p. 41)

The heritage and focus of U.S. Navy SEALs, from their predecessors in World War II to the first SEALs in Vietnam and into the recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, have been on direct action raids (U.S. Navy, 2013). Among other requirements, these missions require violence of action and minimized contact with the civilian populace (U.S. Navy, 2013).

The historical mission focus and related organizational and cultural preference for minimizing contact with the populace stands in contrast to the evolution of the recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. These conflicts transitioned from unilateral U.S. action to partnered action with a U.S. lead, and later to partner Iraqi- or Afghan-led, action. Furthermore, the counter-insurgency doctrine (Petraeus, 2006) applied to these wars emphasized a population-centric approach through advising and assisting local defense

forces and engaging and protecting the civil population. Outside of Iraq and Afghanistan, the primary special operations mission during this same timeframe was consistent—to advise, assist, and train with partner forces to increase their internal capacity to address threats to partner nation stability. Despite a preference for more direct action assignments, Navy SEALs routinely conduct advise and assist missions. The USSOCOM has emphasized increased focus on relationships with international and U.S. interagency partners in its USSOCOM 2020 strategy (USSOCOM, 2012a). All of this highlights a requirement for cross-cultural capability that is not part of the traditional SEAL focus or culture (Turnley, 2011). Culture and focus are established at the selection course and reinforced in SEAL platoons.

When SEALs complete the selection course and a follow-on qualification course, they are assigned to a SEAL platoon. This small tactical element is composed of 21 men ranging in rank from midgrade enlisted personnel (E-5) to junior officers (O-3). Women are eligible for assignment as SEALs, but no woman has yet screened for the SEAL selection course. Depending on the mission, a SEAL platoon may be distributed into multiple smaller elements (four to eight men) or stay together as an integral unit of 21.

During this research, SEALs were assigned to missions throughout the Pacific, Africa, the Middle East, South America, Europe, and Afghanistan. In each location, mission assignments varied in their degrees of cross-cultural interaction. For example, some platoons or smaller task elements were imbedded with partner forces, having close, daily cross-cultural contact for the entire deployment. These platoons had a mission of *advise and assist*, essentially training and mentoring their partner forces. Other SEAL elements were assigned contingency response missions, acting as ready forces for raids

and hostage rescues. These contingency forces had only episodic interactions with partner forces for relative short exercise periods (4 to 8 weeks at a time).

While the degree of cross-cultural interaction across different SEAL platoons may vary widely, the key dependent variable under study is relative superior or substandard cross-cultural competence factors across the study population. The assignment of different missions may create a dichotomy of perspectives with high cross-cultural engagement platoons seeing their roles, their partners, and themselves differently than those assigned a contingency mission. While this was not extensively explored in this study, the potential impact of this difference was integrated into the research data analysis through demographic information used as independent variables.

Significance of the Research

This research is the first known effort in the Navy and SOF or in the academic community to assess cross-cultural competence-related attributes of Navy SEALs. Additionally, no other known study had cognition style factors as independent variables related to performance in cross-cultural competence factor assessments. The identification of key attributes that contribute to successful cross-cultural performance and a baseline profile of recent SEAL selection graduates will help establish both a benchmark objective (cross-cultural superior performer profile) and a “starting point” of SEAL cross-cultural capability (recent SEAL graduate profile). Results from this research can inform cross-cultural training and development initiatives, contributing to increased program effectiveness. Additionally, research results can assist in identifying critical training requirements and priorities for significant differences between SEAL selection graduates and SEAL cross-cultural top assessment scorers. Furthermore, the

identification of attributes associated with SEAL superior performance in a cross-cultural environment can assist SEAL leadership in identifying personnel best suited for assignment to positions requiring an ability to excel in cross-cultural environments.

Research Questions

In this research, I posed two primary questions: (a) Focusing on recent SEAL selection course graduates, what is the attribute profile, as defined by mean cohort scores, for SEAL selection graduates and how does this profile compare with the profile of an experienced SEAL cross-cultural high performer, defined as the top 15th percentile? (In other words, how do newly minted SEALs stack up against the experienced SEALs who score in the top 15th percentile in cross-cultural competence?); and (b) Focusing on experienced SEALs, what are the attribute profiles of cross-cultural superior (top 15th percentile) and substandard assessment scorers (bottom 15th percentile), and what is the relationship between demographic and cognition style factors and individual scores in a cross-cultural competence? In other words, what does the top and bottom scorers look like? Are there distinguishing personal traits that contribute to this performance?

Research Design

In this section, I review the research methodology, instruments, and procedures used to assess factors related to cross-cultural competence and cognition styles.

Research Methodology

A quantitative research design was used to explore common attributes among recent SEAL selection course graduates and common attributes among experienced SEALs who are superior or substandard assessment scorers, relative to scores across the experienced SEAL population in the study. Two parallel studies were conducted, one for

each area of focus: (a) recent SEAL selection graduates and (b) experienced SEALs. Throughout, I used post-event observation through an identical battery of assessment instruments discussed in the following sections.

Research Instruments

Two web-based self-assessment instruments and a demographic survey were administered online for both studies. These instruments were given to all recent SEAL training graduates and a subset of recently redeployed, experienced SEALs. To ensure confidentiality, a unique identifier code was assigned to each participant and applied to each of the instruments to protect the identities of participants.

An additional instrument designed to identify superior and substandard cross-cultural assessment scorers was used in the cross-cultural study on experienced SEALs. However, this methodology was flawed and did not render useful results. The instrument was intended to identify superior and substandard assessment scorers in the study population; most SEALs identified by their peers as superior and substandard assessment scorers did not participate in the study. Although 157 individuals were identified as superior or substandard cross-cultural assessment scorers, only eight were study participants. Because of this design flaw, instead of using peer assessments, superior and substandard assessment scorers were identified using cross-cultural competence and cognition style factors scores. For each factor, those who scored in the top 15th percentile were deemed superior assessment scorers, and those scoring in the bottom 15th percentile were assessed as substandard.

Instruments

There were two instruments common across both the SEAL selection and the experienced SEAL studies. These instruments include cross-cultural competence factors and decision style factors.

Cross-cultural competence factors. The factors of cross-cultural competence are depicted on the radar chart in Figure 3.1. The C3 factors used in this research are drawn from three studies: McCloskey et al. (2012); Ross, Thomson, et al. (2010); and Sudduth (2012). The instrument included 86 total items across 11 subscales focused on cross-cultural competence plus a lie scale. The average completion time for this scale was approximately one hour. The lie scale is a 5-item subscale from Ross, Thomson, et al. (2010). The lie scale was developed to detect attempts by respondents to present themselves in a favorable light regardless of accuracy. Respondents who attempt to present themselves in the most positive way, even if untruthful, score high on the lie scale. Participants who failed the lie scale criteria (a total score of 15 across the five items on a 1 to 6 rating scale), as per Webster and Kruglanski (1994), were excluded from the study. The cross-cultural competence assessment used in this research is found in Appendix B.

Five subscales were drawn from McCloskey et al. (2012) and included a total of 44 items with an overall reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of .91. Adequate reliability is achieved at a Cronbach's alpha of greater or equal to .70.

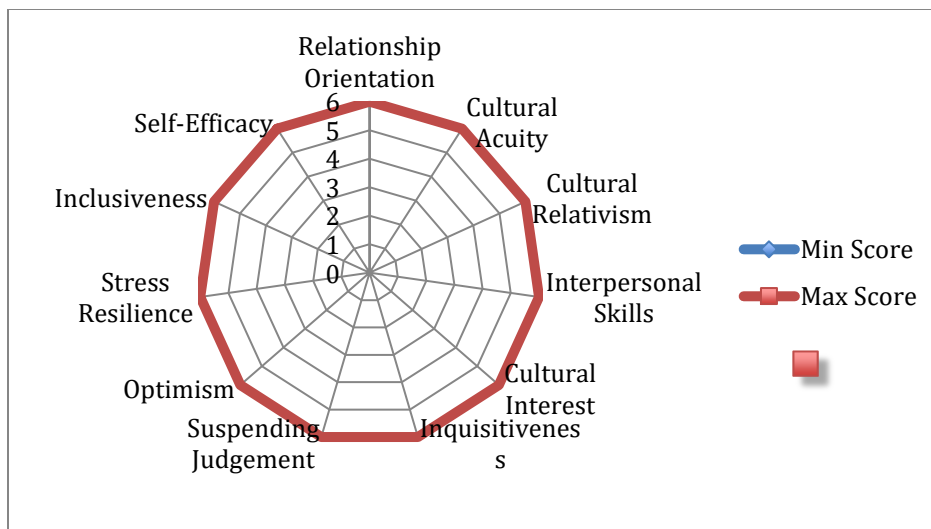


Figure 3.1. Cross-cultural competence factors—maximum and minimum scores.

The first of these subscales, *cultural interest*, involves a military member's willingness to learn about and engage with the local populace in pursuit of mission success (McCloskey et al., 2012). This subscale maps to the DLO framework supporting enablers of tolerance of cultural uncertainty, tolerance for ambiguity, openness to experience, and willingness to engage. This subscale of six items has a Cronbach's alpha of .73.

Cultural relativism refers to an ability to recognize and accept cultural differences and the corresponding alternative approaches and responses that different cultures engender (McCloskey et al., 2012). This subscale maps to the DLO framework supporting enablers of emotional stability, tolerance for uncertainty, and openness to experience. This subscale has 10 items and a Cronbach's alpha of .80.

Cultural acuity involves the ability to accurately assess the perspectives of others, situational dynamics, and the impact of cultural actions on the broader mission (McCloskey et al., 2012). This subscale maps to the core competencies of cultural

perspective taking, reasoning, and learning in the DLO framework. It consists of eight items and has a Cronbach's alpha of .70.

Relationship orientation measures the general tendency to value personal relationships and maps to the framework's elements of emotional stability (self-regulation) and perspective taking (McCloskey et al., 2012). This subscale has seven items and a Cronbach's alpha of .71.

Interpersonal skills focus on the ability to "consistently present oneself in a manner that promotes positive short and long term interactions to achieve mission objectives" (McCloskey et al., 2012, p. 14) and is primarily mapped to the framework's core competency of intercultural interaction. This subscale has 13 items and a Cronbach's alpha of .87.

The next five subscales are from Sudduth (2012) who did not report Cronbach's alpha for subscales. The first one, *stress resilience* (Sudduth, 2012), represents the ability to tolerate emotionally exhausting, frustrating, or shocking circumstances. Resilience is an enabler to the core competence of self-regulation in the DLO cross-cultural competence framework. Those with high stress resilience, despite repeated setbacks, failures, and obstacles to success, can maintain task focus and enthusiasm. This subscale has six items.

Inclusiveness, an enabler to core competence of cultural reasoning in the DLO framework, is the tendency to accept and include people and things based on commonalities and an appreciation for differences (Sudduth, 2012). This subscale has seven items.

Inquisitiveness is a 6-item subscale focused on the “tendency to take an active pursuit in the understanding of ideas, values, norms, situations, and behaviors that are new and different” (Sudduth, 2012, p. 1). It is measured using a social curiosity scale (Renner, 2006). Inquisitiveness is found in the DLO framework as an enabler to cultural learning, one of the six core competences.

Optimism is the “expectation of positive outcomes. An individual high in optimism views problems as solvable challenges and as exciting learning opportunities” (Sudduth, 2012, p. 1). Optimism was included as a core enabler in the resilience factors from Johnston et al. (2010) cross-cultural framework. This subscale has six items.

Suspending judgment is the ability to withhold judgment until adequate information becomes available and to perceive information neutrally (Sudduth, 2012). Suspending judgment was also included in the Johnston et al. (2010) framework. This subscale has five items and was adapted from a scale to measure professional skepticism (Hurtt, 2010).

The final two subscales are from Ross, Thornson, et al. (2010). The first one, *self-efficacy*, is the belief one has the ability to reach a particular goal or the power to produce a desired effect. Bandura’s (1997) focus on self-efficacy and his social cognitive theory is foundational to this concept. Self-efficacy is the only enabler to map to five of the six core competencies in the latest DLO framework (Reid, Kaloydis, et al., 2012). This subscale (Ross, Thornson, et al., 2010) has eight items and a Cronbach’s alpha of .86.

Cognition style factors. Cognition style factors are depicted in Figure 3.2. Thompson (1998) developed a cognitive style assessment that included subscales from the literature on cognition styles. These subscales include 66 items. This cognitive style

assessment took approximately 45 minutes to complete. The cognitive style assessment used in this research is found in Appendix C. As discussed in Chapter 2, cognition style factors are seen as enablers to cross-cultural competence (Abbe et al., 2007; Johnston et al., 2010; Reid, Kaloydis, et al., 2012). However, except for this study, there are no known studies that attempt to correlate cognition style factors with cross-cultural competence.

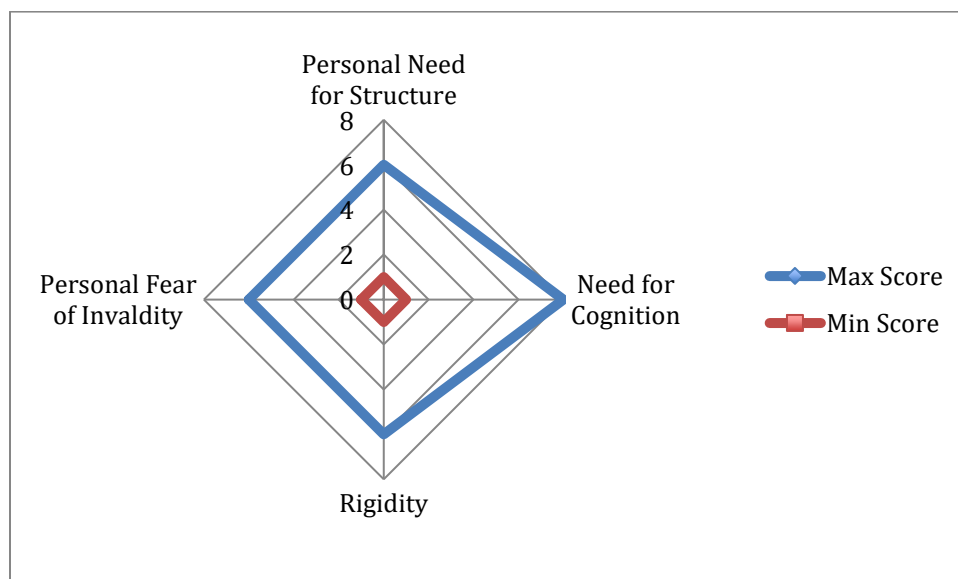


Figure 3.2. Cognition style factors maximum and minimum scores.

The first subscale, *personal need for structure*, is negatively correlated with integrative complexity, which affects cross-cultural competence (Tadmor et al., 2009). *Personal need for structure* is a “need to have some guiding knowledge or answer on a topic; any answer being preferable to no answer at all” (Thompson, Naccarato, & Parker, 1998, p. 2). A person high in personal need for structure would be troubled and uncomfortable with ambiguity and grey areas and would prefer clarity and structure in most situations. Neuberg and Newsom (1993) demonstrated individuals high in personal need for structure were more likely to arrange social and nonsocial information in simple,

less complex ways. This subscale has 12 items and had a Cronbach's alpha ranging from .77 to .82 across the 12 items.

Personal fear of invalidity raises concerns with the possibility of making errors, potentially leading to vacillation between options, longer response times, and lower subjective confidence in their own judgments (Thompson et al., 1998). This subscale has 14 items and a Cronbach's alpha between .76 and .83 across the 14 items.

Need for cognition indicates enjoyment and a desire for effortful cognitive tasks; those with high *need for cognition* see difficult cognitive tasks as a challenge rather than stressful events (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982). At face value, Thompson's (1998) description of *need for cognition* appears to be an important factor in cross-cultural competence, and my data analysis described in Chapter 4 highlights a strong correlation of *need for cognition* to every cross-cultural competence factor. According to Thompson (1998):

High need for cognition motivates [NFC] people to search for meaningful synthesis of decision-relevant information, with a goal of reconciling apparent inconsistencies into a meaningful and overarching understanding of a problem or issue. Past research . . . has determined that high [NFC] is related to individuals perceiving themselves as effective problem solvers, having higher levels of curiosity, and generating more complex explanations for behavior. . . . Taken together, this literature suggests that those high in NFC typically endeavor to work through, understand, and bring coherence to a decision area. (p. 3)

This subscale has 18 items and a Cronbach's alpha between .83 and .94 across the 18 items in the various populations from Thompson's (1998) study.

Rigidity is a dogged persistence in responses that, while perhaps suitable in other contexts, no longer appear to be adequate to achieve desired goals or solve current problems (Wesley, 1953). Those high in rigidity likely will be unable to adapt to new or inconsistent information about a topic and could lead to an inability to reconcile

inconsistencies. This subscale has 22 items and a Cronbach's alpha between .58 and .73 across the 22 items for the various populations of Thompson's (1998) study.

Common Instrument Procedures

All the instruments were web based and delivered online. The instruments could be taken in any order and each assessment took no more than 1 hour. The combined time of all instruments was less than 2 hours. It was not required that all instruments be taken at the same time. As long as the respondents had not had significant transitions into news role that might have altered their perceptions of themselves, their teammates, or their deployments, it is unlikely that an individual's scores would change over a period of weeks. No respondents in this study had significant post-deployment transitions; upon return from deployment, SEAL platoon members take leave (e.g., vacation) and begin individual professional development courses.

Common Data Analysis Procedures

Instruments did not allow questions to be skipped and were not considered complete unless all questions were answered. A 100% response was required. If only one of the two instruments were completed, follow-up with individual respondents were made to encourage completion. When follow-up failed to affect the completion of both instruments, the data from the sole instrument completed was used for cohort profiles and correlation of the instrument variables and cross-cultural assessment performance.

SEAL Selection Course Study

The first research question was: What is the common attribute profile for recent SEAL selection graduates? This provided the starting point of the study. The independent variables were the results of the assessment instruments, and the dependent variable was

successful graduation. Distribution (mean) analysis was used to determine the cohort attribute profile.

Population and Sample

I included the entire BUD/S training graduation population from August 2013 to June 2014; this included BUD/S Classes 300 to 305 (six classes). The first three classes, BUD/S classes 300 through 302, had already completed BUD/S but were assigned to SEAL Qualification Training (SQT), a “finishing school,” and were still available as a class to complete the assessments. The BUD/S classes have approximately 125 students who start each class; between 30 and 50 of those students graduate. The attrition rate over the past nine classes (Classes 294-303) was 64% (L. Jung, personal communication, 2015). During the period of study, six classes finished training with approximately 180 graduating; this was the population who were administered the instruments.

One hundred and sixty-four newly participated SEALs constituted the final sample of this study. While 100% of the SEAL graduates (a total of 180) participated in the study, 30 were removed from the study for failure to meet the lie scale criteria—a total score less than 15 across the five items on a 1-6 scale for each item. An additional four recent graduates were eliminated from the study for failure to complete portions of the study. Therefore, the sample included 164 newly minted SEALs out of a total population of 180 (81%).

Instrument Procedures

The links to the three instruments (biographical, cognition styles, and cross-cultural competence) and instructions were emailed to the class leader (senior student officer) of each class. Each class leader passed on the instructions and links to the entire

class and was the point of coordination for any follow-up with class members on incomplete elements of the instruments. It was explained participation was voluntary, but, given any task, a SEAL class is driven to complete it in due order.

The SEAL selection candidates took a biographical survey and cross-cultural competence and cognitive style assessments as part of their administrative week prior to graduation. For Classes 300 through 302, already graduated, the instruments were completed whenever possible during their SQT.

Data Analysis

The regression model for data analysis in the first study involved common characteristics among SEAL selection course graduates and was represented as follows:

$$SG = a_0 + a_1A_1 + a_2A_23CA + a_3A_3CFA$$

Where:

$$SG = \text{SEAL Graduate (yes or no)}$$

$$A_1 = \text{demographic data}$$

$$A_23CA = \text{Cross-Cultural Competence Assessment}$$

Where $A_33CA = \text{Cultural Interest} + \text{Cultural Relativism} + \text{Cultural Acuity} + \text{Relationship Orientation} + \text{Interpersonal Skills} + \text{Stress Resilience} + \text{Inclusiveness} + \text{Inquisitiveness} + \text{Optimism} + \text{Suspending Judgment} + \text{Self-Efficacy}$

$$A_3CFA = \text{Cognitive Factors Assessment}$$

Where $A_4CFA = \text{Personal Need for Structure} + \text{Personal Fear of Invalidity} + \text{Need for Cognition} + \text{Rigidity}$

The SQT students, the “finishing school,” and BUD/S graduates were combined to form the population of selection and assessment graduates. The SQT students (Classes 299 to 302) and BUD/S graduates (Classes 302 to 305) were also analyzed separately and compared with each other to see if there was a post-BUD/S graduation change.

Experienced SEAL Study

The second research question was: Focusing on experienced SEALs, what are the attribute profiles of cross-cultural superior (top 15th percentile) and substandard assessment scorers (bottom 15th percentile), and what is the relationship between demographic and cognition style factors and individual scores in a cross-cultural competence? In other words, what does the top and bottom scorers look like? Are there distinguishing personal traits that contribute to this performance? These questions provided the starting point of the second study. The unit of analysis was individual performance in a cross-cultural competence assessment. The discriminating variable was performance in the assessment, specifically performance in the top and bottom 15th percentiles.

Distribution analysis was used to determine the cut-off scores for superior and substandard assessment scorers. Cut-off scores for each factor of cross-cultural competence and cognition style were considered attribute profiles for superior and substandard assessment scorers. With this information, comparisons were made between mean attribute profiles of newly minted SEALs and experienced SEAL superior assessment scorers. This answered the second part of Research Question 1: How do newly minted SEALs compare with experienced SEAL superior cross-cultural competence assessment scorers?

The cut-off scores for superior and substandard assessment scorers were applied to the entire population of the study—both newly minted and experienced SEALs. Participants who scored at or above the top 15th percentile were assigned a *1* and designated as *all-stars*, and participants who scored in the bottom 15th percentile were

assigned a 0 and designated as *dogs*, because the term “dogging it” refers to those who lag behind in runs or physical evolutions. A comparison of superior and substandard assessment scorers across the entire research population answered the first part of Research Question 2: What does the top and bottom of the stack look like? The designation of all-stars and dogs was the focal point of binary logistical regression and helped answer the second part of Research Question 2: Are there distinguishing personal traits that contribute to this performance?

The dependent variables were individual scores in the cross-cultural competence assessment. The independent variables were the results of the cognition style assessment and demographic survey. Binary logistical regression analysis was used to determine if factors from the independent variables were correlated to cross-cultural competence assessment performance. A significance level of $p = .05$ was established and checked by an F test (ANOVA) for overall fit.

Population

The particular focus of the second study (cross-cultural competence assessment performance) was on SEALs at the lowest echelon, the SEAL platoon; this task element has the greatest opportunity for cross-cultural interaction. The target population of this study was defined as all U.S. Navy SEALs assigned to SEAL platoons. There are eight SEAL teams in the U.S. Navy. Each SEAL team has seven platoons. A platoon consists of 21 men: three officers and 18 enlisted personnel. The target population of this study was 1,176 SEALs (eight teams of seven platoons, each with 21 men).

Sample

The total population during the research window was 588 platoon members from 28 platoons. This number includes all SEAL platoon members returning from deployment between December 2013 to April 2014. Four SEAL teams returned from deployment during the study period. As such, the target population was 50% of the total population. A total of 294 experienced SEALs were in the target population, and 89 experienced SEALs constituted the final study sample. The sample constitutes 30% (89 of 294) of the target population and 15% (89 of 588) of the total population.

As noted in the dissertation proposal limitations discussion, SEALs may be “survey saturated” as efforts to assess their post-deployment physical, mental, and social (family and close relationships) health have significantly increased over the period of war in Iraq and Afghanistan. This saturation likely reduced the response rate. To counteract this, I personally briefed returning SEAL teams and frequently engaged with the team executive officer (second in charge) in an attempt to increase response rates. As seen in the first study of newly graduated SEALs, assessment and selection graduates do not suffer from similar survey saturation and had a high response rate as they tend to be eager to please as the “newly minted SEALs.”

Instrument Procedures

The SEAL team executive officers (XOs) were emailed the link to the demographic questionnaire (see Appendix D) and the two assessment instruments (cross-cultural and cognitive factors) within 2 months of their return from deployment. The XOs distributed the links and instructions to their teams and encouraged participation. I

routinely engaged with the XOs and visited the teams to explain the purpose and importance of the study.

As previously discussed, all platoon members were asked to rate their peers in cross-cultural competence using a peer rating process from McCloskey et al. (2012; see Appendix E). A total of 169 nominations were received, identifying 151 individuals as superior or substandard assessment scorers. However, of the 151 individual nominations, only eight participated in the study. Because of this, the top and bottom 15th percentiles were used as discriminators of performance.

Data Analysis

Regression models for data analysis in the second study involved common characteristics among superior and substandard assessment scorers in cross-cultural environments and were represented as follows:

$$CCS = a_0 + a_1 A_1 + a_2 A_2 3CA + a_3 A_3 CFA$$

$$CCP = a_0 + a_1 A_1 + a_2 A_2 3CA + a_3 A_3 CFA$$

Where:

$$CCS = \text{Superior Cross-Cultural Assessment scorers} = 1$$

$$CCP = \text{Poor Cross-Cultural Assessment scorers} = 0$$

$$A_1 = \text{Demographics (see Appendix D)}$$

$$A_2 3CA = \text{Cross-Cultural Competence Assessment}$$

Where $A_4 3CA = \text{Cultural Interest} + \text{Cultural Relativism} + \text{Cultural Acuity} + \text{Relationship Orientation} + \text{Interpersonal Skills} + \text{Stress Resilience} + \text{Inclusiveness} + \text{Inquisitiveness} + \text{Optimism} + \text{Suspending Judgment} + \text{Self-Efficacy}$

$$A_3 CFA = \text{Cognitive Factors Assessment}$$

Where $A_4 CFA = \text{Personal Need for Structure} + \text{Personal Fear of Invalidity} + \text{Need for Cognition} + \text{Rigidity}$

Limitations of the Research

As discussed in Chapter 2, culture and the competence required to cross cultures are complex constructs and difficult to precisely define and assess. Gabrenya, Griffith, et al. (2012) reviewed 34 instruments used to assess cross-cultural competence in nonmilitary contexts and found both the competency models that provided the foundation for the instruments and the instruments themselves wanting. The assessments used in this study, designed for a military context, suffered from the limitations that Gabrenya, Griffith, et al. (2012) highlighted: I used self-report methods to obtain declarative, cognitively accessible, and self-referent information, which can be misrepresented. As discussed in Chapter 2, I used a lie scale meant to address this limitation. The lie scale assessment identified 30 recently graduated SEALs (and no experienced SEALs) as potentially “faking it”; these individuals were removed from the study. Regardless, the potential for respondent manipulation of the results still existed.

No cross-cultural assessment has been independently correlated with cross-cultural performance. While previous academic research has included the creation of the original feeder instruments, there are no independent studies that correlate the assessment instruments in the field of cross-cultural performance. My research has a theoretical foundation that has not been scrutinized by researchers assessing actual cross-cultural competence assessment scorers; due to the shortfall in peer assessments this was a limitation in this study.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This research focused on the relatively small community of U.S. Navy SEALs and the attributes of individual SEALs that may be correlated to performance in cross-cultural assessment, a proxy for when SEALs work with foreign partners. This research is about cross-cultural competence factors at an individual level of analysis. My goal was to discover if there is a correlation between demographic traits or cognition style factors and scores assessing individual cross-cultural competence factors.

This chapter begins with a review of the study population demographics, attribute profiles, and details of the regression analysis. Attribute profiles, consisting of mean scores in both the cognition style and cross-cultural competence factors, are used to compare (a) new SEALs and experienced SEALs, (b) new SEALs and the top 15th percentile of experienced SEALs (as a performance benchmark), and (c) officer and enlisted SEALs. These comparisons highlight potential areas of training and development focus. I also compare the attribute profiles of the entire study population in the top 15th percentile (the superior assessment scorers) and the bottom 15th percentile (the substandard assessment scorers). This is used in binary logistical regression analysis as dependent variables where 1 = *all-stars* and 0 = *dogs*.

Demographic and cognition style factors were used as independent variables. Highly significant correlations contributed to predictive models for each of the 11 cross-cultural competence factors. I close the chapter with a detailed summary of the data analysis and conclude with the story found in the data.

Demographics

A total of 253 SEALs participated in this study. This number does not include data collected but excluded from analysis. Ten experienced SEALs completed only the demographic survey and did not complete any part of the decision styles or cross cultural competence surveys; they were thus eliminated from the study. Additionally, 30 participants, all new graduates, were eliminated from the study because their lie scale scores on a scale of 1 to 6 exceeded a mean of 4; this mirrors the methodology used by Ross, Thornson, et al. (2010) and developed by Webster and Kruglanski (1994). It is not surprising that slightly more than 15% of the newly minted SEALs felt some desire to complete the surveys out of class loyalty and a compulsion to complete any assigned task, but they focused less than the necessary energy to read and digest the items or felt compelled to show positive faces. Alternatively, they may have been extreme narcissists, as items include statements such as “I have never hurt another person’s feelings” and “I have never been late for an appointment.” However, if this were the case, I would expect this narcissist flag to be reflected in at least some of the experienced SEALs.

Survey Methodology

Two web-based, self-assessment instruments, totaling 153 individual questions, and a demographic survey were administered online to six classes of newly minted SEALs and experienced SEALs from a subset of four SEAL teams recently returned from deployment. The total time for completing the assessments for each participant was less than 2 hours. In Chapter 3, I reviewed the survey process and procedures in depth.

Experience, Age, Rank, and Time in Service

Study participants included 164 (64.8%) newly graduated SEALs and 89 (35.2%) experienced SEALs. One variable, SEAL experience, correlated to one cross-cultural competence factor, *suspending judgment*. This correlation will be discussed later in the chapter. Except for this instance, SEAL experience was not found to correlate to cognition styles factors or any other cross-cultural competence factor.

While it may seem participants of this study skew young, the mean age across all SOF was 29 (USSOCOM, 2019), and SEALs are generally younger than their Army counterparts. Consistent with nearly 65% of participants being newly minted SEALs, 68.5% were in their twenties (see Figure 4.1). In terms of rank, 65.6% were in the lowest officer and enlisted ranks: Ensigns (O-1) or Lieutenant Junior Grade (O-2) and Seaman Recruit (E-1) to Petty Officer Third Class (E-4; see Figure 4.2). More than 60% (62.1%) were in their first 4 years of service with an additional 16.2% serving between 5-8 years (see Figure 4.3). Neither age, rank, nor time in service was correlated to decision styles or cross-cultural competence factors.

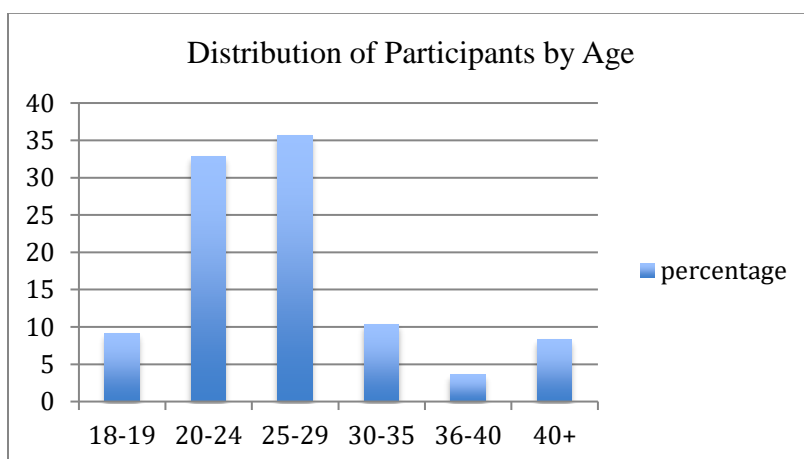


Figure 4.1. Age distribution across the study participants.

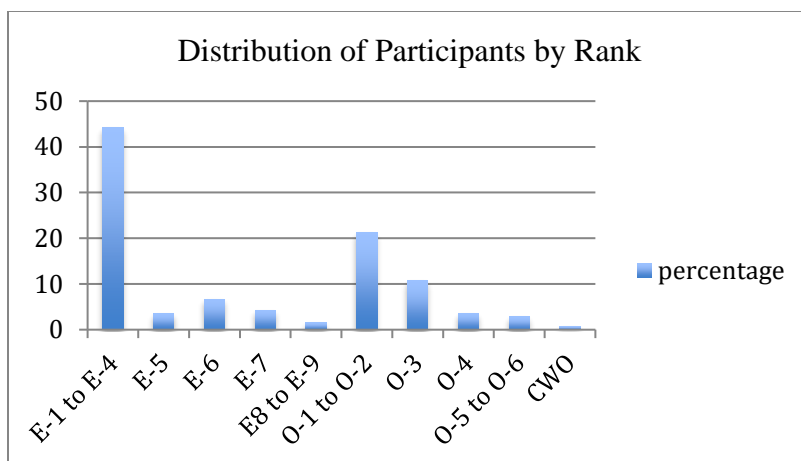


Figure 4.2. Rank distribution across the study participants.

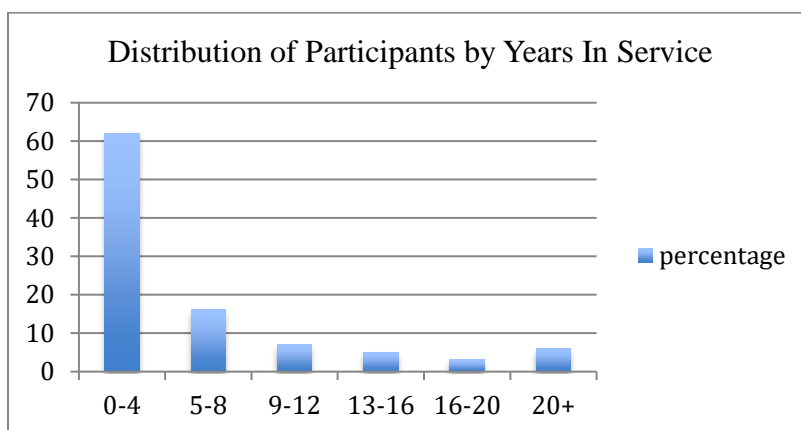


Figure 4.3. Time in service distribution across the study participants.

As depicted in Figure 4.4, 99 (39.1%) officers and 153 (60.5%) enlisted SEALs were among participants. Being an officer was found to correlate to the *suspending judgment* factor of cross-cultural competence and will be discussed later in this chapter. Neither status as an officer nor enlisted service member was found to correlate to cognition styles factors or any other cross-cultural competence factor.

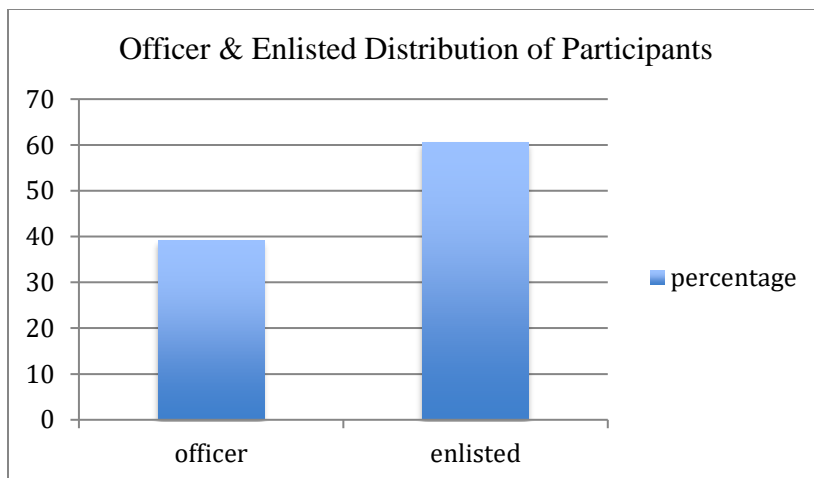


Figure 4.4. Officer and enlisted distribution across the study sample.

Language and Cultural Training.

A majority (59.7%) of participants had less than 1 week of cultural training, and 21% had 2-8 weeks of cultural training. An even larger majority (64.4%) had no language training, while fewer than 20% had extended language training (9 or more weeks). The distribution of study by cultural and language training is shown in Figure 4.5.

About half (50.7%) of participants assessed their cultural training as *effective* (*moderate to highly effective*), and 30% assessed their cultural training as *minimally effective* or *not at all effective*. Cultural training was assessed to be more effective than language training. Only 17.4% of participants assessed their language training to be *effective* (*moderate to very highly effective*), where 41.1% assessed language training as *minimally effective* or *ineffective*. These results are shown in Figure 4.6. Neither cultural nor language training was found to be correlated to decision style or cross-cultural competence factors.

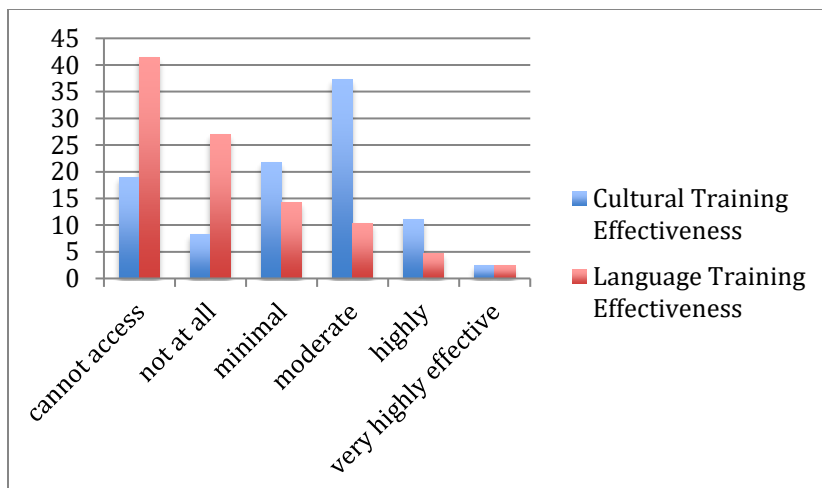


Figure 4.5. Effectiveness of cultural and language training assessed by study participants.

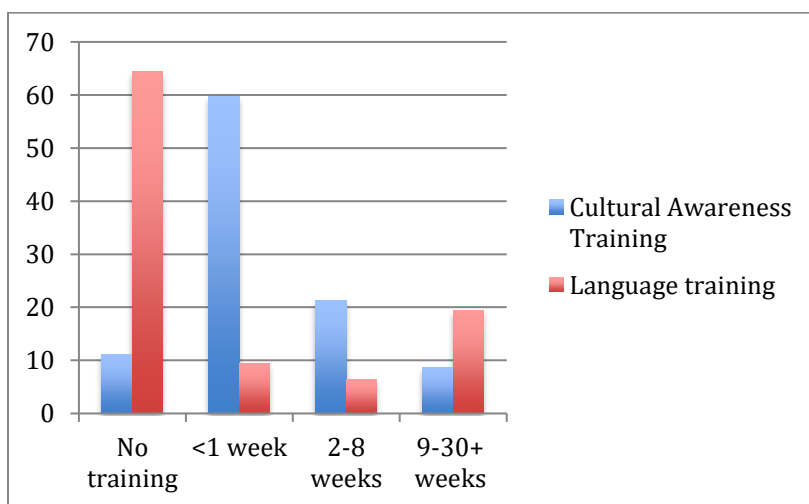


Figure 4.6. Distribution of participants by cultural awareness and language training across study sample.

Deployment Experience

Nearly three-fourths (72.5%) of experienced SEALs had two or three deployments, while 16% had only one deployment; the rest had four or more deployments (see Figure 4.7). On their most recent deployments, nearly 60% of participants completed routine SEAL deployments of 6-8 months; another third completed short deployments of less than 6 months, and almost 10% completed extended deployments of more than 8 months (see Figure 4.8). There were no reported losses (killed or wounded in action) of U.S. forces and 12 reported instances of partner-force

losses. Neither number of deployments, length of most recent deployments, nor partner force losses were correlated with cognition styles or cross cultural-competence factors.

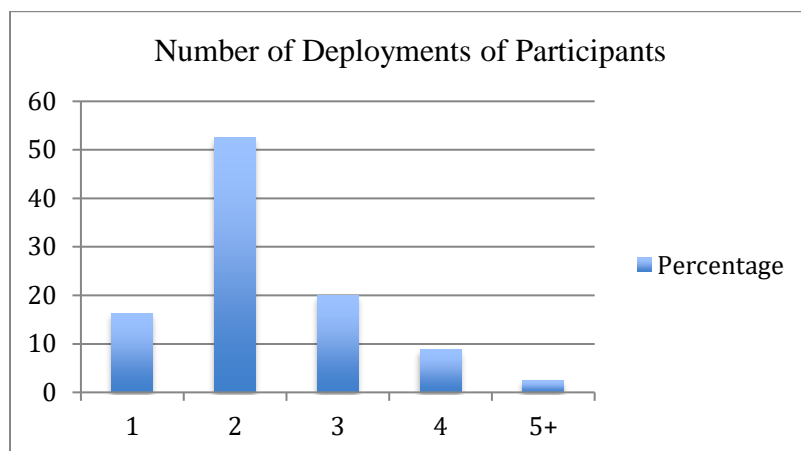


Figure 4.7. Distribution of deployment experience across study participants.

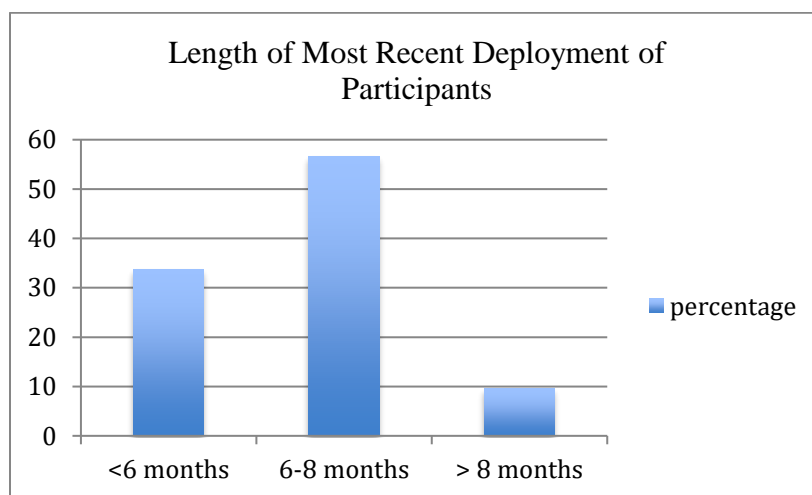


Figure 4.8. Length of most recent deployment across study participants.

Experienced SEALs were nearly evenly distributed across the spectrum of task element sizes (see Figure 4.9). Slightly more than 18% were operating in elements of four personnel or less, while 12% were operating in squad sizes of seven to 10 personnel, and 14.5% were in elements of 11 to 16 personnel. Nearly 23% were operating in SEAL platoon strengths of 16 to 21 personnel, and slightly more than 25% were operating in larger than platoon strength (21 or more personnel).

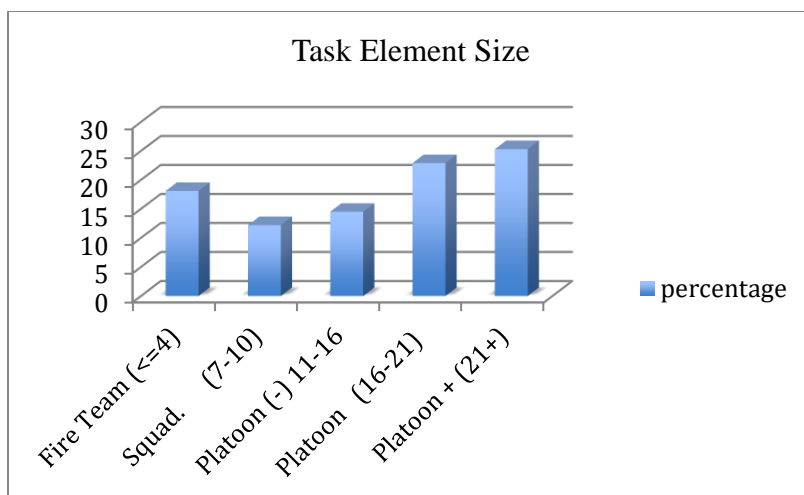


Figure 4.9. Distribution of study participants most recent deployment task element size.

A summary of deployment locations is shown in Figure 4.10. Most of experienced SEALs were deployed to the Middle East, including Afghanistan (61.4%), while the rest were distributed to the Southern Command (3.6%), European Command (3.6%), Pacific Command (14.5%) and Africa Command (16.9%). Neither size of task element nor deployment location was correlated to decision styles or cross-cultural competence factors.

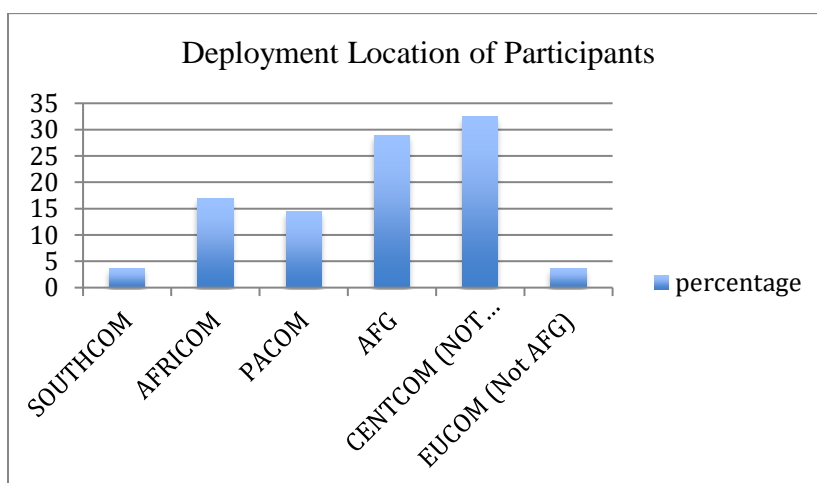


Figure 4.10. Most recent deployment location across study participants.

Most of the experienced SEALs (61.4%) were assigned missions related to training and advising partner forces. As a result, 83.2% reported moderate to significant contact with their partners, with 68% having daily contact with their partners. See Figures 4.11 and 4.12 for individual and task element interaction with partner forces.

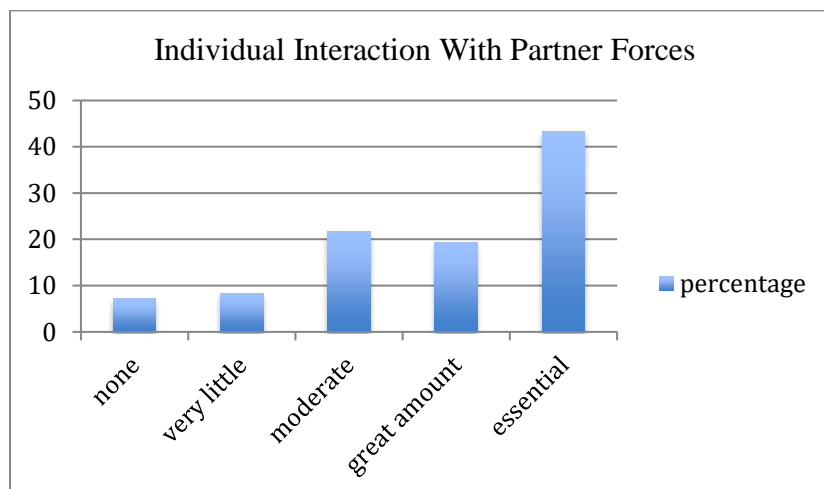


Figure 4.11. Individual interaction with partner forces.

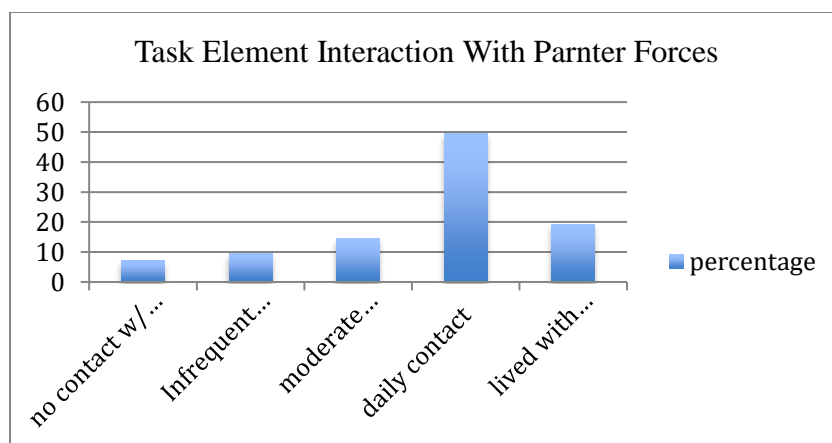


Figure 4.12. Task element contact with partner forces.

Nearly three fourths (74.7%) of experienced SEALs assessed their task element effectiveness in interactions as *moderate to extremely effective*, while 22.9% reported mixed results, and only 2.4% reported poor results (see Figure 4.13). Neither the type of mission, degree of partner contact, nor the assessed effectiveness of partner nation forces interaction was correlated with decision styles or cross-cultural competence factors.

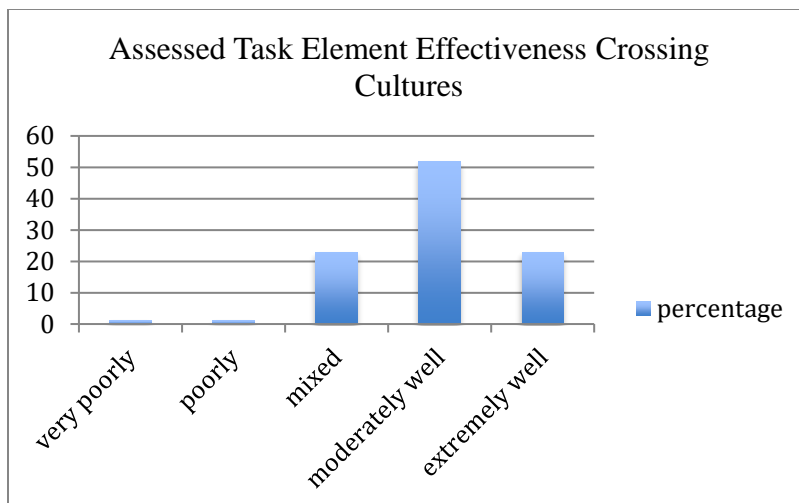


Figure 4.13. Assessed effectiveness of task elements crossing cultures.

Cross-Cultural Competence Attribute Profile

The attribute profiles in this research include cognition style factors and cross-cultural competence factors. I have used radar charts to portray the mean scores of cognition style and cross-cultural competence factors.

Cognition Style Factors

The independent variables and range of responses for each cognition style factor are shown in Table 4.1. Each variable used a Likert scale where the minimum response (0) represents *strongly disagree* and the maximum response (6 or 8) represents *strongly agree*. The differences in ranges are based upon the origin and development of the scale by Thompson (1998).

Personal need for structure is a factor that represents the need to have some guiding knowledge or answer on a topic with any answer being preferable to no answer at all. This instrument contained 12 items that comprise this factor. In an ambiguous environment, generally, the lower the score, the better.

Table 4.1

Ranges for Independent Variables – Cognition Style Factors

Independent Variables	Range
Personal Need for Structure	0-6
Need for Cognition	0-8
Rigidity	0-6
Personal Fear of Invalidity	0-6

Need for cognition is a factor that indicates enjoyment and a desire for effortful cognitive tasks. Those high in *need for cognition* see difficult cognitive task as a challenge rather than a stressful event. Eighteen items comprised this factor in this instrument. The higher the score, the better, although those high in *need for cognition* are sometimes slow to make decisions or bog down collaborative conversations in excessive discussion of the facts (Petty, Brinol, Loersch, & McCaslin, 2009).

Rigidity represents dogged persistence in responses that, while perhaps suitable in other contexts, no longer appear to be adequate to achieve desired goals or solve current problems. Individuals high in rigidity are often unable to adapt to new or inconsistent information about a topic, which could lead to an inability to reconcile inconsistencies. This instrument contained 22 items that comprise the factor. In an ambiguous environment, generally, the lower the score, the better.

Personal fear of invalidity is a factor which raises concerns with the possibility of making errors, potentially leading to vacillation between options, longer response times, and lower subjective confidence in their own judgments. This instrument contained 14 items that comprised this factor. Generally, the lower the score, the better; however, an extremely low score may indicate overconfidence or hubris.

Cross-Cultural Competence Factors

The dependent variables that comprise the cross-cultural competence factors are presented in Table 4.2 along with the ranges of responses on a Likert scale where the minimum response (0) is *strongly disagree* and the maximum response (6) is *strongly agree*.

Table 4.2

Ranges for Dependent Variables – Cross-Cultural Factors

Dependent Variables	Range
Relationship Orientation	0-6
Cultural Acuity	0-6
Cultural Relativism	0-6
Interpersonal Skills	0-6
Cultural Interest	0-6
Inquisitiveness	0-6
Suspending Judgment	0-6
Optimism	0-6
Stress Resilience	0-6
Inclusiveness	0-6
Self-Efficacy	0-6

The cross-cultural competence factors and definitions include the following:

- *Relationship orientation* (7 items) is a factor that reflects the general tendency to value personal relationships.
- *Cultural acuity* (8 items) represents the ability to accurately assess the perspectives of others, situational dynamics, and the impact of cultural actions on the broader mission.
- *Cultural relativism* (10 items) reflects an ability to recognize and accept cultural differences and the corresponding alternative approaches and response that different cultures engender.

- *Interpersonal skills* (13 items) refer to the ability to consistently present oneself in a manner that promotes positive short- and long-term interactions to achieve mission objectives.
- *Cultural interest* (six items) is a factor that assesses the willingness to learn about and engage with the local population in pursuit of mission success.
- *Inquisitiveness* (six items) represents the tendency to take an active pursuit in the understanding of ideas, values, norms, situations, and behaviors that are new and different.
- *Suspending judgment* (five items) refers to the ability to withhold judgment until adequate information becomes available and to perceive information neutrally.
- *Optimism* (six items) is a factor that represents the expectation of positive outcomes. High scores indicate viewing problems as solvable challenges and as exciting learning opportunities.
- *Stress resilience* (six items) represents the ability to tolerate emotionally exhausting, frustrating, or shocking circumstances.
- *Inclusiveness* (seven items) refers to the tendency to accept and include people and things based on commonalities and an appreciation of differences
- *Self-efficacy* (eight items) is a construct that expresses the belief that one has the ability to reach a particular goal or the power to produce a desired effect.

The cross-cultural competence means of all SEALs in the study were compared with maximum scores on each of these factors. This comparison is shown in Figure 4.14.

This cross-cultural competence instrument is a combination of items from previous

studies, and there are no comparison groups with which to compare the scores of the SEALS in this study.

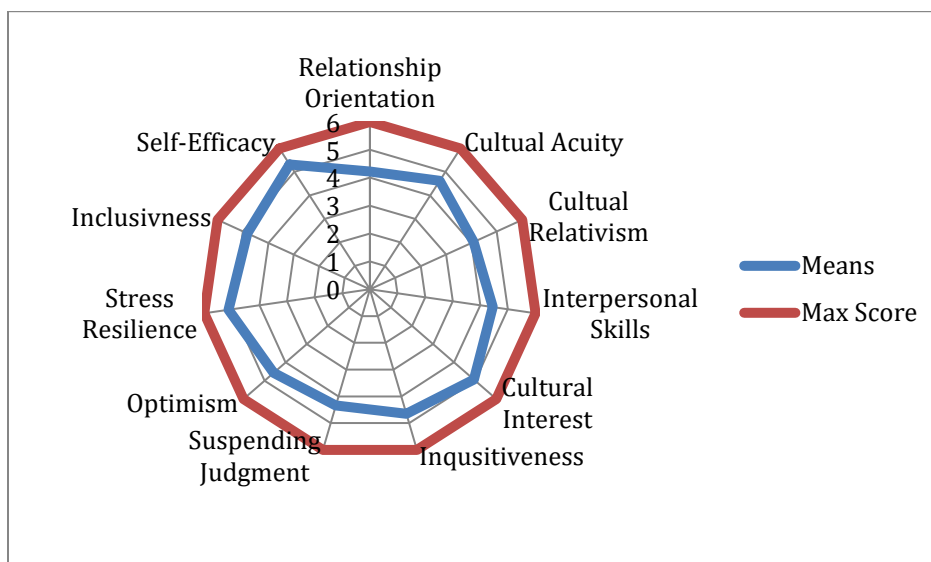


Figure 4.14. SEAL cross-cultural competence mean scores.

Research Question Findings

In this section, I present the findings as they relate to each research question, which were as follows:

1. What is the attribute profile, as defined by mean cohort scores, for SEAL selection graduates and how does this profile compare with the profile of an experienced SEAL cross-cultural high performer? In other words, how do newly minted SEALS compare with the experienced SEALS who score in the top 15th percentile in cross-cultural competence?
2. What are the attribute profiles of cross-cultural superior (top 15th percentile) and substandard assessment scorers (bottom 15th percentile), and what is the relationship between demographic and cognition style factors and individual scores in a cross-cultural competence? In other words, what does the top and

bottom assessment scorers look like and do personal traits contribute to this performance?

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 focused on newly minted SEALs with a focus on how new SEALs common attribute profiles compare to experienced SEALs who are superior assessment scorers in the cross-cultural competence assessment factors, as defined by the top 15th percentile of scores in the instrument. This comparison was intended to inform potential areas of focus for education and training. The comparison of how newly minted SEALs compare with experienced SEALs scoring in the top 15th percentile of each factor is shown in Figures 4.15 and 4.16.

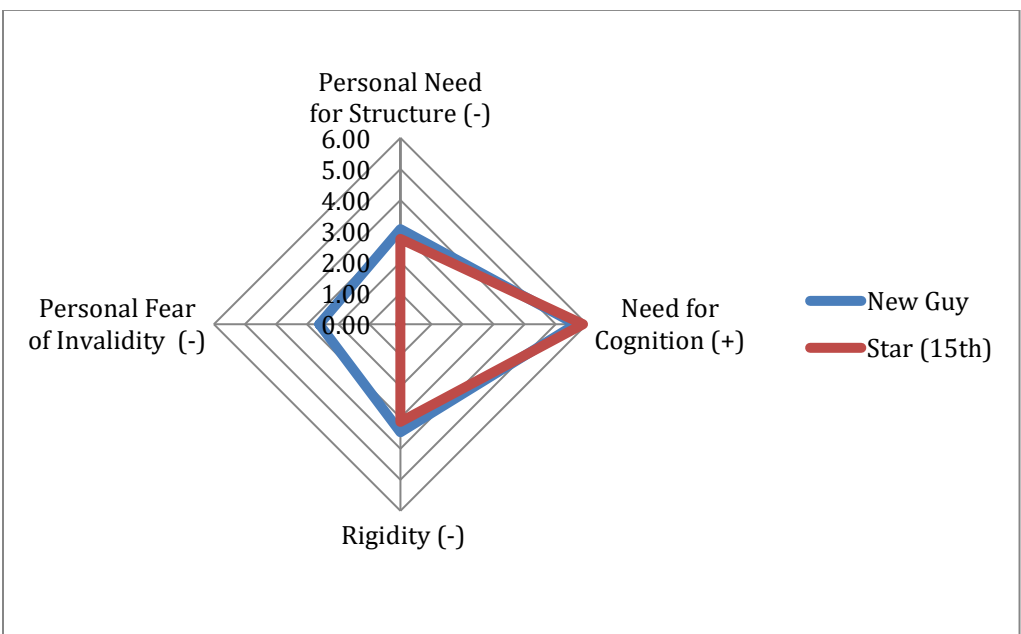


Figure 4.15. Decision style factor mean comparison newly minted SEAL vs. experienced SEAL all-stars.

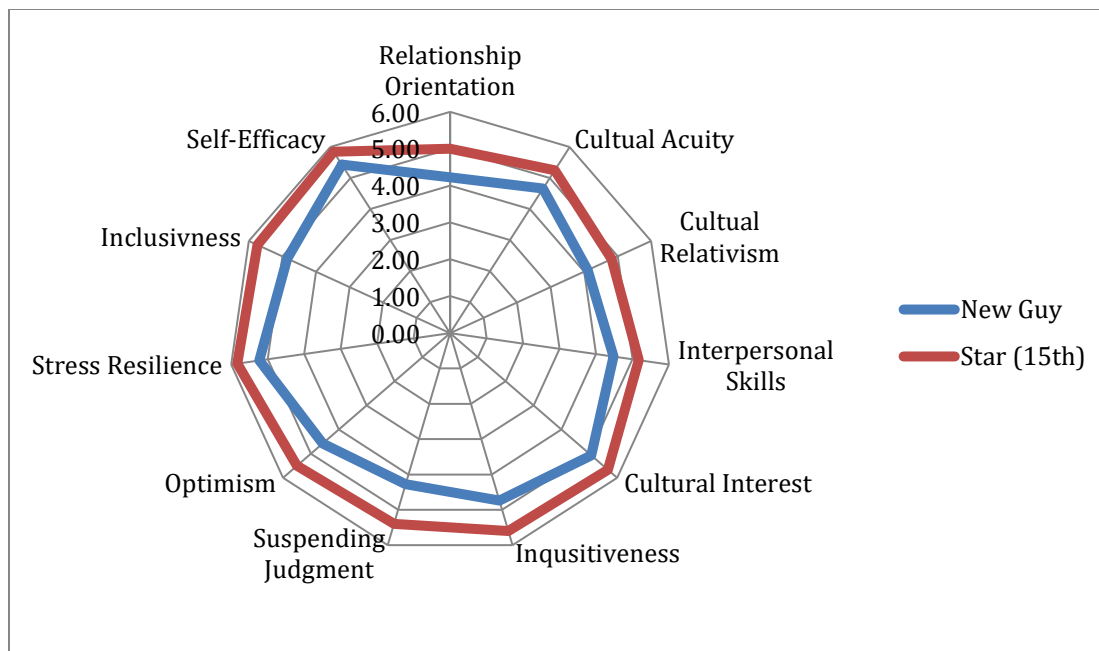


Figure 4.16. Cross-cultural competence factors mean comparison newly minted SEALs vs. experienced SEAL all-stars.

In cognition style factors, the newly minted SEAL mean score is very close to stars in *need for cognition*. Again, this is the most critical cognition style factor, with strong correlation to all of the cross-cultural competence factors. Additionally, the newly minted SEAL means are close to star assessment scorers in *personal need for structure* and *rigidity*. There is a major difference in *personal fear of invalidity* between newly minted SEALs and stars. Experienced SEALs in the top 15th percentile registered the lowest possible score for *personal fear of invalidity*, which may raise concerns about hubris and overconfidence; newly minted SEAL mean scores were in the middle of the scale. This highlights that new SEALs are very well positioned for cross-cultural focused missions with strong cognition style factor scores that are correlated with top performance in the cross-cultural competence factors.

In cross-cultural competence factors, newly minted SEAL means lagged behind stars but have strong showings in *self-efficacy*, *stress resilience*, *cultural interest*, and

cultural acuity. The largest gap between newly minted SEAL means and stars was in *suspending judgment*.

Strengths and weaknesses are highlighted in Table 4.3, which shows the total number in the top 15th percentile and the bottom 15th percentile for (a) the entire regression model discussed in the next section, (b) experienced SEALs, and (c) newly minted SEALs. The table also shows the percentages of stars and dogs in each category. As a reminder, the top and bottom 15th percentiles were established through the scores of all experienced SEALs, which sets an operational benchmark. Using this benchmark, newly minted SEALs were identified who fit in the top and bottom 15th percentiles as established by experienced SEALs. Comparing the percentage for stars and dogs (top and bottom 15th percentile, respectively) in each factor underscores potential areas for training, development, and use of new SEALs. A skew greater than 60% is noted with bold font for dogs and underlined italics for stars, respectively.

Newly minted SEAL stars clustered in interpersonal skills, cultural interest, inquisitiveness, stress resilience, and self-efficacy. The cross-cultural competence strengths of newly minted SEALs (highlighted in underlined italics font), identified by a disproportionate number of stars—a greater than 60% skew toward stars and away from dogs—may indicate that newly minted SEALs, especially those with high scores in need for cognition, may be better positioned than the average experienced SEAL to perform well engaging with foreign partners. Additionally, building task elements with an eye toward cross-cultural competence, and not just experience, would likely improve SEAL interactions and success with foreign partners.

Table 4.3

Percentage of Stars and Dogs Across Cross-Cultural Competence Factors

	Cross-Cultural Competence Factors										
	<u>RO</u>	<u>CA</u>	<u>CR</u>	<u>IS</u>	<u>CI</u>	<u>INQ</u>	<u>SJ</u>	<u>O</u>	<u>SR</u>	<u>INC</u>	<u>SE</u>
Model total	73	95	60	65	47	80	95	70	80	90	91
Dog %	46.6	49.5	53.3	52.3	51.1	41.2	68.4	48.6	23.7	58.9	23.1
Star %	53.4	50.5	46.7	47.7	48.9	58.8	31.6	51.4	<u>76.3</u>	41.1	<u>76.9</u>
Salt total	23	30	26	24	23	35	30	26	27	33	25
Dog %	43.5	53.3	53.8	50	60.9	51.4	53.3	50	44.4	63.6	52
Star %	56.5	46.7	46.2	50	39.1	48.6	46.7	50	55.6	36.4	48
Newly minted SEAL total	51	65	36	32	26	47	68	46	55	59	67
Dog %	47.1	47.7	52.7	37.5	38.5	31.9	75	47.8	12.7	56	11.9
Star %	52.9	52.3	47.2	<u>62.5</u>	<u>61.5</u>	<u>68.1</u>	25	52.2	<u>87.3</u>	44	<u>88.1</u>

Note. RO = relationship orientation; CA = cultural acuity; CR = cultural relativism; IS = interpersonal skills; CI = cultural interest; INQ = inquisitiveness; SJ = suspending judgment; O = optimism; SR = stress resilience; INC = inclusiveness; SE = self-efficacy.

Newly minted SEAL dogs were prominent (75% skew toward dogs, highlighted in bold font) in suspending judgment, the ability to withhold judgment until adequate information becomes available and to perceive information neutrally. This result may warrant some focused attention in SEAL training. Additionally, both newly minted seals (56%) and experienced SEALs (63.6%) were skewed toward dogs in inclusiveness.

While not part of the dissertation questions, comparing attribute profiles of newly minted SEALs and experienced SEALs and officers and enlisted provides additional insight. These comparisons are presented in Figures 4.17 and 4.18.

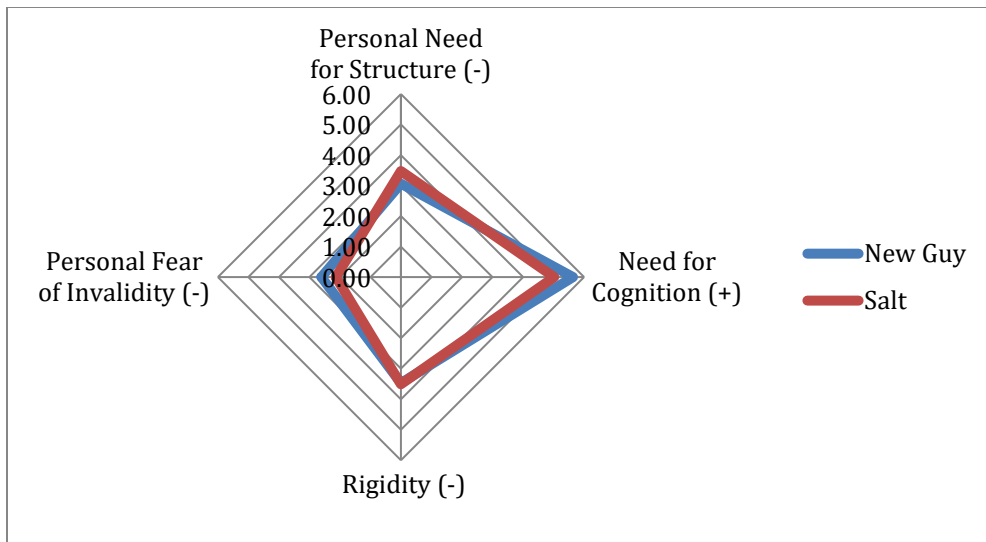


Figure 4.17. Decision style factors mean comparison newly minted SEALs vs. experienced SEALs.

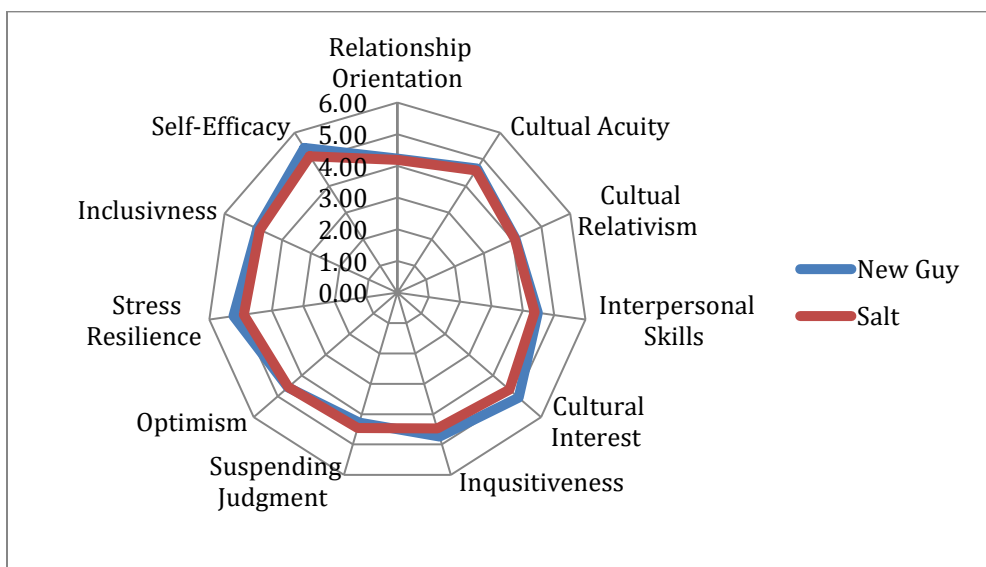


Figure 4.18. Cross-cultural competence factors mean score comparison newly minted SEALs vs. experienced SEALs.

The mean of newly minted SEALs is significantly higher than the mean of experienced SEALs in personal need for structure and need for cognition. However, newly minted SEALs have a higher personal fear of invalidity and roughly similar means for rigidity. In cross-cultural competence factors, newly minted SEALs have higher self-

efficacy, stress resilience, inquisitiveness, cultural interest, and slightly higher cultural acuity and relationship orientation. Newly minted SEALs lagged behind experienced SEALs in suspending judgment. Overall, this may imply newly minted SEALs may be better postured to engage foreign partners or more open to the engagement.

The final comparison of attribute profiles presented in this section is one between SEAL officers and enlisted. As depicted in Figures 4.19 and 4.20, there are minimal differences between the profiles of officers and enlisted. Officers' means are slightly higher in need for structure, inclusiveness, and cultural relativism and slightly lower in stress resilience. The latter would come to no surprise to enlisted SEALs.

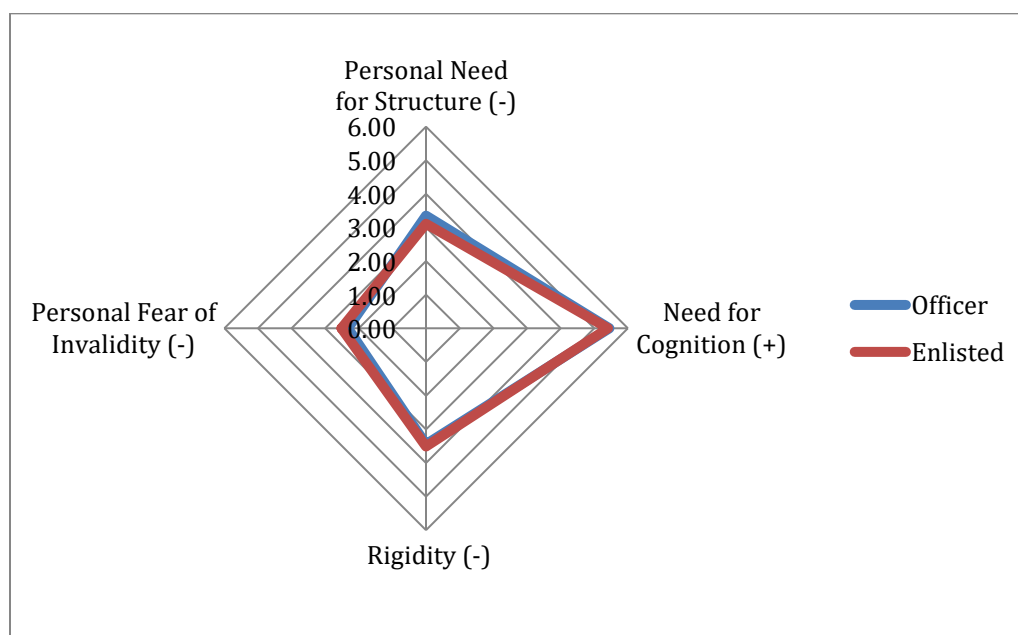


Figure 4.19. Cognitive style factor mean comparison officers vs. enlisted.

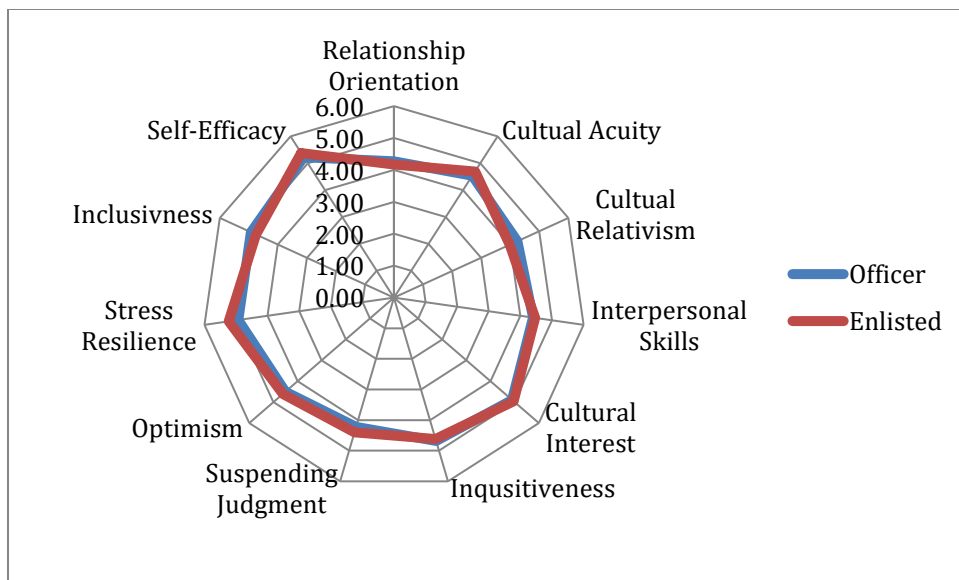


Figure 4.20. Cross-cultural competence factor mean comparison officer vs. enlisted.

Research Question 2

The second primary question of this research is focused on the attribute profiles of superior and substandard scorers for all SEALs in the study. The attribute profiles of these two groups are presented in Figures 4.21 and 4.22.

Using these two performance categories (star and dog), I used binary logistical analysis with cross cultural competence factors as dependent variables to explore any correlations between demographic or cognition style factors and cross-cultural competence factors. The cross-cultural competence models identify cognition style and demographic factors that showed significant correlation to cross-cultural competence.

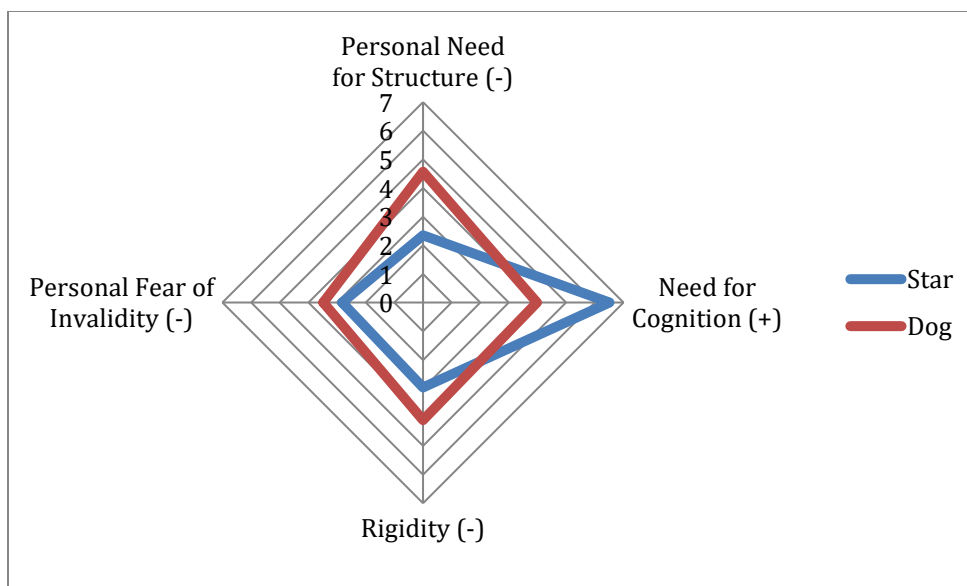


Figure 4.21. Decision style factors mean comparison stars vs. dogs.

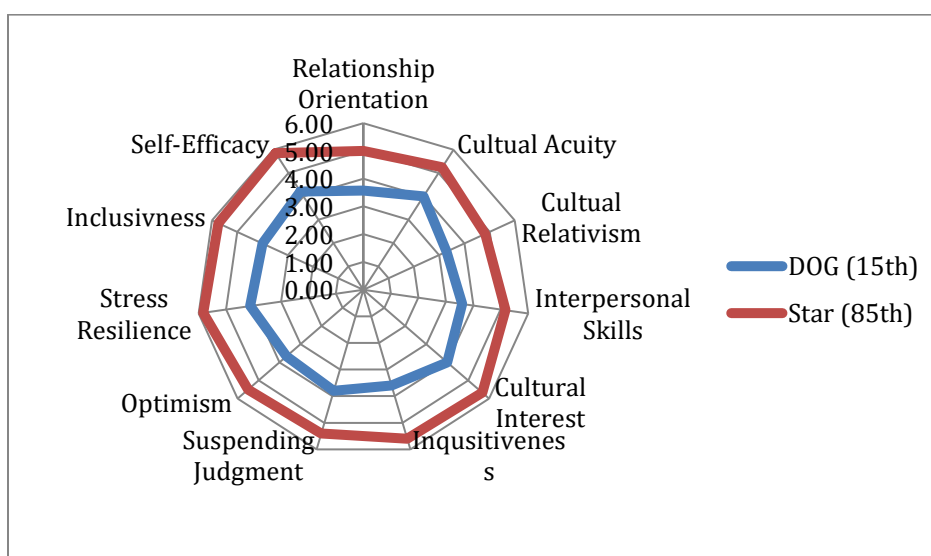


Figure 4.22. Cross-cultural competence factors mean comparison star vs. dog.

Cross-cultural competence model. The details of the regression analysis are discussed later in the chapter after I present the consolidated model for cross-cultural competence. For 10 of the 11 cross-cultural competence factors, the model consists only of the four cognition style factors—need for cognition, personal fear of invalidity, rigidity, and personal need for structure. For interpersonal skills, the 11th cross-cultural competence factor, officer and SEAL experience, was added to the cognition style factors

because of their significant correlation to interpersonal skills. The ranges of predictability for the variability in a particular cross-cultural competence factor, as projected by the Cox and Snell and Nagelkerke *R* squares, range from 20.1-26.9% for relationship orientation to 52.7-79.8% for self-efficacy.

There were five cross-cultural competence factors where the model held only *need for cognition* as a significant factor. These results are shown in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4

Cross-Cultural Competence Model for Factors Where Only Need for Cognition Is Significant

<u>Model Data</u>	<u>Factors</u>				
	<u>RO</u>	<u>CI</u>	<u>O</u>	<u>INQ</u>	<u>INC</u>
Cox & Snell R^2	0.2	0.49	0.24	0.31	0.33
Nagelkerke R^2	0.27	0.65	0.33	0.41	0.44
	NFC	NFC	NFC	NFC	NFC
Sig.	< 0.01	< 0.01	0.03	< 0.01	< 0.01

Note. RO = relationship orientation; CI = cultural interest; O = optimism; INQ = inquisitiveness; INC = inclusion.

For the other six cross-cultural competence factors, need for cognition combined with at least one other cognition style factor as significant independent variables.

Personal fear of invalidity was significant in five of the cross-cultural competence factors while rigidity was significant in three cross-cultural competence factors. Personal need for structure was significant in only one cross-cultural competence factor. Suspending judgment was the only cross-cultural competence factor where demographic variables were found to be significant; experienced SEALs and officers were significant variables. These details are presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5

Cross-Cultural Competence Model Where More Than Need for Cognition Is Significant

Model Data	Factors					
	SR	CA	IS	CR	SE	SJ
Cox & Snell R^2	0.24	0.5	0.47	0.36	0.53	0.39
Nagelkerke R^2	0.32	0.67	0.63	0.48	0.8	0.51
	NFC	NFC	NFC	NFC	NFC	NFC
Sig.	0.01	< 0.01	0.04	< 0.01	< 0.01	< 0.01
	PFI	PFI	PFI	PFI	PFI	PFI
Sig.	< 0.01	< 0.01	< 0.01	0.03	0.02	
	R	R	R	R	R	R
Sig.				0.03	0.01	< 0.01
	PNS	PNS	PNS	PNS	PNS	PNS
Sig.				0.04		
						EXP
Sig.						< 0.01
						Officer
Sig.						0.01

Note. SR = stress resilience; CA = cultural acuity; IS = interpersonal skills; CR = cultural relativism; SE = self-efficacy; SJ = suspending judgment; EXP = experienced SEALs; NFC = need for cognition; PFI = personal fear of invalidity; R = rigidity; PNS = personal need for structure.

Regression analysis details. Direct logistical regression was performed to assess the impact of cognition style factors on the likelihood that SEALs would be in the top or bottom 15th percentile (1 = top 15th percentile; 0 = bottom 15th percentile) of the 11 cross-cultural competence factors. Ten of the models contained only the four cognitive style variables (need for closure, need for cognition, rigidity, and personal fear of invalidity).

Relationship orientation. The full model containing all predictors was statistically significant, chi-square (4, $n = 73$) = 16.424, $p = .002$, indicating the model distinguished between SEALs in the top 15th percentile of relationship orientation and those in the bottom 15th percentile. This model on a whole explained between 20.1% and 26.9% of the variance between SEAL super stars and substandard assessment scorers in

the relationship orientation factor of cross-cultural competence. As shown in Table 4.6, only one of the four independent variables made a unique statistically significant contribution to the model. Need for cognition displayed an odds ratio of 2.91. This indicates the odds of being a super star in relationship orientation increase by a factor of 2.91 if a person scores one point higher in need for cognition.

Table 4.1

Relationship Orientation Model Data

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	Wald	<i>p</i>
PNS	.87	.52	2.88	.09
PFI	-.43	.63	.47	.49
NFC	1.07	.34	9.6	<.01
Rigidity	-.77	.84	.84	.36
Constant	-4.56	4.11	1.23	.27

Note. NFC = need for cognition; PNS = personal need for structure; PFI = personal fear of invalidity.

Cultural acuity. The full model containing all predictors was statistically significant, chi-square (4, $n = 95$) = 66.423, $p = .000$, indicating the model distinguished between SEALs in the top 15th percentile of cultural acuity and those in the bottom 15th percentile. This model on a whole explained between 50.3% (Cox and Snell R^2) and 67.1% of the variance between SEAL all-stars and substandard assessment scorers in the cultural acuity factor of cross-cultural competence. As shown in Table 4.7, two of the four independent variables made a unique statistically significant contribution to the model. Need for cognition displayed an odds ratio of 5.4. The odds of being an all-star in cultural acuity increased by a factor of 5.4 if a person scored one point higher in need for cognition. Personal fear of invalidity displayed an odds ratio of .027 (-1:37), indicating a negative correlation; the odds of being an all-star in cultural acuity increase by a factor of 37 if a person scored one point lower in personal fear of invalidity.

Table 4.2

Cultural Acuity Model Data

Variables	B	SE	Wald	<i>p</i>
NFS	.35	.60	.34	.56
PFI	-3.61	.87	17.33	< .01
NFC	1.69	.50	11.40	.01
Rigidity	1.01	1.07	.90	.34
Constant	-2.57	5.17	.25	.62

Note. NFC = need for cognition; PNS = personal need for structure; PFI = personal fear of invalidity.

Cultural relativism. The full model containing all predictors was statistically significant, chi-square (4, $n = 60$) = 26.748, $p < .001$, indicating the model distinguished between SEALs in the top 15th percentile of cultural relativism and those in the bottom 15th percentile. This model on a whole explained between 36% and 48% of the variance between SEAL all-stars and dogs scorers in the cultural relativism factor of cross-cultural competence.

As shown in Table 4.8, all four independent variables made a unique statistically significant contribution to the model. Cultural relativism was the only cross-cultural competence factor where all four cognition style factors had a correlation. Cultural relativism was also the only cross-cultural competence factor where need for structure played any role. Need for structure displayed an odds ratio of 4.79. The odds of a person being an all-star in cultural relativism increased by a factor of 4.79 if a person scored one point higher in need for structure. Need for cognition displayed an odds ratio of 3.61; the odds of being an all-star in cultural relativism increased by a factor of 3.61 if a person scored one point higher on need for cognition. Personal fear of invalidity displayed an odds ratio of 0.19 (-1:5.15); the odds of a person being an all-star in cultural relativism increase by a factor of 5.15 if a person scored one point less in personal fear of invalidity.

Rigidity displayed an odds ratio of 0.04 (-1:27.8). The odds of a person being an all-star in cultural relativism increase by a factor of 27.8 if a person scored one point less in rigidity.

Table 4.8

Cultural Relativism Model Data

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	Wald	<i>p</i>
NFS	1.57	.78	4.09	.04
PFI	-1.64	.74	4.86	.03
NFC	1.28	.42	9.31	<.01
Rigidity	-3.30	1.49	4.93	.03
Constant	4.09	4.93	.69	.41

Note. NFC = need for cognition; PNS = personal need for structure; PFI = personal fear of invalidity.

Interpersonal skills. The full model containing all predictors was statistically significant, chi-square (4, $n = 55$) = 35.063, $p < .001$, indicating the model distinguished between SEALs in the top 15th percentile of interpersonal skills and those in the bottom 15th percentile. This model on a whole explained between 47.1% and 63.2% of the variance between SEAL super stars and substandard assessment scorers in the interpersonal skills factor of cross-cultural competence. As shown in Table 4.9, two of the four independent variables made a unique statistically significant contribution to the model. Need for cognition displayed an odds ratio of 3.26. The odds of a person being an all-star in interpersonal skills increase by a factor of 3.26 if a person scored one point higher in need for cognition. Personal fear of invalidity displayed an odds ratio of .017 (-1:58.8). The odds of being an all-star in interpersonal skills increase by a factor of 58.8 if a person scored one point less in personal fear of invalidity.

Table 4.9

Interpersonal Skills Model Data

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	Wald	<i>p</i>
PNS	.52	.83	.39	.53
PFI	-4.10	1.44	8.14	<.01
NFC	1.18	.57	4.29	.04
Rigidity	.09	1.42	.00	.95
Constant	4.70	7.40	.41	.53

Note. NFC = need for cognition; PNS = personal need for structure; PFI = personal fear of invalidity.

Cultural interest. The full model containing all predictors was statistically significant, chi-square (4, $n = 47$) = 31.62, $p < .001$, indicating the model distinguished between SEALs in the top 15th percentile of cultural interest and those in the bottom 15th percentile. This model on a whole explained between 49% and 65.3% of the variance between SEAL super stars and substandard assessment scorers in the cultural interest factor of cross-cultural competence. As shown in Table 4.10, only one of the four independent variables made a unique statistically significant contribution to the model. Need for cognition displayed an odds ratio of 8.56. The odds of being an all-star in cultural interest increased by a factor of 8.56 if a person scored one point higher in need for cognition.

Table 4.10

Cultural Interest Model Data

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	Wald	<i>p</i>
PNS	.26	.71	.14	.71
PFI	1.43	.91	2.49	.12
NFC	2.11	.72	8.61	<.01
Rigidity	2.14	2.22	.93	.34
Constant	-15.21	10.62	2.05	.15

Note. NFC = need for cognition; PNS = personal need for structure; PFI = personal fear of invalidity.

Inquisitiveness. The full model containing all predictors was statistically significant, chi-square (4, $n = 80$) = 29.374, $p < .001$, indicating the model distinguished between SEALs in the top 15th percentile of inquisitiveness and those in the bottom 15th percentile. This model on a whole explained between 30.7% and 41.4% of the variance between SEAL super stars and substandard assessment scorers in the inquisitiveness factor of cross-cultural competence. As shown in Table 4.11, only one of the four independent variables made a unique statistically significant contribution to the model. Need for cognition displayed an odds ratio of 4.37. The odds of being an all-star in inquisitiveness increased by a factor of 4.37 if a person scored one point higher in need for cognition.

Table 4.3

Inquisitiveness Model Data

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	Wald	<i>p</i>
PNS	.09	.59	.03	.87
PFI	-.49	.62	.62	.43
NFC	1.47	.42	12.07	<.01
Rigidity	.67	1.04	.41	.52
Constant	-8.67	4.58	3.59	.06

Note. NFC = need for cognition; PNS = personal need for structure; PFI = personal fear of invalidity.

Optimism. The full model containing all predictors was statistically significant, chi-square (4, $n = 70$) = 19.57, $p = .001$, indicating the model distinguished between SEALs in the top 15th percentile of optimism and those in the bottom 15th percentile. This model on a whole between 24.4% and 32.5% of the variance between SEAL all-stars and substandard assessment scorers in the optimism factor of cross-cultural competence. As shown in Table 4.12, only one of the four independent variables made a unique statistically significant contribution to the model. Need for cognition displayed an

odds ratio of 2.40. The odds of being an all-star in optimism increased by a factor of 2.40 if a person scored one point higher in need for cognition.

Table 4.12

Optimism Model Data

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	Wald	<i>p</i>
PNS	-.13	.50	.07	.80
PFI	-.98	.58	2.89	.09
NFC	.88	.39	4.97	.03
Rigidity	.42	.83	.26	.61
Constant	-2.88	4.26	.46	.50

Note. NFC = need for cognition; PNS = personal need for structure; PFI = personal fear of invalidity.

Stress resilience. The full model containing all predictors was statistically significant, chi-square (4, $n = 80$) = 19.570, $p = .001$, indicating the model distinguished between SEALs in the top 15th percentile of stress resilience and those in the bottom 15th percentile. This model on a whole explained between 24.4% and 32.5% of the variance between SEAL super stars and substandard assessment scorers in the stress resilience factor of cross-cultural competence. As shown in Table 4.13, two of the four independent variables made a unique statistically significant contribution to the model. Need for cognition displayed an odds ratio of 11.32. The odds of a person being a star in stress resilience increased by a factor of 11.32 if a person scored one point higher in need for cognition. Personal fear of invalidity displayed an odds ratio of .02, indicating a negative correlation; the odds of a person being an all-star in stress resilience increased by a factor of 62.5 if a person scored one point less in personal fear of invalidity.

Table 4.13

Stress Resilience Model Data

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	Wald	<i>p</i>
NFS	1.62	.84	3.70	.05
PFI	-4.17	1.42	8.55	<.01
NFC	2.43	.89	7.46	.01
Rigidity	2.36	1.66	2.03	.16
Constant	-.41	7.36	.00	.96

Note. NFC = need for cognition; PNS = personal need for structure; PFI = personal fear of invalidity.

Inclusiveness. The full model containing all predictors was statistically significant, chi-square (4, $n = 90$) = 35.477, $p < .001$, indicating the model distinguished between SEALs in the top 15th percentile of inclusiveness and those in the bottom 15th percentile. This model on a whole explained between 32.6% and 43.9% of the variance between SEAL all-stars and substandard assessment scorers in the inclusiveness factor of cross-cultural competence. As shown in Table 4.14, only one of the four independent variables made a unique statistically significant contribution to the model. Need for cognition displayed an odds ratio of 5.74. The odds of a person being an all-star in inclusiveness increased by a factor of 5.74 if a person scored one point higher in need for cognition.

Table 4.14

Inclusiveness Model Data

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	Wald	<i>p</i>
PNS	-.14	.49	.08	.78
PFI	.41	.63	.43	.51
NFC	1.75	.41	18.66	<.01
Rigidity	-.38	.90	.18	.67
Constant	-9.31	4.22	4.87	.03

Note. NFC = need for cognition; PNS = personal need for structure; PFI = personal fear of invalidity.

Self-efficacy. The full model containing all predictors was statistically significant, chi-square (4, $n = 91$) = 68.1, $p < .001$, indicating the model distinguished between SEALs in the top 15th percentile of self-efficacy and those in the bottom 15th percentile. This model on a whole explained between 52.7% and 79.8% of the variance between SEAL super stars and substandard assessment scorers in the self-efficacy factor of cross-cultural competence. As shown in Table 4.15, three of the four independent variables made a unique statistically significant contribution to the model. Need for cognition displayed an odds ratio of 69.97. The odds of being an all-star in self-efficacy increased by a factor of 70 if a person scored one point higher in need for cognition. Personal fear of invalidity displayed an odds ratio of 0.02. The odds of being an all-star in self-efficacy increased by a factor of 59 if a person scored one point lower in personal fear of invalidity. Rigidity displayed an odds ratio of 600.19. The odds of a person being an all-star in self-efficacy increased by a factor of 600 if a person scored one point higher in rigidity.

Table 4.15

Self-Efficacy Model Data

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	Wald	<i>p</i>
PNS	-1.13	.98	1.37	.25
PFI	-4.09	1.80	5.18	.02
NFC	NFC		4.25	1.25
Rigidity	6.40	2.32	7.59	.01
Constant	-26.01	10.94	5.65	.02

Note. NFC = need for cognition; PNS = personal need for structure; PFI = personal fear of invalidity.

Suspending judgment. Direct logistical regression was performed to assess the impact of cognitive style factors on the likelihood that SEALs would be in the top 15th percentile (1 = top 15th percentile; 0 = bottom 15th percentile) of the cross-cultural

competence factor suspending judgment. In addition to the four cognitive style variables contained in the 10 other cross-cultural competence factor models, this model included two demographic variables, experienced SEALs and SEAL officers. The full model containing all predictors was statistically significant, chi-square (4, $n = 95$) = 47.4, $p < .001$, indicating the model distinguished between SEALs in the top 15th percentile of suspending judgment and those in the bottom 15th percentile (see Figure 4.16). This model on a whole explained between 39.3% and 50.1% of the variance between SEAL super stars and substandard assessment scorers in the suspending judgment factor of cross-cultural competence.

As shown in Table 4.16, two of the four cognitive style independent variables made a unique statistically significant contribution to the model. Need for cognition displayed an odds ratio of 4.59. The odds of being an all-star in suspending judgment increased by a factor of 4.59 if a person scored one point higher in need for cognition. Rigidity displayed an odds ratio of 35.87. The odds of being an all-star in suspending judgment increased by a factor of 35.87 if a person scored one point higher in rigidity.

Table 4.16

Suspending Judgment Model Data

Variables	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	Wald	<i>p</i>
NFC	1.52	.43	12.55	<.01
RIGIDITY	3.58	1.35	7.09	.01
PNS	.49	.57	.74	.39
PFI	.49	.57	.73	.39
EXP	-2.25	.78	8.39	<.01
Officer	1.84	.75	6.04	.01
Constant	-24.63	5.86	17.66	<.01

Note. NFC = need for cognition; PNS = personal need for structure; PFI = personal fear of invalidity.

The two demographic variables were also found to make a unique statistically significant contribution to the model. Experienced SEALs displayed an odds ratio of .023. The odds of being an all-star in suspending judgment increased by a factor of 43.47 if a SEAL is a newly minted SEAL. Officers displayed an odds ratio of 6.28. The odds of being an all-star in suspending judgment increased by a factor of 6.3 if a SEAL is an officer, rather than an enlisted.

The Story in the Data

I am aware of no other study that has assessed a cognition styles model for correlation with cross-cultural competence. I pursued this avenue of study because I was interested in the importance of integrative complexity—the capacity and willingness to acknowledge the legitimacy of competing perspectives on the same issue (differentiation) and to forge conceptual links among these perspectives (Seudfeld, Tetlock, & Strefert, 1992). Tadmor et al. (2009) placed integrative complexity into the context of cross-cultural competence:

Within a cross-cultural context, integrative complexity reflects the degree to which people accept the reasonableness of clashing cultural perspectives on how to live and, consequently, the degree to which they are motivated to develop cognitive schemas that integrate these competing world views by explaining how different people can come to such divergent conclusions or by specifying ways of blending potentially discordant norms and values. (p. 106)

Because assessment of integrative complexity is onerous and time consuming for study participants, cognition styles were used as a proxy. Personal need for structure has been shown to negatively correlate to integrative complexity. Need for cognitive closure has also been shown to negatively correlate to integrative complexity. Furthermore, need for cognitive closure and need for cognition are closely related (Suedfeld, 2009). The cognition style factors used in this study—personal need for structure, need for cognition,

rigidity, and personal fear of invalidity—were used by Thompson (1998) and applied in a study using Canadian military forces and University of Arizona students.

Using binary logistical regression analysis against the dependent variable of superior and substandard assessment scorers, I developed predictive models for the 11 cross-cultural competence factors. Ten of 11 of the predictive models used only the four cognition style factors and in all but one case were found to be worthwhile models with highly significant goodness of fit, as demonstrated through the omnibus tests for model coefficients and the Hosmer and Lemeshow test. Despite the fact the omnibus tests for model coefficients returned highly significant results ($p < .001$) for the interpersonal skills cross-cultural competence factor, the Hosmer and Lemeshow test just missed the mark to be considered significant ($p = 0.49$ where > 0.50 is considered significant). The Hosmer and Lemeshow Test indicates the interpersonal skill model is not as robust as the 10 other models.

Across all the 11 models, the ranges of predictability for the variability in a particular cross-cultural competence factor, as projected by the Cox and Snell and Nagelkerke R squares, range from 20.1%-26.9% for relationship orientation to 52.7%-79.8% for self-efficacy. The analysis shows the findings in this study are statistically significant.

Cognitive Style Findings Summary

The most noteworthy finding is that need for cognition is strongly correlated to every cross-cultural competence factor. Need for cognition indicates enjoyment and a desire for effortful cognitive tasks. Individuals high in need for cognition see difficult

cognitive tasks as a challenge rather than a stressful event. Often, interacting with foreign partners is a challenging cognitive and emotional task.

SEALs' need for cognition was higher than university students, close to Canadian forces senior enlisted, and lagged well behind Canadian forces officers, two sample populations from Thompson's (1998) study. Unlike almost all of the cross-cultural competence factors, and the cognition style personal fear of invalidity that had fairly even distribution between superior assessment scorers and substandard assessment scorers, SEALs in this study were skewed toward superior performance by more than 82% (72 superior; 20 substandard assessment scorers) in need for cognition. This strong need for cognition by SEALs in this study is consistent with the USSOCOM's (2019) characterization that the typical U.S. SOF member "enjoys games which require problem solving like chess" (p. 58). Additionally, the mean of newly minted SEALs is significantly better than the mean of experienced SEALs in personal need for structure, and newly minted SEALs mean score in need for cognition is very close to experienced SEAL superior assessment scorers.

Personal fear of validity had negative correlations to five cross-cultural competence factors: cultural acuity, cultural relativism, interpersonal skills, stress resilience, and self-efficacy. These results make sense on face value; lack of confidence in one's own judgment, concern over making errors, and slowness in decision making could negatively impact all of the traits where the data shows a negative correlation. The good news for SEALs is that the mean for personal fear of validity was very low, and the top 15th percentile registered the lowest possible score; the bottom 15th percentile was not far behind.

Rigidity was negatively correlated to cultural relativism but had a positive correlation with suspending judgment and self-efficacy. This is the most perplexing finding. Generally, with all things being equal and barring the extremes, one would assume the lower the score on rigidity the better. The data show the expected negative correlation holds for cultural relativism—an ability to recognize and accept difference and the corresponding alternative approaches and responses that different cultures require. High rigidity, logically, would get in the way of cultural relativism. However, why would higher rigidity correlate to increased performance in suspending judgment and self-efficacy? One explanation may be that suspending judgment and self-efficacy are positively affected by the confidence and commitment to maintain a dogged persistence even in the face of mounting evidence that a change in response is required. The SEAL mean for rigidity was low (significantly lower than the comparison group from Thompson's [1998] study) and SEALs also were skewed toward the bottom 15th in suspending judgment (65 dogs compared to 30 stars; newly minted SEALs accounted for the majority of this skewing). However, this straightforward explanation does not hold for self-efficacy where SEALs were skewed toward top assessment scorers in self-efficacy (70 stars and 21 dogs; newly minted SEALs were largely responsible for this result as well). Furthermore, the data showed rigidity had a very high odds ratio; for every single point increase in rigidity, self-efficacy was 600 times more likely to increase by one point. Further study is required to get beyond a surface explanation of this result.

Personal need for structure was only correlated to cultural relativism and it had a positive correlation. This is another unexpected finding. Because personal need for structure is negatively correlated with integrative complexity, and research (Tadmor et

al., 2009) has indicated integrative complexity may have a role in cross-cultural competence, I expected to see personal need for structure to be negatively correlated with cultural relativism; but the correlation was positive. I also expected it to have a larger role across the cross-cultural competence factors, and this was not the case. This finding may indicate structure is important in recognizing and accepting cultural differences and pursuing alternative approaches and responses appropriate for specific cultures.

Demographic-Related Findings Summary

Demographic data were captured to assess any potential correlation to cross-cultural competence factors. With only two exceptions in one of 11 cross-cultural competence factors, demographic data were not found to correlate to any of the factors in cognition styles or any other cross-cultural competence factor. For cross-cultural competence factor of suspending judgment, being an experienced SEAL was negatively correlated with the factor and being an officer positively correlated. The data showed being a newly minted SEAL would be 43.5 times more likely to increase a point in suspending judgment. This is somewhat surprising when looking at the distribution of dogs and stars in suspending judgment where newly minted SEALs were heavily skewed toward dogs (51 dogs, 17 all-stars) in suspending judgment. Nevertheless, the data showed being a newly minted SEAL increased the likelihood of higher suspending judgment scores, which is another argument for why newly minted SEALs should be considered for missions that engage foreign partners.

Being an officer would be 6.3 times more likely to increase a point in suspending judgment. While being an officer was positively correlated to suspending judgment when comparing star assessment scorers with dogs, the data showed that the means of officers

and enlisted, across all C3 factors showed little difference (see Figure 4.22). For suspending judgment, specifically, the officer mean (4.23) was lower than the enlisted mean (4.40). My takeaway from these data is that when building a team to maximize for cross-cultural competence, do not play the averages—know who the stars are through some system of assessment.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this quantitative study was to identify personal traits correlated with cross-cultural competence assessment factors and to potentially aid in the selection, training, and assignment of SOF related to cross-cultural competence. This research was about cross-cultural competence factors at an individual level of analysis. I am aware of no other study that assesses a cognition style model for correlation with cross-cultural competence. I discovered a correlation between cognition style factors and, to a lesser degree, demographic traits and scores assessing individual cross-cultural competence factors.

In this chapter, I present the limitations of this study, review the objectives of the study, review the research questions and provide a brief overview of the answers to these questions, and then present findings and implications of the study. The chapter closes with recommendations for further study.

Limitations of the Study

It is important to keep the limitations of the study in mind as I discuss the key findings, their possible implications, and potential future research avenues. The theoretical and functional foundation of this study is constrained by limitations of the models and assessments that measure cross-cultural competence. Despite significant DOD focus and academic effort, the foundation is suggestive but not definitive.

Gabrenya, Griffith, et al. (2012) provided an overview of the shortfalls of existing cross-cultural competence models, including (a) imprecise definition constructs, with no application strategy; (b) considerable conceptual overlap and lack of distinctions among

key model components such as antecedents; knowledge, skills, abilities and other attributes; and performance outcomes; (c) imprecision in specifying the causal order among constructs; and (d) poor articulation of competencies with respect to the U.S. military's practical selection needs due to insufficient attention to military occupational specialty (specific jobs/functions), rank, and service variables. These shortcomings limit the predictive and explanatory abilities of existing cross-cultural competence models and consequently limit the predictive abilities and training and development applications of existing 3C assessments.

The latest cross-cultural competence models for a military context are a combination of compositional and developmental frameworks. Spitzberg and Changnon (2009) examined the existing compositional models in 2009, but their assessment applied to all of the models to date:

They are theoretically weak . . . in their ability to specify conditional relationships among the components. They are also theoretically weak in leaving fundamentally undefined the precise criteria by which competency is defined. It is generally not clear, in other words, what constituted competency in these models—what levels of proficiency, what specific combination of criteria or outcomes, would be determinative of competence. (p. 15)

Spitzburg and Changnon (2009) continued with a critique of existing developmental models:

Developmental models . . . [are] correspondingly weak in specifying the interpersonal and intercultural competence traits that facilitate or moderate the course of such evolution [developmental progress]. (p. 24)

The limitations of this study are tied to the weaknesses of cross-cultural competence assessments (Gabrenya, Moukarzel, Poermance, Griffith, & Deaton, 2012; Selmeski, 2007; Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). In the literature, competence is

sometimes equated with a set of knowledge, skills, abilities, and other attributes and, at other times, discussed as a subjective evaluative impression of a level of performance (Abbe & Bortnick, 2010; Turnley 2011). Selmeski (2007) argued observable and measurable standards are “poorly applied to culture; too often applied to surface level behavior but ignores the middle and deep-levels of culture” (p. 6).

Another limitation of this study and the assessment of cross-cultural competence is the use of self-referent tools. Gabrenya, Griffith, et al. (2012) question the methodology of self-reporting: “Self-reports of cross-cultural skills and abilities have been criticized on methodological grounds and may have questionable validity” (p. 7). While the assessments in this study were shown to have acceptable validity in a few studies, they have not been robustly examined. Regardless, no viable alternative existed for assessing cross-cultural competence. Comprehensive and informed peer assessments or expert measurements did not exist and could have involved significant amounts of time, effort, and potential intrusion upon or disruption of military operations.

Furthermore, subjective evaluations of performance are context specific. This importance of context was underscored by SEAL peer assessments from this study where the same individuals received nominations as both superior and substandard-assessment scorers from peers. Shifting contexts can undermine attempts to establish standards and measures of cross-cultural competence (Spitzberg, 2000, 2007; Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984, 2002). One skill or behavior may be assessed as competent in one context but not another, “thus no particular skill is likely to ever be universally competent” (Spitzberg & Changon, 2009, p. 6). Assessing performance—narrowly defined as strong relationships and trust built

between partner forces and/or mission success enabled by cross-cultural competence—may be possible with significant focus and effort, but identifying what contributed to that success and developing training and education so others can achieve success is a challenge that has not been solved.

Crossing cultures is adaptive work, not a technical task. Therefore, tools, approaches and standards vary by circumstance. In this research, I used the definition of *competence* Abbe and Bortnick (2010) presented: “a set of behaviors that describe excellent performance” (p. 14), where that set of behaviors requires knowledge, supporting skills and abilities, and complementary personality traits. However, it is exceedingly difficult to measure competence—those contributing behaviors and their antecedents—in crossing cultures.

Despite these limitations, I used what was available to view cross-cultural competence from a lens of personal traits, demographics, and cognition styles. Shaffer, Harrison, Gregersen, Black, and Ferzandi (2006) underscored why this might be fruitful: “When individuals are operating in these ambiguous situations [with many unknowns regarding the norms of behavior, social roles, and expectations], personality may be the dominant factor that guides individual behavior” (as cited in Abbe et al., 2007, p. 4). While I believe the findings of this study are significant, they are limited by the state of the field, which remains lacking.

This study is also limited by the population of experienced SEALs and overall population of SEALs. The sample size of recent SEAL training graduates was robust at 81% of the target population. However, the sample size of the

experienced SEALs was only 15% of the target population available to participate in the study (89 of 588). Furthermore, the total sample size of 253, composed of newly minted SEALs and experienced SEALs, is a small fraction of the SEAL community (253 of 3394 or 7.5%). Given these limitations, the results of this study are suggestive but far from conclusive.

Study Objectives

The goal of this research was to inform and potentially improve effectiveness of U.S Navy SEAL and other SOF cross-cultural-related selection, training, education and development, and personnel assignment. I identified personal traits among SEALs correlated with superior or lagging performance in cross-cultural environments. I answered the two primary research questions by identifying baseline attribute profiles of recent graduates from SEAL selection and benchmark objectives of SEAL cross-cultural-related factors, the top 15th percentile of cross-cultural competence factors. These findings inform potential adjustments to selection, training, education and development, and personnel assignment related to cross-cultural competence.

Research Questions and Short Answers

Research Question 1 was: Focusing on experienced SEALs, what are the attribute profiles, defined by cohort mean scores, of cross-cultural superior and substandard assessment scorers, and what is the relationship between demographic and cognition style factors and individual scores in a cross-cultural competence? There are statistically significant correlations among the 11 factors associated with cross-cultural competence and cognition styles (especially need for cognition) and two demographic traits. As

shown in Figure 5.1, superior assessment scorers (all-stars) scored very near or in the top ring—a score between 5 and the maximum 6, in all cross-cultural competence factors.

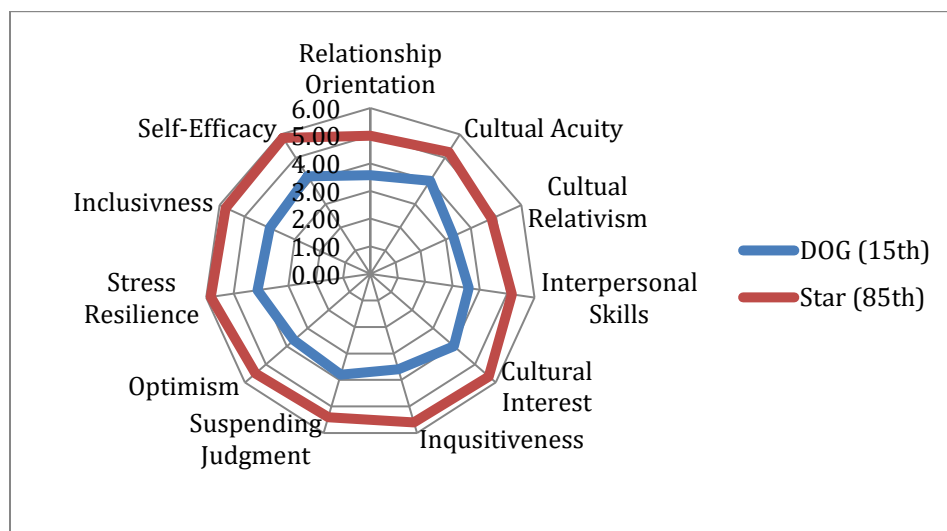


Figure 5.1. Cross-cultural competence factors mean comparison star vs. dogs.

Substandard assessment scorers (dogs) scored between the third and fourth ring out of a possible six. The pattern of scores—relationships of means to other factors—appears to be consistent between all-stars and dogs. That is, the attribute profiles of all-stars and dogs are roughly the same. Overall, based on the attribute profiles of superior and substandard assessment scorers, it appears that SEALs have registered a strong cross-cultural competence baseline for the community.

The most significant difference between superior and substandard assessment scorers in cognitive styles was the large variance in need for cognition (correlated to all 11 cross-cultural competence factors) and personal need for structure (correlated to only one cross-cultural competence factor; see Figure 5.2). This difference is what appears to separate all-stars and dogs the most and, given the importance of need for cognition, likely contributes to some of the variance in the cross-cultural competence means of all-stars and dogs. Additionally, the mean for all SEALs outperformed the three populations

from Thompson's (1998) study in personal need for structure, rigidity, and personal fear of invalidity. For need for cognition, SEALs were very close to Canadian armed forces noncommissioned officers (0.06 points less) and were not far behind Canadian armed forces officers (0.23 points less). The mean scores for the entire SEAL population in the study presented a very strong cognitive style attribute profile from a cross-cultural competence perspective.

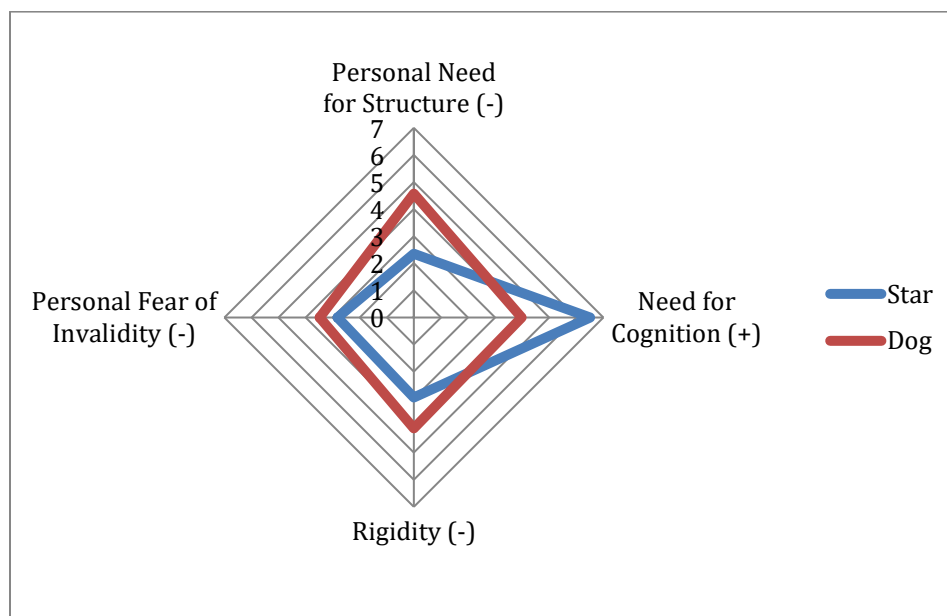


Figure 5.2. Decision style factors mean comparison stars vs. dogs.

Research Question 2 was: Focusing on recent SEAL selection course graduates, what is the attribute profile, as defined by mean cohort scores, for SEAL selection graduates, and how does this profile compare with the profile of an experienced SEAL cross-cultural high performer? For cross-cultural competence, newly minted SEALs fared very well in comparison to the top assessment scorers, with a mean difference in cross-cultural competence mean scores of 0.75 points and strong mean scores for self-efficacy, cultural acuity, cultural interest, and stress resilience (see Figures 5.3 and 5.4). Furthermore, newly minted SEALs showed a small difference (0.24 points) from top

assessment scorers in mean scores for need for cognition, the most important cognitive factor for cross-cultural competence.

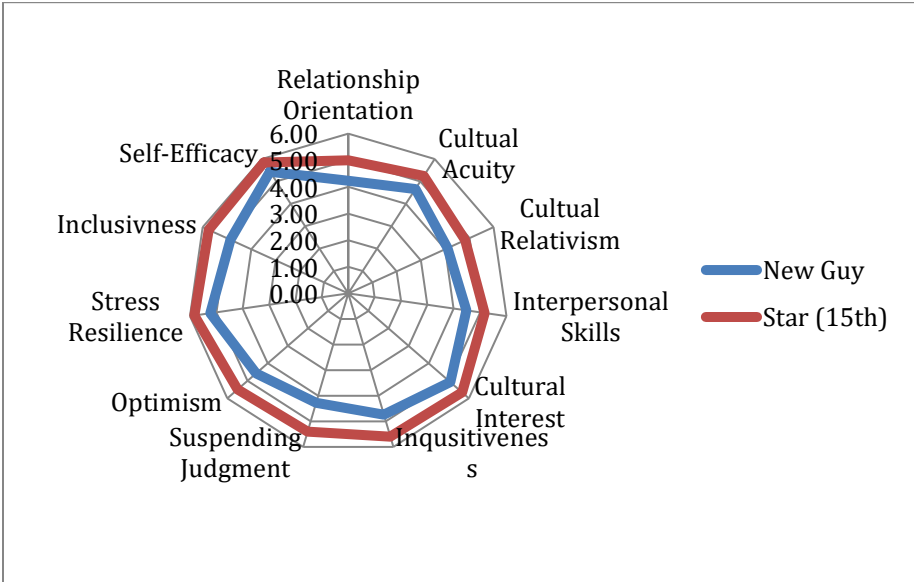


Figure 5.3. Cross-cultural competence factors mean comparison newly minted SEALs vs. top performers.

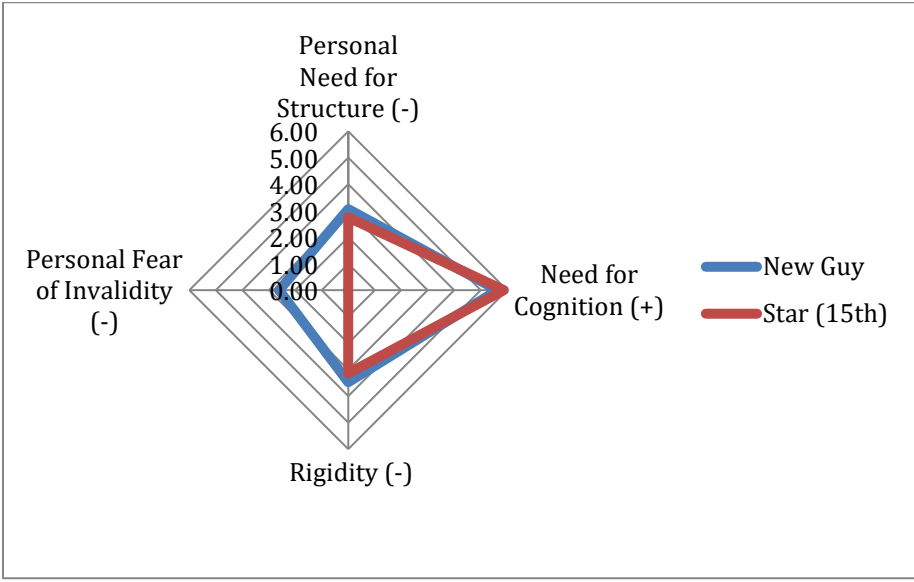


Figure 5.4. Decision style factor mean comparison newly minted SEAL vs. top performer.

Major Findings and Potential Implications

The two most noteworthy findings are (a) need for cognition was strongly correlated to every cross-cultural competence factor and (b) newly minted SEALs may have a strong predisposition for contributing in a cross-cultural mission set.

Need for cognition is highly correlated to cross-cultural performance, and SEALs scored high in need for cognition. Need for cognition was correlated to eight of 11 cross-cultural competence factors with a significance level of less than .001. Statistically, there is near-zero risk of concluding that need for cognition had no correlation to these eight factors. For the other three of the 11 cross-cultural competence factors, need for cognition had a significance level of 0.01, 0.03, and 0.04, meaning that there is a 1-4% risk of concluding that need for cognition showed a correlation when it does not.

The SEALs displayed high but not extraordinarily high means in need for cognition. As discussed previously, when comparing SEALs' scores in need for cognition to the sample populations from Thompson's (1998) study, SEALs were higher in need for cognition than university students, close to Canadian forces senior enlisted, and lagged slightly behind Canadian forces officers. The SEALs in this study were skewed toward top assessment scorers in need for cognition. Unlike almost all cross-cultural competence factors and the cognition style personal fear of invalidity that had fairly even distribution between superior assessment scorers and substandard assessment scorers, SEALs in this study were skewed toward superior performance by more than 82% (72 superior; 20 substandard assessment scorers) in need for cognition. SEALs may be well positioned to use an apparent community strength in high need for cognition for positive performance in cross-cultural competence.

In cognition style factors, newly minted SEALs' mean scores were very close to top assessment scorers in need for cognition. Again, this was the most critical cognition style factor, with strong correlation to all the cross-cultural competence factors. Additionally, newly minted SEAL means were close to all-star assessment scorers in personal need for structure and rigidity.

There was a major difference in personal fear of invalidity between newly minted SEALs and all-stars. Experienced SEALs in the top 15th percentile registered the lowest possible score for personal fear of invalidity, which may raise concerns about hubris and overconfidence in those who scored zero fear of invalidity; newly minted SEAL mean scores were in the middle of the scale. In summary, the newly minted SEAL means across cognition style factors presented cross-cultural competence.

Newly minted SEALs showed strengths in five of 11 cross-cultural competence factors. Identified by a disproportionate number of all-stars—a greater than 60% skew toward stars and away from dogs—these newly minted SEAL stand out cross-cultural competence factors include the following: interpersonal skills, cultural interest, inquisitiveness, stress resilience, and self-efficacy. This may indicate that newly minted SEALs, especially those with high scores in need for cognition, may be better positioned than the average experienced SEAL to perform well when engaging with foreign partners.

Overall, the newly minted SEAL attribute profile—means in both cognitive style and cross-cultural competence factors—may imply newly minted SEALs may be better postured to engage foreign partners than the average experienced SEAL or may at least be more open to the engagement. Most importantly, the newly minted SEAL high means

in need for cognition, the only cognition styles factor the correlated across all 11 cross-cultural competence factors, bodes well for integrating newly minted SEALs into partnership engagements. For mission selection, if numbers matter and the task element must be culled, all things being equal, experienced SEALs are chosen over new SEALs. However, in partner force engagement, these data imply all things may not be equal, and newly minted SEALs may bring something special to the table.

The mean scores for SEALs in this study and populations in Thompson's (1998) study of cognition styles are shown in Figure 5.5 in a radar chart. The same information in tabular form is shown in Table 5.1. These comparisons provides a reference point for where SEALs fit compared to other populations.

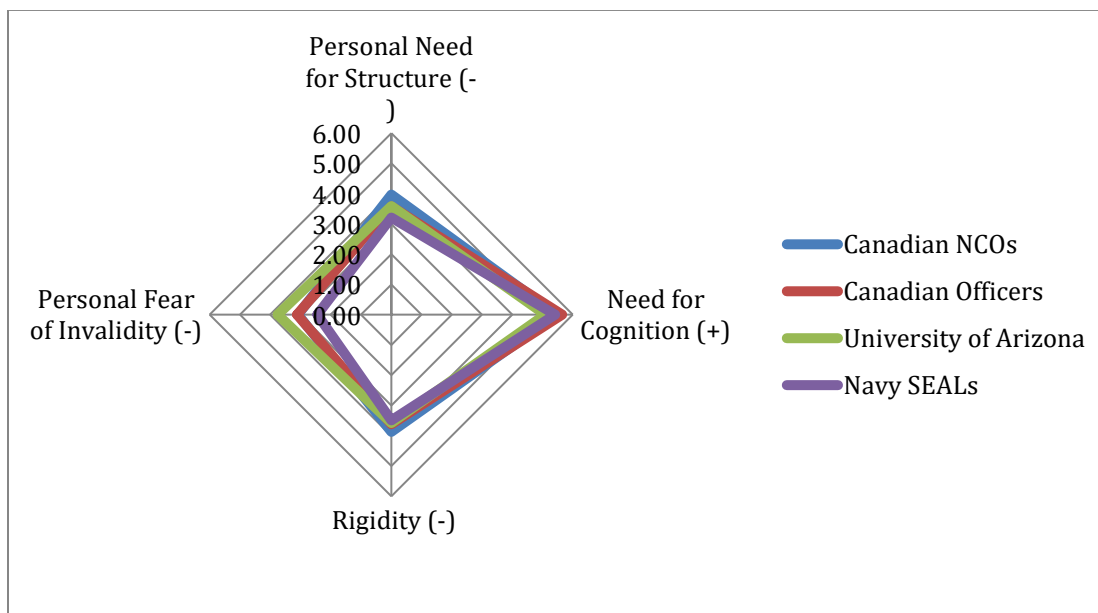


Figure 5.5. Comparison of cognition style factor means.

Table 5.1

Population Means for Decision Style Factors

<i>n</i>	Cohort	Personal Need for Structure (-)	Need for Cognition (+)	Rigidity (-)	Personal Fear of Invalidity (-)
251	SEALs	3.21	5.42	3.49	2.44
245	Canadian NCOs	3.97	5.48	3.87	3.08
245	Canadian Officers	3.58	5.65	3.62	3.11
149	University of Arizona	3.59	5.09	3.58	3.75

Across the three factors where a lower score is generally better—personal need for structure, rigidity, and personal fear of invalidity—SEALs scored significantly lower than Canadian military officers and noncommissioned officers (senior enlisted), and University of Arizona students. However, in need for cognition, where a higher score is better, SEALs lag behind Canadian military personnel from Thompson’s (1998) study.

Other Findings and Implications

In addition to the correlation of need for cognition to every cross-cultural competence factor, and the possible high contribution potential of newly minted SEALs to cross-cultural competence missions, several other findings are worth noting. These include SEALs’ scores in personal fear of invalidity, cultural relativism and the need for structure, newly minted SEALs’ potential weaknesses in suspending judgment, inclusiveness limitations of SEALs, perplexing findings on rigidity, and implications for assessment and selection—for SEALs in general and for cross-cultural competence missions specifically. Each of these findings will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

The SEALs were nearly fearless regarding personal fear invalidity. Personal fear of invalidity had a negative correlation to five cross-cultural competence factors: cultural

acuity, cultural relativism, interpersonal skills, stress resilience, and self-efficacy. The good news for SEALs is the mean for personal fear of validity was very low; those in the top 15th percentile registered the lowest possible score, while the bottom 15th percentile was not far behind. On the other hand, extreme low scores in personal fear of invalidity may raise concerns about hubris and overconfidence, issues not unfamiliar to the SEAL community.

The personal need for structure was only correlated to cultural relativism, which an unexpected finding. Because personal need for structure was negatively correlated with integrative complexity, and research (Tadmor et al., 2009) has indicated integrative complexity may have a role in cross-cultural competence, I expected to see personal need for structure have a negative correlation. I also expected it to have a larger role across the cross-cultural competence factors. This was not the case. This finding may indicate structure is important in recognizing and accepting cultural differences and pursuing alternative approaches and responses appropriate for specific cultures. In the literature, I found no indications of tools or structured processes to consider and improve cultural relativism—the ability to recognize and accept cultural differences and the corresponding alternative approaches and responses different cultures engender. Providing structure and developing tools and training to recognize cultural differences is one potential path to improve cross-cultural competence.

Newly minted SEAL dogs were prominent (75% skew toward dogs) in suspending judgment—the ability to withhold judgment until adequate information becomes available and to perceive information neutrally. This result may warrant further exploration and some focused attention in SEAL training.

The SEALS were low in inclusiveness. Newly minted SEALS (55.9%) and experienced SEALS (63.6%) were skewed toward low scores in inclusiveness. Defined as a tendency to accept and include people and things based on commonalities and an appreciation of differences, inclusiveness is important not only in cross-cultural competence but also with integration of SEAL support and enablers (non-SEALS) into SEAL elements. Based on my experience and discussions with other SEALS, integration of non-SEALS into SEAL formations has been difficult at times. An increased focus on inclusiveness training and awareness may be warranted for the entire SEAL community.

There were perplexing findings about rigidity. Rigidity was negatively correlated with cultural relativism but has a positive correlation to suspending judgment and self-efficacy. I found this to be the most perplexing finding. Generally, with all things being equal and barring the extremes, the lower the score on rigidity, the better. The data show pattern holds for cultural relativism—an ability to recognize and accept difference and the corresponding alternative approaches and responses that different cultures require. High rigidity, logically, would get in the way of cultural relativism. However, higher rigidity correlated to increased performance in suspending judgment and self-efficacy. One explanation may be suspending judgment and self-efficacy are positively affected by the confidence and commitment to maintain a dogged persistence even in the face of mounting evidence that a change in response is required.

The SEAL mean for rigidity was low (significantly lower than the comparison group from Thompson's [1998] study), and SEALS also were skewed toward the bottom 15th percentile in suspending judgment (65 dogs compared to 30 all-stars; newly minted SEALS accounted for the majority of this skewing). However, this explanation does not

hold for self-efficacy, where SEALs were skewed toward top assessment scorers (70 all-stars and 21 dogs; newly minted SEALs were largely responsible for this result as well). Furthermore, data showed rigidity had a very high odds ratio. For every single point increase in rigidity, self-efficacy was 600 times more likely to increase by one point. Further study is required to get beyond a surface explanation of this result.

My takeaway from all of the findings is that when specifically building a team to maximize for cross-cultural competence, one should not play the averages and should instead know who the all-stars are through assessment. I would not go as far as to say need for cognition, other cognition style factors, or cross-cultural competence factors should influence SEAL selection. The U.S. SOF, including SEALs, are considered warrior-diplomats. The diplomat role is related to cross-cultural competence. As this research has shown, cross-cultural competence is vitally important to SOF operations and U.S. national security. Especially for SEALs, the warrior role is paramount; direct action raids, violence of action, and speed of execution are key to the warrior role, and it is not clear what role cognition styles and cross-cultural competence factors play in warrior competence.

The Navy Health Research Center studied top assessment scorers in SEAL close-quarter combat training with a focus on the biometric output (e.g., heart rate, breathing rate; K. Kelly, personal communication, 2012). Before considering tinkering with selection criteria, it would be important to understand how cognition styles and cross-cultural competence factors are correlated to superior performance in close combat. However, as noted previously, those with high need for cognition and newly minted SEALs may be uniquely suited for contribution to missions that require cross-cultural

competence. The insights into cross-cultural superior-performer attributes identified in this study may assist with improving personnel assignments to positions requiring high cross-cultural capability. These results may be the start of a method for cross-cultural-related personnel screening and could assist with related personnel assignments.

The results provided minimal insight into assisting with the design of SOF training and education focused on cross-cultural capabilities and the measurement of related program effectiveness. This is consistent with the state of cross-cultural models and assessment tools.

Potential Future Research

As discussed previously, the correlation of SEAL top assessment scorers in close combat training (identified as “top guns”) and superior performers on direct action missions should be studied to understand how these top guns compare with cross-cultural competence all-stars in cognition style and cross-cultural competence factors. Is there a cognition style difference between a close combat top gun and a cross-cultural competence all-star? If not, the factors that contribute to both could become assessment and selection aids for the SEAL selection course. If there are differences, these differences should be factored into building mission specific task elements.

While this study was focused on Navy SEALs, it would be informative to conduct a similar study with the Special Forces community, commonly known as Green Berets. Do top assessment scorers in the Green Beret selection exercise, an event known as Robin Sage, a cross-cultural simulation, display a high need for cognition, and do other cognitive style and cross-cultural competence factors correlate to superior and

substandard assessment scorers? How do recent graduates of the Special Forces qualification course compare to experienced Green Berets?

The correlation of rigidity to three cross-cultural competence factors may also present the potential for a fruitful study. Why is rigidity negatively correlated to cultural relativism and positively correlated to suspending judgment and self-efficacy?

This study was, in part, inspired by my interest in the importance of integrative complexity—the capacity and willingness to differentiate among competing perspectives and to integrate conceptual links among these competing perspectives (Seudfeld et al., 1992). Tadmor et al. (2009) placed integrative complexity into the context of cross-cultural competence:

Within a cross-cultural context, integrative complexity reflects the degree to which people accept the reasonableness of clashing cultural perspectives on how to live and, consequently, the degree to which they are motivated to develop cognitive schemas that integrate these competing world views by explaining how different people can come to such divergent conclusions or by specifying ways of blending potentially discordant norms and values. (p. 106)

Cognition styles, and particularly personal need for structure and need for cognition, were used as proxies for integrative complexity. A study that finds an elegant and minimally intrusive way to assess the impact of integrate complexity may yield significant insight.

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APPENDIX A

CROSS-CULTURAL COMPETENCE SELF-ASSESSMENT

1. I would have trouble predicting the long-term effects of my actions in a new country.
2. I would easily change my outward appearance based on the mission, such as switching from a military to a humanitarian effort.
3. On a deployment, I would be good at “working with locals” to give me the needed intelligence.
4. The views and beliefs of American culture are generally superior to those of the countries we visit.
5. My personality is such that most people are quickly drawn to me.
6. I often have trouble envisioning the long-term effects of my actions.
7. I am good at getting others to see my point of view.
8. I do better sticking with an approach until it works versus changing tactics.
9. I would befriend locals during deployments to support mission success.
10. I often have to rely on others to adjust my perceptions of what is really going on in a group or setting.
11. As an American, I probably do not have as many biases as do people from Middle Eastern cultures.
12. Without the help of fellow teammates, I would struggle in figuring out what the locals are really up to in deployment situations.
13. I would quickly get used to unfamiliar customs if deployed.
14. I devote significant time to building many lasting relationships in my life.
15. I often “feel the pain” of others when someone is sharing a sad story.
16. If I knew I was being deployed, I would spend some free time learning about the cultural customs before I left.
17. I would easily and believably “fake compassion” with foreign citizens to achieve the mission.
18. I find the thought of negotiating with village elders unpleasant.
19. My own sense of humor would come in handy during deployments to put foreign locals at ease.
20. Deployed U.S. forces need to focus less on compassion and more on “getting the job done” when dealing with locals.
21. I would find it easy to be casual and friendly with foreign citizens during deployments.
22. When watching two people have a discussion, I can pick up on differences between what is being said and what is really felt.
23. I enjoy making sense of complex situations.
24. Interacting with locals in order to build relationships during deployments would be worth the risks.
25. I sometimes wonder how my own culture influences how I see things.

26. My personality is such that, in a foreign country, I could quickly put an irate citizen at ease.
27. I possess the skills needed to persuade foreign civilians to provide sensitive information.
28. I consider myself as being oblivious to what is really going on in group interactions.
29. I would have little problem figuring out the heart of the matter when observing a disagreement between soldiers and foreign citizens.
30. It is easy for me to quickly gain the trust of others through casual discussion.
31. If I find a common practice of the locals offensive while deployed, I would have trouble understanding why the locals act that way.
32. Prior to deployment, I would try to learn the basics of the language before going, whether directed to or not.
33. Since we are often deployed in order to help other countries, these countries should adjust to our customs, not the other way around.
34. I can win over a group of strangers with ease.
35. I would probably rely on another team member to strike up initial conversations with foreign citizens when deployed, as this is not my strong suit.
36. I could see my temper getting the best of me when interacting with unappreciative foreign citizens during deployment.
37. I am a compassionate and trusting person in general.
38. It would be hard for me to read the intent of foreign citizens with whom I am communicating.
39. I use my sense of humor to quickly put others at ease.
40. If a trainee was resistant to my instructions, I would put myself in their shoes to figure out why.
41. In trying to persuade a village elder to let us search his village, I would probably fall back on force if my first attempts at persuasion did not work.
42. If you know the basic do's and don'ts of a country, and some language, that's all you need to get by to interact with locals during deployments.
43. Negotiating with village elders during a deployment would fit my abilities.
44. I get upset when I hear people making fun of people from other countries.

On a scale of 1 to 6:

- 1 – Strongly Disagree
- 2 – Moderately Disagree
- 3 – Slightly Disagree
- 4 – Slightly Agree
- 5 – Moderately Agree
- 6 – Strongly Agree

Inquisitiveness

1. I enjoy getting to know people.
2. I enjoy meeting new people and learning about their life.
3. Getting to know new people is fascinating to me.
4. I enjoy learning about others' behavioral patterns.

5. I enjoy learning how others' think.

Suspending Judgment

1. I would rather wait on additional information than make a quick decision.
2. I prefer to make a decision only after I review available information.
3. I collect all information possible on an issue before I make a decision.
4. I take as much time as needed to make a decision.
5. I like to feel certain that I have considered all available information before I make a decision.

Optimism

1. In uncertain times, I usually expect the best.
2. If something can go wrong for me, it will.
3. I'm always optimistic about my future.
4. I hardly ever expect things to go my way.
5. I rarely count on good things happening to me.
6. Overall, I expect more good things to happen to me than bad.

Stress Resilience

1. I tend to bounce back quickly after hard times.
2. I have a hard time making it through stressful events.
3. It does not take me long to recover from stressful events.
4. It is hard for me to snap back when something bad happens.
5. I usually come through difficult times with little trouble.
6. I tend to take a long time to get over set-backs in my life.

Inclusiveness

1. I enjoy events where I can meet people from a variety of backgrounds.
2. Learning about the different cultures of the world intrigues me.
3. Understanding how a person is different from me greatly enhances our relationship.
4. I enjoy learning about the traditions of other cultures.
5. I would like to go to events that feature activities from other countries.
6. I gain insight from other people's experiences.
7. I feel comfortable talking with individuals of a different race.

On a 1 to 5 scale

- 1 – Strongly Disagree
- 2 – Disagree
- 3 – Neither Agree nor Disagree
- 4 – Agree
- 5 – Strongly Disagree

Self-efficacy.

1. I am sure I would be able to handle all of the stress of adjusting to a culture that is new to me.

2. I am confident that I can get used to the unusual conditions of living in another culture.
3. I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough.
4. It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals.
5. I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events.
6. I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities.
7. No matter what comes my way, I'm usually able to handle it.

On a scale of 1 to 6:

- 1 – Strongly Disagree
- 2 – Moderately Disagree
- 3 – Slightly Disagree
- 4 – Slightly Agree
- 5 – Moderately Agree
- 6 – Strongly Agree

Lie Scale. A score greater than 15 results in removal of a participant.

1. I have never been late for an appointment.
2. I have never known someone I did not like.
3. I believe that one should never engage in leisure activities.
4. I feel that there is no such things as an honest mistake.
5. I have never hurt another person's feelings.

On a scale of 1 to 6:

- 1 – Strongly Disagree
- 2 – Moderately Disagree
- 3 – Slightly Disagree
- 4 – Slightly Agree
- 5 – Moderately Agree
- 6 – Strongly Agree

APPENDIX B

COGNITIVE STYLE SELF-ASSESSMENT

Personal Need for Structure

1. It upsets me to go into a situation without knowing what I can expect from it.
2. I'm not bothered by things that upset my daily routine.
3. I enjoy having a clear and structured mode of life.
4. I like a place for everything and everything in its place.
5. I like being spontaneous.
6. I find that a well ordered life with regular hours makes my life tedious.
7. I don't like situations that are uncertain.
8. I hate to change my plans at the last minute.
9. I hate to be with people that are unpredictable.
10. I find that a consistent routine enables me to enjoy life more.
11. I enjoy the exhilaration of being put in unpredictable situations.
12. I become uncomfortable when the rules in a situation are not clear.

On a scale of 1 to 6:

- 1 – Strongly Disagree
- 2 – Moderately Disagree
- 3 – Slightly Disagree
- 4 – Slightly Agree
- 5 – Moderately Agree
- 6 – Strongly Agree

Personal Fear of Invalidity

1. I may struggle with a few decisions but not very often.
2. I never put off making important decisions.
3. Sometimes I become impatient over my indecisiveness.
4. Sometimes I see so many options to a situations that it is really confusing.
5. I can be reluctant to commit myself to something because of the possibility that I might be wrong.
6. I tend to struggle with most decisions.
7. Even after making an important decision I continue to think about the pros and cons to make sure I am not wrong.
8. Regardless of whether others see an event as positive or negative I don't mind committing myself to it.
9. I prefer situations where I do not decide immediately.
10. I rarely doubt that the course of action I have selected will be correct.
11. I tend to continue to evaluate recently made decisions.
12. I wish I did not worry so much about making errors.
13. Decisions rarely weigh heavily on my shoulders.
14. I find myself reluctant to commit to new ideas but find little comfort in remaining with the tried and true.

On a scale of 1 to 6:

- 1 – Strongly Disagree
- 2 – Moderately Disagree
- 3 – Slightly Disagree
- 4 – Slightly Agree
- 5 – Moderately Agree
- 6 – Strongly Agree

Need for Cognition

1. I prefer complex to simple problems.
2. I would like to have the responsibility of handling a situation that requires a lot of thinking.
3. Thinking is not my idea of fun.
4. I would rather do something that requires little thought than something that is sure to challenge my thinking abilities.
5. I try to anticipate and avoid situations where there is likely the chance that I will have to think in depth about something.
6. I find satisfaction in deliberating hard and for long hours.
7. I only think as hard as I have to.
8. I prefer to think about small, daily projects to [rather than] long term ones.
9. I like tasks that required little thought once I've learned them.
10. The idea of relying on thought to make my way to the top appeals to me.
11. I really enjoy a task that involves coming up with new solutions.
12. Learning new ways to think doesn't excite me very much.
13. I prefer my life to be filled with puzzles that I must solve.
14. The note of thinking abstractly is appealing to me.
15. I would prefer a task that is intellectual, difficult, and important to one that is somewhat important but does not required much thought.
16. I feel relief rather than satisfaction after completing a task that required a lot of mental effort.
17. It's enough for me that something gets the job done; I don't care how or why it works.
18. I usually end up deliberating about issues even when they do not affect me personally.

On a scale of 1 to 8

- 1 – Very Strong Disagreement
- 2 – Strong Disagreement
- 3 – Moderate Disagreement
- 4 – Slight Disagreement
- 5 – Slight Agreement
- 6 – Moderate Agreement
- 7 – Strong Agreement
- 8 – Very Strong Agreement

Rigidity

1. I do not enjoy having to adapt myself to new and unusual situations.
2. I prefer to stop and think before I act on even trifling matters.
3. I would not like the kind of work which involves a large number of different activities.
4. I usually find that one way of attacking a problem is best, even though it doesn't seem to work in the beginning.
5. I dislike having to learn new ways of doing things.
6. I am a methodical person in whatever I do.
7. I am usually able to keep a job longer than most people.
8. I think that it is usually wise to do things in a conventional way.
9. I always finish the task I start even if they are not important.
10. People who go about their work methodically are almost always successful.
11. When I have undertaken a task, I find it difficult to set it aside, even for a short amount of time.
12. I am very conscientious about things such as locking doors and turning off lights.
13. I have done many things on the spur of the moment.
14. It is important to be prompt about appointments and the like.
15. I usually dislike to set aside a task that I have undertaken until it is finished.
16. I am inclined to go from one activity to another without continuing on any one for too long.
17. I prefer to do things according to a routine which I plan myself.
18. I like a great deal of variety in my work.
19. An expert who doesn't come up with a definite answer probably doesn't know too much.
20. It is more fun to tackle a complicated problem than to solve a simple one.
21. I would like to live in a foreign country for a while.
22. Many of our most important decisions are based on insufficient information.

On a scale of 1 to 6:

- 1 – Strongly Disagree
- 2 – Moderately Disagree
- 3 – Slightly Disagree
- 4 – Slightly Agree
- 5 – Moderately Agree
- 6 – Strongly Agree

APPENDIX C

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

1. My age is:

1 = 18-20

2 = 20-24

3 = 25-29

4 = 30-35

5 = 36-40

6 = 40+

2. I am:

1 = male

2 = female

3. I am a(n):

1 = Enlisted Member

2 = Warrant Officer

3 = Enlisted Member

4. My pay grade is (e.g., E4-9, O2-6)

1 = 1-3

2 = 4-5

3 = 6

4 = 7-8

5 = 9

5. I am:

1 = active duty

2 = a reservist

6. My time in service, in years, is:

1 = 0-4

2 = 5-8

3 = 9-12

4 = 13-16

5 = 16-20

6 = 20+

7. I have been deployed ___ times over the last FIVE years.

8. Length of time of most recent deployment = _____ months

9. During this deployment, my job required that I interact and/or form relations with local nationals or foreign counterparts:

- 1 = Not at all
- 2 = Very little
- 3 = A moderate amount
- 4 = A fair amount
- 5 = A great deal
- 6 = It was essential to my job

10. Please estimate the number of hours of cultural awareness training (e.g., online, classroom, predeployment, excluding language training) that you have received from the military during your career: ____ HOURS.

11. Please rate how effective you think the cultural awareness training was in preparing you for your assignment:

- 1 = Not at all
- 2 = Minimally effective
- 3 = Moderately effective
- 4 = Highly effective
- 5 = Very highly effective (essential)

10. Please estimate the number of hours of language training that you have received from the military during your career: ____ HOURS.

11. Please rate how effective you think the language training was in preparing you for your assignment:

- 1 = Not at all
- 2 = Minimally effective
- 3 = Moderately effective
- 4 = Highly effective
- 5 = Very highly effective (essential)

12. Identify the mission of your platoon or task element

- 1 = Train, Advise, and Assist (e.g., JPAT, JAT, VSP)
- 2 = Contingency Response (e.g., CRE)
- 3 = Other (Please specify)

13. If your mission was contingency response how many exercises, SMEEs, etc., did your task element participate in?

- 1 = 0
- 2 = 1-3
- 3 = 4+

14. Provide your personal combat indicator (First Initial, Last Initial, Last 4 SSN). This will be used to identify your responses to all related assessments.

15. What was the size of your task element (# of SEALs).

- 1 = four or less (Fire Team)

- 2 = 7-10 (Squad)
- 3 = 11- 16 (Platoon (-))
- 4 = 16-21 (Platoon)

16. Where were you assigned?

- 1 = SOUTHCOM
- 2 = AFRICOM
- 3 = PACOM
- 4 = AFG
- 5 = CENTCOM (not deployed to AFG)
- 6 = EUCOM (not deployed to AFG)

17. Rate your Task Element degree of cross-cultural interaction.

- 1 = No contact with partners (unilateral operations)
- 2 = Infrequent contact with partners
- 3 = Moderate contact with partners
- 4 = Daily contact with partners
- 5 = Lived with partners

APPENDIX D

CROSS-CULTURAL COMPETENCE PEER RATING

Peer Ratings

1. Culture Fundamentals. How effective are your teammates at demonstrating knowledge of culture fundamentals such as definitions of culture, values, beliefs, behaviors, and norms?

Does not apply customs and courtesies outside of own culture	Applies limited relevant aspects of culture; equates cultural differences purely to customs and taboos	Demonstrates sufficient knowledge of cross-cultural values, beliefs, behaviors, and norms	Demonstrates superior cross-cultural competence; demonstrates characteristics that enable learning and adaptations to unfamiliar cultures

2. Cultural Awareness. How effective are your teammates at demonstrating awareness of cross-cultural differences?

Demonstrates no awareness of American or Navy culture and other cultures in regard to religion, ethnicity, sex, gender, social class, or regional differences	Demonstrates limited awareness and understanding of American cultures, Navy culture, and other cultures	Demonstrates sufficient awareness that cultural differences play a role in cross-cultural interactions	Demonstrates superior awareness of own biases and does not allow them to influence own perceptions

3. Culture Skills. How effective are your teammates at applying cross-cultural skills in rapport building with members of other cultures?

Does not demonstrate rapport-building skills; avoids engagement with members of other cultures	Makes limited attempts at verbal and nonverbal communication with members of other cultures; has difficulty considering other's perspectives; has difficulty in suspending judgment	Performs sufficiently at verbal and nonverbal communication as part of rapport-building	Performs successfully at rapport building, considering other's perspectives, and suspending judgment

4. Communication Skills. How effective are your teammates at communicating with members of other cultures?

Does not communicate verbally or nonverbally with members of other cultures; does not develop relationships with members of other cultures	Demonstrates limited verbal and nonverbal communication techniques, but application of techniques is not effective	Applies sufficiently appropriate verbal and nonverbal communication techniques to most communications	Demonstrates superior performance in communicating with members of other cultures by speaking, gesturing, and listening

5. Cross-Cultural Operations. How effective are your teammates at integrating cultural considerations into developing and executing plans?

Does not integrate cultural considerations when developing and executing plans	Integrates limited cultural considerations when developing and executing plans but does not consider their importance.	Sufficiently integrates cultural considerations when developing and executing plans	Successfully balances planning and cultural considerations to reduce effects of negative consequences without compromising the mission

6. Influence. How effective are your teammates at practicing negotiation, persuasion, and mediation in a cross-cultural setting?

Is unable to exert influence over members of other cultures	Makes limited attempts to negotiate with members of other cultures; demonstrates limited consideration of social and political positions of members of other cultures	Sufficiently applies a number of negotiation and mediation techniques	Successfully balances seamless and efficient negotiation/mediation with mission goals

IRB APPROVAL FORM



ENTERED
4/29/14

**Institutional Review Board
Project Action Summary**

Action Date: April 28, 2014

Note: Approval expires one year after this date.

Type: New Full Review New Expedited Review Continuation Review Exempt Review
 Modification

Action: Approved Approved Pending Modification Not Approved

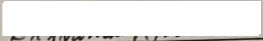
Project Number: 2014-04-238
Researcher(s): Robert A. Newsom Doc SOLES
George Reed, PhD Fac SOLES
Project Title: Cross-Cultural Competence in Naval Special Warfare

Note: We send IRB correspondence regarding student research to the faculty advisor, who bears the ultimate responsibility for the conduct of the research. We request that the faculty advisor share this correspondence with the student researcher.

Modifications Required or Reasons for Non-Approval

None

The next deadline for submitting project proposals to the Provost's Office for full review is N/A. You may submit a project proposal for expedited review at any time.


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