

Army Sociocultural Performance Requirements



Special Report 72

**U.S. Army Research Institute
for the Behavioral and Social Sciences**

Army Sociocultural Performance Requirements

**U.S. Army Research Institute
for the Behavioral and Social Sciences**

**Department of the Army
Deputy Chief of Staff, G1**

Authorized and approved for distribution:

**MICHELLE SAMS, Ph.D.
Director**

NOTICES

PHOTOS: All images courtesy of DoD DefenseImagery.mil.

DISTRIBUTION: Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited. Send correspondence concerning distribution of reports to: U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, Attn: DAPE-ARI-ZXM, 6000 6th Street, Building 1464/Mail Stop 5610, Fort Belvoir, Virginia 22060-5610.

FINAL DISPOSITION: This Special Report may be destroyed when it is no longer needed. Please do not return it to the U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences.

NOTE: The findings in this Special Report are not to be construed as an official Department of the Army position, unless so designated by other authorized documents.

Army Sociocultural Performance Requirements

Army Sociocultural Performance Requirements

Michelle Wisecarver

Hannah Foldes

Cory Adis

Personnel Decisions Research Institutes, Inc.

Jessica Gallus

Jennifer Klafehn

U.S. Army Research Institute

Foundational Science Research Unit

Gerald F. Goodwin, Chief

U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences

6000 6th Street, Fort Belvoir, Virginia 22060

June 2014

Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.

Army Sociocultural Performance Requirements

Executive Summary

This report provides U.S. Army planners and trainers with information regarding 13 cultural performance requirements identified as critical for a sample of Soldiers who deployed or held a position outside of the continental U.S. (OCONUS) within the past five years. Cultural performance requirements are the actions Soldiers must take on their jobs to work effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds in order to achieve the goals of their mission.

Data were analyzed from a sample of 4,157 active duty Soldiers of varying ranks and branches. Soldiers were asked to

rate the importance and frequency with which they performed tasks related to 13 different cultural performance dimensions.

Results found that for each of the 13 dimensions, tasks related to that dimension were performed by 50-80% of the sample. Those who performed the tasks rated each of the dimensions as being moderately to very critical in contributing to the successful performance of their mission. For a number of dimensions, Soldiers performed the tasks somewhat infrequently (i.e., once a week to once a month), but nevertheless rated the task as moderately

to very important for effective performance. As a group, officers were more likely to engage in cultural performance tasks than were enlisted or warrant officers. Patterns also emerged based on whether a Soldier was in a combat or support branch.

The survey affirms the importance of cultural performance for Soldier success and identifies 13 performance dimensions that are critical for that success. Recommendations are presented regarding the training and education of knowledge and skills for these sociocultural dimensions based on the patterns of results.

Inside:

- **13 sociocultural performance dimensions are identified that are critical for mission success**
- **The criticality of these dimensions for different ranks and branches**
- **Recommendations for training and education**

Table of Contents

Background.....	2
Method.....	3
Results.....	6
Summary & Recommendations.....	18
Key Sources for Model Development.....	22

Army Sociocultural Performance Requirements

Army Sociocultural Performance Requirements

Background

With the current missions and environments that military personnel face, cultural and foreign language capabilities have increased in their importance for successful mission accomplishment. Despite their importance, relatively little effort has been expended to define sociocultural performance itself – that is, describing exactly what Soldiers must be able to do in order to perform successfully in these environments. Identifying the behaviors and proficiency levels needed for different jobs, ranks, and/or missions is critical to building an appropriate training and development pipeline.

In November 2011, the U.S. Combined Arms Center issued Operations Order (CAC OPORD) 11305-003, *CAC Implementation of the Army Culture and Foreign Language Strategy* (ACFLS). This OPORD described tasks and conditions required for implementation of the ACFLS. One condition was that the U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences (ARI) identify the cultural performance requirements for General Purpose Forces (GPF) Soldiers across developmental stages. This would enable the Culture Centers of Excellence (CoEs) to revise Programs of Instruction (POIs), Training Support Packages (TSPs), and distance learning programs to reflect these requirements.

In order to accomplish this, ARI developed a taxonomy of 13 sociocultural performance requirements based on an analysis of existing task, activity, and behavioral statements, as well as critical incidents of sociocultural mission performance collected from Soldiers with deployment and other experience outside of the continental U.S. (OCONUS). The taxonomy was then used to create a survey that captured information regarding how important each of these dimensions was to Soldiers and how frequently they engaged in those activities on their last deployment or OCONUS position.



Purpose

This report provides information regarding the cultural performance requirements for a sample of Soldiers who deployed or held an OCONUS position within the past five years. Cultural performance requirements are the actions Soldiers must take on their jobs to work effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds in order to achieve the goals of their mission. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of these cultural performance requirements for Soldiers and compare them across different ranks and branches.

Army Sociocultural Performance Requirements

Method

The procedure by which these objectives were accomplished is as follows:

(1) A comprehensive list of cultural performance requirements across the military was developed based on previous research and discussions with Soldiers. A list of some of the key sources used in this process can be found in the Appendix. Thirteen performance categories were identified and defined (see Table 1).

(2) These categories were used to develop an online questionnaire that asked Soldiers to rate how *important* each of these cultural performance requirements was to their overall

job performance, as well as how *frequently* they engaged in them on their last deployment or OCONUS assignment. Ratings for frequency ranged from 0-5, where 0 = Not Applicable (NA), 1 = Performed the activity less than once a month, 2 = Performed the activity at least once a month, but less than once a week, 3 = Performed the activity at least once a week, but less than once a day, 4 = Performed the activity, on average, once a day, and 5 = Performed the activity, on average, more than once a day. Ratings for importance ranged from 0 = Not at all important to 5 = Extremely important.



Army Sociocultural Performance Requirements

Table 1. Definitions of the Thirteen Sociocultural Performance Categories

Category Code	Socio-Cultural Performance Category	Category Definition
CA	Demonstrates Cultural Awareness	Has knowledge about and is able to work with different values, customs, and norms; uses knowledge to analyze, interpret, and predict behavior and events within a particular sociocultural context; understands cultural differences and integrates well into other cultures.
BR	Builds Rapport	Develops and maintains positive relationships by showing appropriate consideration for others' welfare, feelings, and viewpoints; takes action to make a positive impression on others by fostering trust, respect, and credibility; understands the implications of own actions.
AB	Adjusts Behavior to Fit Cultural Context	Makes specific adjustments to own behavior or appearance to fit in with the cultural customs and values of others; applies MOS-specific skills in a culturally considerate manner.
CI	Collects Cultural Information	Takes action to learn about and understand cultural information from different sources (e.g., interactions with locals, talking with a guide/interpreter, the internet, books, etc.); assesses credibility of information and its source; identifies gaps in cultural knowledge and skills.
NC	Uses Nonverbal Communication	Uses alternative, sometimes novel, methods to communicate when verbal language is not shared; conveys information about mood, intent, status, and demeanor via gestures, tone of voice, and facial expressions; improvises communication techniques as necessary.
WI	Works with Interpreters	Works with interpreters to interact with people who speak a different language; prepares interpreters for meetings, monitors their interactions, and evaluates their capabilities and performance; provides interpreters with coaching to ensure they appropriately convey intent, emotion, and specific content of information.
IO	Influences Others	Uses culturally appropriate influence tactics to change the opinion or actions of others and/or convince them to willingly follow own leadership; applies knowledge of social dynamics, structure, and power to identify and build relationships with local sources of influence; creates suitable conditions for enacting influence.
NO	Negotiates with Others	Uses culturally appropriate negotiation tactics to achieve desired goals or outcomes (e.g., for supplies and other resources); adapts the negotiating strategy by considering how the worldview of others may affect how they engage in negotiation.
RC	Resolves Conflicts	Prevents, mediates, and/or resolves interpersonal conflicts between others; recognizes when the potential for conflict might exist and manages situations to prevent or minimize its occurrence.
EC	Handles Ethical Challenges	Confronts ethical concerns (e.g., corruption) by discussing them with locals in a non-judgmental manner.
MP	Manages Perceptions	Manages how U.S. personnel and operations are perceived by others in AOR (e.g., manage the flow of information; balances and incorporate sociocultural factors into planning and tactics); anticipates consequences of actions and considers alternative COAs and their sociocultural implications.
MS	Manages Stress	Remains composed and resilient in demanding cultural settings (e.g., lack of language skills, limited understanding of cultural context, and/or strain of cultural differences); engages in appropriate coping practices; serves as a calming influence to whom others look for guidance.
LC	Leads Across Cultures	Reinforces the cultural element of missions by communicating intent, conveying relevance of culture to the mission, and modeling cultural tolerance; provides guidance and training beyond the chain of command (e.g., to members of the local population).

Army Sociocultural Performance Requirements

(3) Data were collected from a sample of 6,098 active duty Soldiers of varying ranks. The sample was stratified by rank for each of five branch or specialty categories. Table 2 shows the branch category labels and the fields that comprise each category.

Table 2. Composition of the Branch/Specialty Categories Used in this Research

Branch Category Title	MOS or Specialties Included in the Category
Combat Arms (CA)	Infantry, Corps of Engineers, Field Artillery, Artillery, Aviation, Special Forces, Armor, and Combat Engineer
Combat Support (CS)	Signal Corps, Military Police Corps, Military Intelligence, MISO, Civil Affairs, and Chemical Corps
Combat Service Support (CSS)	Finance Corps, Adjutant General Corps, Operations, Plans & Training Officer, Nuclear Weapon Technician, Recruiting & Retention, Transportation, Logistics, Ordinance, and Quartermaster Corps
Special Branch (SB)	Judge Advocate Generals' Corps, Chaplain Corps, and Medical Corps
Foreign Area Officer (FAO)	Foreign Area Officer (FAO)

Sample

Of the survey responses collected, 1,177 Soldiers indicated they had not deployed or been OCONUS in the last 5 years, and were thus removed from the sample. Participants were also removed if they responded to fewer than 70% of the items. Using this criterion, an additional 765 Soldiers were removed from the sample. This left a final sample of 4,157 Soldiers. For analyses that included branch categories, 57 Soldiers were missing branch information, resulting in sample sizes of 1,027 in the Combat Arms (CA) category, 1,155 in the Combat Service (CS) category,

958 in the Combat Service Support (CSS) category, 854 in Special Branches (SB), and 106 Foreign Area Officers (FAOs). For rank-based analyses, an additional two Soldiers were excluded from the sample due to missing rank information.

Despite the stratified sampling technique that was employed, the sample was underrepresented by Junior Enlisted (Privates First Class, PFC; Specialist, SPC; Corporal, CPL), and Junior Noncommissioned Officers (NCOs; Sergeant, SGT; Staff Sergeant, SSG; Sergeant First Class, SFC). Representation

was particularly low for Junior Enlisted from the CA and CSS branch categories. The sample was overrepresented by the officer groups and the Senior NCO group (Master Sergeants (MSG)/First Sergeants, 1SG; Sergeants Major, SGM/Command Sergeants Major, CSM). The overrepresentation of higher ranking Soldiers may be indicative of senior personnel having a greater appreciation of the utility of the survey. Also, it could be due to these personnel having more convenient access to the Internet, which would enable them to take advantage

Army Sociocultural Performance Requirements

of the web-based format of the survey. To ensure results were representative of the Army population, sample weights were applied to the analyses.¹

4,157 enlisted, officers, and warrant officers were surveyed about their sociocultural activities while on deployments or OCONUS assignments.



Results

A list of the 13 cultural performance dimensions and their associated abbreviations and definitions can be seen in Table 1. Results regarding the criticality of these dimensions for Soldiers during their last deployment or OCONUS assignment will be presented first for the overall sample, then for officers, enlisted, and warrant officers separately. Within each of these rank groups we will explore similarities and differences across the CA, CS, and CSS branch categories.

In each section we describe three key pieces of information: (1) the percentage of Soldiers who indicated the items in a given dimension were

or were not applicable (NA) to them on a recent deployment/OCONUS assignment; (2) the criticality of the dimension for the Soldiers who *did* report engaging in the dimension on a recent deployment/OCONUS assignment, and (3) the frequency with which they engaged in the activities in that dimension.

Criticality scores (“Crit”) were developed using a composite of the importance and frequency ratings collected from Soldiers. The criticality score provides the benefit of a single score that can be used to evaluate the responses, yet reflects information from both of the ratings. In line with best practices for describing

job performance requirements, the formula used for criticality scores weights importance twice as heavily as frequency.² The rationale for this weighting is that some highly important activities, such as resolving or diffusing a conflict, may occur infrequently, yet the consequence of poor performance would be very high. Thus the importance of the activity is given greater weight:

By using this equation, an activity rated as important will receive a high criticality score even if it is not done very frequently. The criticality score, like the scores for importance and frequency, ranges from 0-5, with 0 = Not Applicable and 5 = Very High Criticality.

$$\text{Criticality} = \frac{(\text{Importance} \times 2) + \text{Frequency}}{3}$$

¹ Weights were computed as the ratio of the subpopulation size to the number of respondents from that subpopulation.

² For more information on this, please see Pulakos, E.D., Arad, S., Donovan, M.A., Plamondon, K.E. (2000). Adaptability in the workplace: Development of a taxonomy of adaptive performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 85, 612-24.

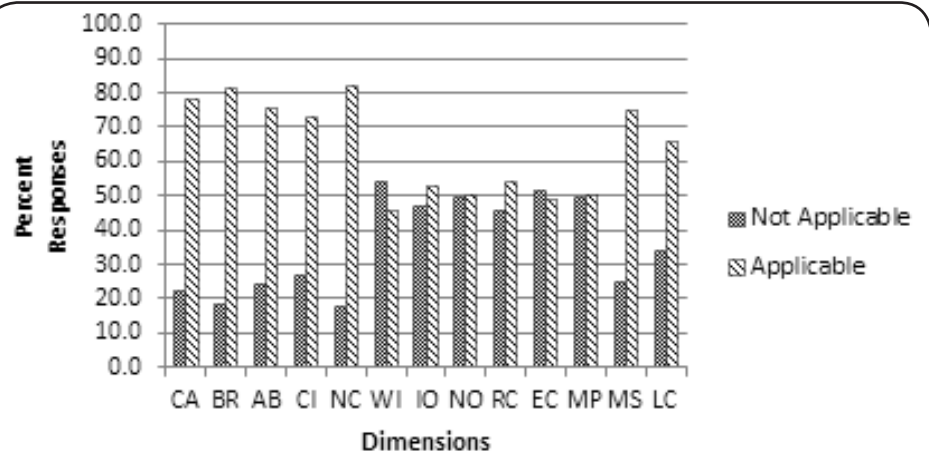
Army Sociocultural Performance Requirements

Overall Results

Performance Dimensions Rated as “Applicable” or “Not Applicable”

Across the entire sample, the percentage of Soldiers who indicated that one of the 13 performance dimensions was “Applicable” on their recent deployment/OCONUS assignment ranged from 46% for Works with Interpreters (WI) to 82% for Uses Nonverbal Communication (NC) (see Figure 1). On the counterpart side, 18% to 54% of the Soldiers indicated one of the dimensions was “Not Applicable (NA),” and they did not perform the activity at all while on their last deployment or OCONUS assignment. Dimensions with NA ratings greater than 45% included Works with Interpreters (WI; 54%), Handles Ethical Challenges (EC; 51%), and Manages Perceptions (MP; 50%), Negotiates with Others (NO; 50%), Influences Others (IO; 47%), and Resolves Conflicts (RC; 46%).

The majority of performance dimensions were performed by half to three-quarters of the Soldiers, although there was a portion of the Soldiers that did not perform each one.



Note. Mean N across dimensions was 4,088.

Figure 1. Percentage of Soldiers who Rated the Dimension as ‘Not Applicable’



Army Sociocultural Performance Requirements

Mean Criticality – All Dimensions

For those Soldiers who did engage in activities within a given dimension, the mean (i.e., average) criticality scores ranged from 3.22 for Influences Others (IO) to 3.64 for Manages Stress (MS) (see Figure 2). Thus, all of the 13 dimensions had a rating of at least *moderate criticality* (Crit = 3) or higher. Please note for Figure 2 (and all subsequent figures that report mean ratings), that although a 5-point scale was used to collect data, findings are presented here on a scale graphic that ranges from 2.0 (Minimal Criticality) to 4.0 (Very Critical) to better illustrate the variability between different dimensions.

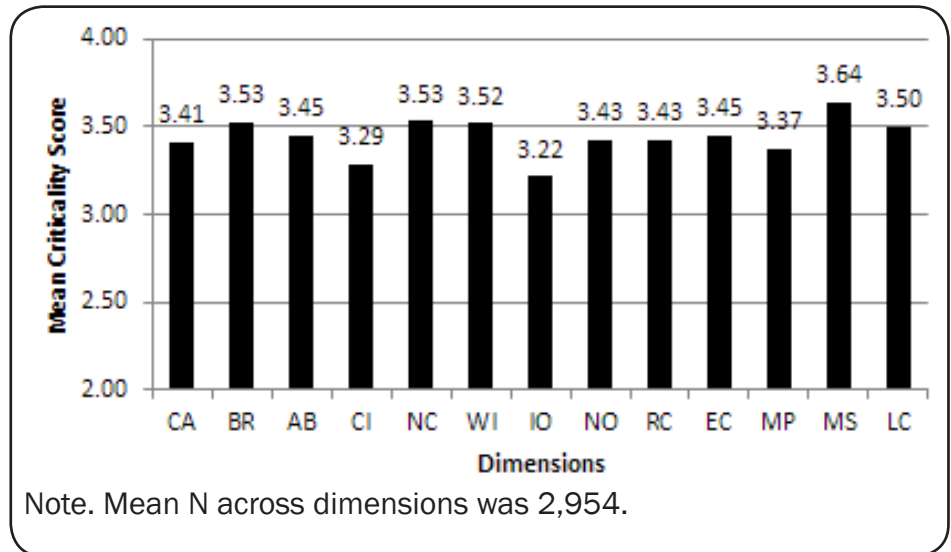


Figure 2. Mean Criticality Scores for Each Cultural Dimension

Mean Frequency and Importance – All Dimensions

An examination of the frequency and importance ratings indicates that, for a number of dimensions, Soldiers performed relevant tasks somewhat infrequently (i.e., once a week to once a month), but nevertheless rated them as moderately to very important for their overall performance. This was particularly true for dimensions such as Works with Interpreters, Resolves Conflicts, Handles Ethical Challenges, and Manages Perceptions (see Figure 3).

Even though Soldiers did not perform some of the dimensions very often, *all* dimensions were rated as moderately to very important.

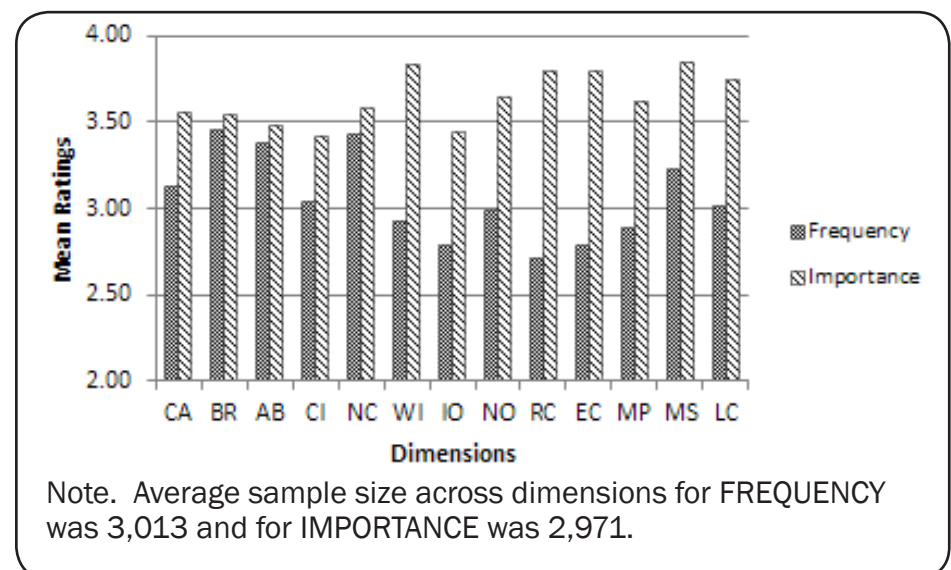


Figure 3. Mean frequency and importance by cultural dimension

Army Sociocultural Performance Requirements

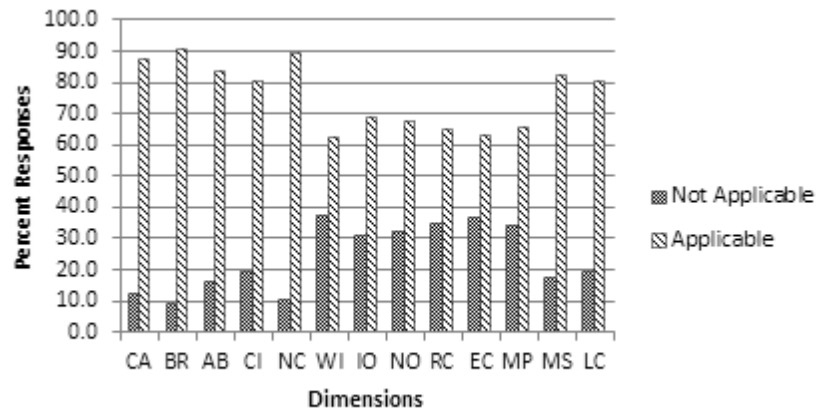
Rank and Branch Group Results

Soldier responses were grouped according to three rank groups: commissioned officers, enlisted, and warrant officers. Results for each rank group are discussed separately below.

Officers

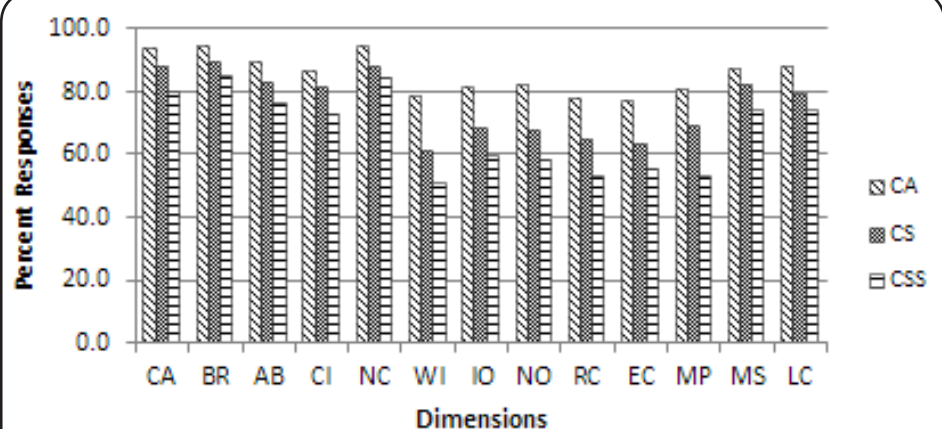
The pattern of results for officers who indicated the dimensions were or were not applicable to them looks similar to the results for the entire sample. In contrast to the overall sample, however, the percentage of officers who indicated that the activities in a given dimension applied to them was consistently higher, with fewer indicating that the dimensions were “Not Applicable” (see Figure 4). Means for “Not Applicable” ratings ranged from 9% for Building Rapport (in contrast with 18% for the entire sample) to 38% for Works with Interpreters (in contrast with 54% for the entire sample). This suggests that officers, as a group, were more likely to engage in these cultural performance activities during their deployment or OCONUS assignment than the sample overall.

Overall, officers were more likely than enlisted Soldiers to engage in sociocultural behaviors.



Note. Average sample size across dimensions was 2,012.

Figure 4. Percentage of officers who rated whether the dimension was applicable



Note. Average sample size by branch is as follows: CA = 525; CS = 539; CSS = 455.

Figure 5. Percentage of officers by branch who rated whether the dimension was applicable

Army Sociocultural Performance Requirements

There were also differences by branch groups in terms of the percentage of officers who indicated the activities were “Applicable” (see Figure 5). Across all dimensions, a consistent pattern was observed, such that a lower percentage of officers in the CSS branch group reported that sociocultural items as applied to them. CA officers were the most likely to indicate that the dimensions applied to them.

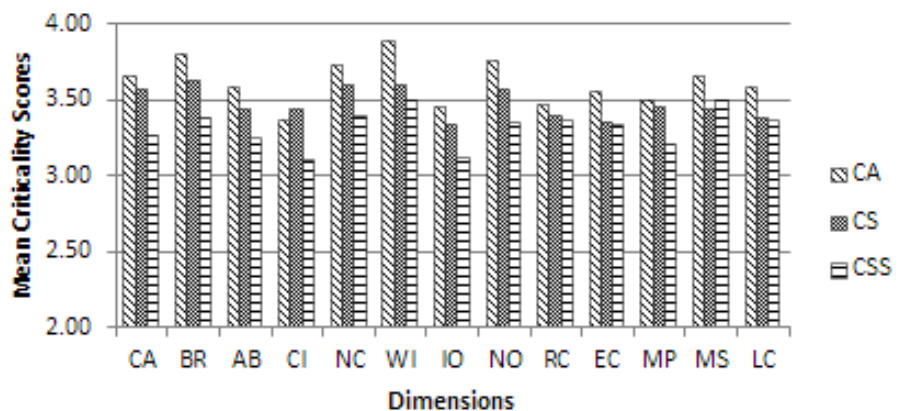
For officers who did engage in activities in a given dimension, the criticality scores were all above moderate (Crit > 3) (see Figure 6), with the following dimensions identified as most critical: Works with Interpreters (3.9), Builds Rapport (3.8), Negotiates with Others (3.8), and Uses Nonverbal Communication (3.7). Figure 6 also shows officer criticality scores by branch group. Across nearly all dimensions, officers in the CA group reported the highest overall

criticality scores (mean across all dimensions = 3.62), with officers from the CSS group reporting the lowest overall criticality (mean across all dimensions = 3.32). In order to determine if these differences were significant we tested a series of group comparisons.

A series of group comparisons was examined for each performance dimension. Officers were placed into three rank groups: (1) COLs/LTCs, (2) MAJs, and (3) CPTs/1LTs.³ Officer rank had little to no relationship with criticality. On the other hand, an

The sociocultural dimensions applied the most extensively to officers in the CA branch group. Officers in the CSS branch group were most likely to report sociocultural items as “Not Applicable.”

Three dimensions were most critical for officers: Builds Rapport, Negotiates with Others, and Uses Nonverbal Communication.



Note. Average sample size by branch is as follows: CA = 473; CS = 444; CSS = 344.

Figure 6. Mean officer criticality scores by dimension and branch

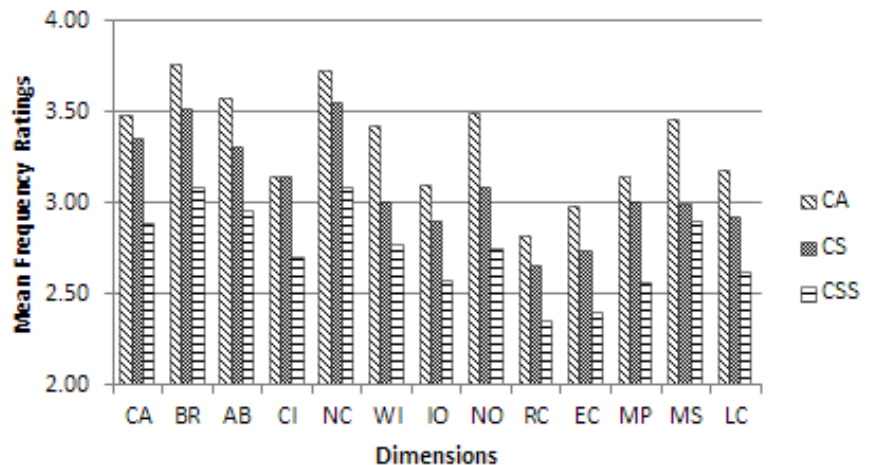
³ Two-way between-group ANOVA analyses were conducted to examine whether the differences in criticality scores for the three branch groups and three rank groups were significant. There were no significant interactions for rank by branch groups for criticality scores. In other words, the relationship between rank and criticality did not change depending on the specific branch group (or vice versa). Therefore, any effect of rank on criticality can be interpreted without needing to also consider branch group.

Army Sociocultural Performance Requirements

effect was found for branch group, with all performance dimensions showing significant differences in criticality across branch groups with the exception of Resolves Conflicts. Officers in both the CA and CS groups rated the dimensions as more critical than officers in the CSS group. For Builds Rapport, Works with Interpreters, Negotiates with Others, and Leads Across Cultures, the CA group ratings were also significantly higher than those made by the CS group. It should be noted that while these differences were statistically significant, in practical terms, they are relatively small in magnitude given the large sample size.

We also examined frequency ratings for the officer groups. Compared to mean criticality scores, which were fairly similar across all the dimensions, mean frequency ratings were more varied (see Figure 7). Sociocultural activities related to the dimensions of Demonstrates Cultural

Officers in both the CA and CS groups rated most sociocultural dimensions as more critical than officers in the CSS group.



Note. Average sample size by branch is as follows: CA = 477; CS = 499; CSS = 351.

Figure 7. Mean officer frequency ratings by dimension and branch

Awareness, Builds Rapport, Adjusts Behavior, and Uses Nonverbal Communication were performed more frequently than activities related to dimensions such as Influences Others, Resolves Conflict, and Handles Ethical Challenges.

The same procedure used to compare criticality scores across groups for each performance dimension was used to compare frequency ratings.⁴ Officer rank had little effect on the frequency with which activities were performed; however, consistent and significant differences were observed for the different officer branch groups. Specifically, officers in the CA group engaged in cultural activities

more often than officers in either the CS or CSS groups, while officers in the CS group engaged in cultural activities more often than those in the CSS group.

These branch group differences were both statistically significant and somewhat moderate in size. The biggest difference between officers in the CA group and officers in the CSS group was observed for the dimension Negotiates with Others, with CA officers engaging in negotiations significantly more often ($\Delta=.69$; $p<.05$). Significant differences were found for the other dimensions, as well, and ranged from $\Delta=.45$ ($p<.05$) for Resolves Conflict, to $\Delta=.67$ ($p<.05$) for Builds Rapport.

⁴ Two-way between-group ANOVA results indicated no significant interactions for rank by branch groups.

Army Sociocultural Performance Requirements

Enlisted

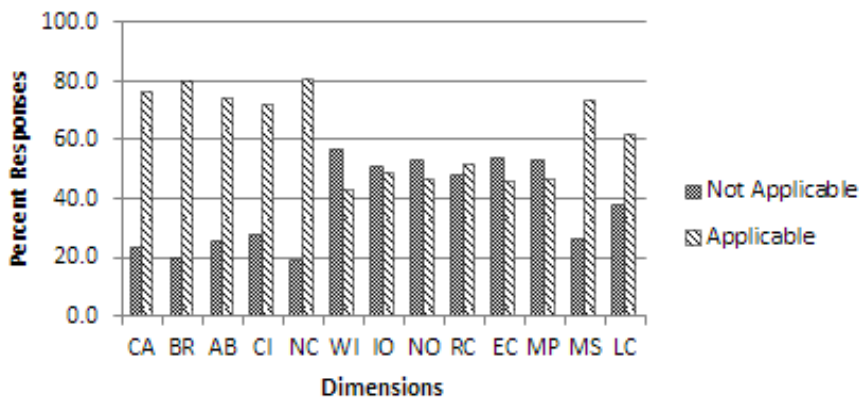
The results for enlisted Soldiers regarding performance dimensions that were “Applicable” or “Not Applicable” on their

recent deployment or OCONUS assignment showed a similar pattern to those for officers, but the NA percentages were consistently higher. This indicated that the

performance dimensions were not applicable to a greater percentage of enlisted Soldiers than officers (see Figure 8, compare to officers in Figure 4). Over half of the enlisted indicated that the following dimensions were “Not Applicable:” Works with Interpreter, Influences Others, Negotiates with Others, Handles Ethical Challenges, and Manages Perceptions. NA means for the enlisted group ranged from a low of 19% for Uses Nonverbal Communication, compared to 10% for the officers, to a high of 57% for Works with Interpreters, up from 38% for the officers.

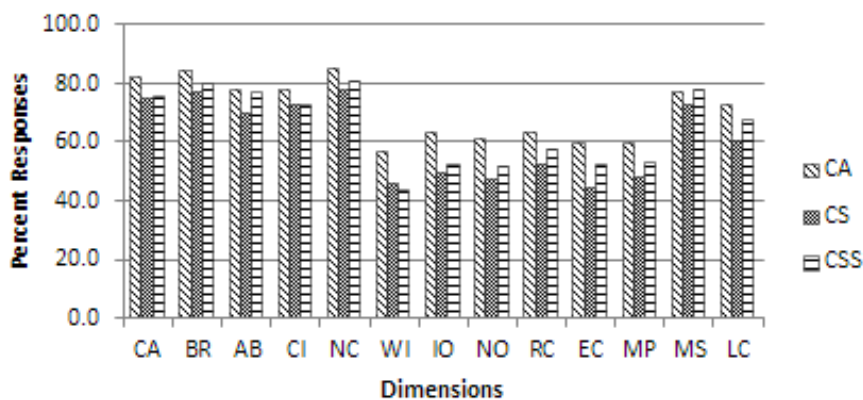
There were also differences by branch groups in terms of which enlisted Soldiers rated activities as “Applicable” or “Not Applicable” (see Figure 9). Across all dimensions, a lower percentage of Soldiers in the CS and CSS groups reported that the sociocultural activities applied to them. Soldiers in the CA group were most likely to indicate that the activities applied. This is the same pattern observed with officers; however, the pattern was more pronounced for the officers than for enlisted Soldiers.

There were also differences by branch groups in terms of which enlisted Soldiers rated activities as “Applicable” or “Not Applicable” (see Figure 9). Across all dimensions, a lower percentage of Soldiers in the CS and CSS groups reported that the sociocultural activities applied to them. Soldiers



Note. Average sample size across dimensions was 1,773.

Figure 8. Percentage of enlisted who rated whether the dimension was applicable



Note. Average sample size by branch is as follows: CA = 423; CS = 504; CSS = 397.

Figure 9. Percentage of enlisted by branch who rated whether the dimension was applicable

Army Sociocultural Performance Requirements

in the CA group were most likely to indicate that the activities applied. This is the same pattern observed with officers; however, the pattern was more pronounced for the officers than for enlisted Soldiers.

For enlisted Soldiers who did engage in activities within a given dimension, ratings of the criticality of these dimensions were above moderate criticality (Crit > 3) (see Figure 10), with the following dimensions identified as being the most critical: Builds Rapport, Uses Nonverbal Communication, Works with Interpreters, Handles Ethical Challenges, Manages Stress, and Leads Across Cultures. Across almost all dimensions, Soldiers from the CA group reported the highest criticality scores, followed by those in CS and CSS groups, respectively.

Differences between branch groups were not very pronounced.⁵ To explore rank group differences further, groups were compared across each performance dimension. Enlisted Soldiers were placed into one of three groups: (1) Senior NCOs (MSG, 1SG, SGM, CSM), (2) Junior NCOs (SGT, SSG, SFC), or (3) Junior Enlisted (PFC, SPC, CPL).

Results confirmed that criticality scores did not differ significantly by branch group. On the other hand, a few significant

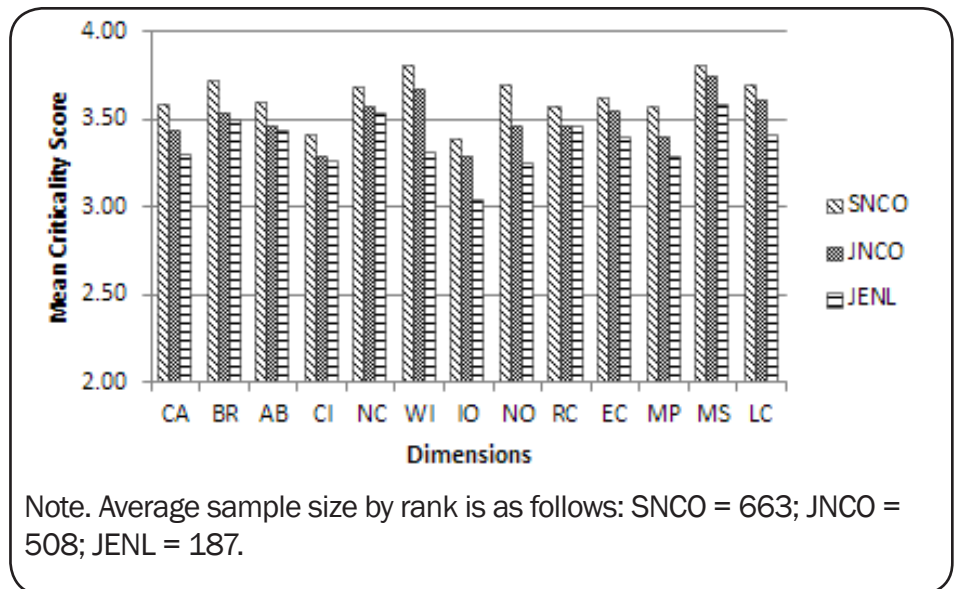


Figure 10. Mean enlisted criticality scores by dimension and rank

differences were found when comparing rank groups on the following dimensions: Demonstrates Cultural Awareness, Builds Rapport, Works with Interpreters, Negotiates with Others, and Leads Across Cultures. For three of these comparisons (Demonstrates Cultural Awareness, Builds Rapport, and Negotiates with Others), Senior NCOs rated the dimension as more critical than both Junior NCO and Junior Enlisted Soldiers, whereas for the other two dimensions (Works with Interpreters and Leads Across Cultures), both Senior and Junior NCOs rated the dimension as more critical than did Junior Enlisted Soldiers.⁶

Mean frequency ratings for

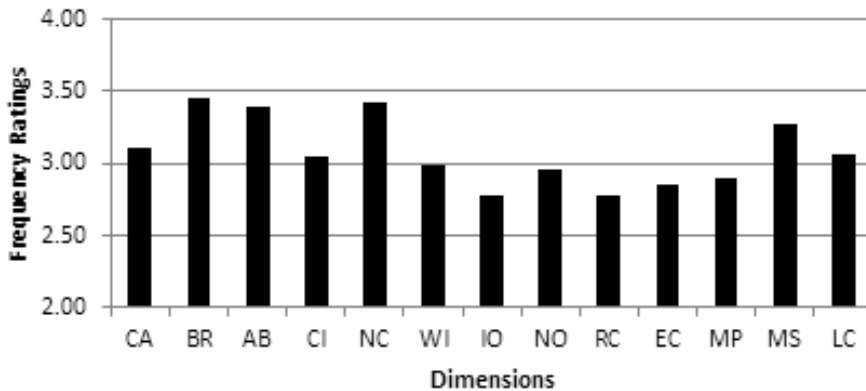
Enlisted Soldiers identified six dimensions as most critical: Builds Rapport, Uses Nonverbal Communication, Works with Interpreters, Handles Ethical Challenges, Manages Stress, and Leads Across Cultures.

the enlisted group were generally lower than those reported by the officers. Sociocultural activities that were performed the most frequently included: Builds Rapport, Adjusts Behavior, and Uses Nonverbal Communication (see Figure 11). Activities that were the least frequently performed included: Influences Others, Resolves Conflict,

⁵ Specifically, two-way between-group ANOVA analyses were conducted to examine group differences for criticality scores for the three branches as well as three enlisted rank groups.

⁶ There were no interactions of any practical magnitude to report for rank by branch group.

Army Sociocultural Performance Requirements



Note. Average sample size across dimensions is 1,272.

Figure 11. Mean enlisted frequency ratings by dimension

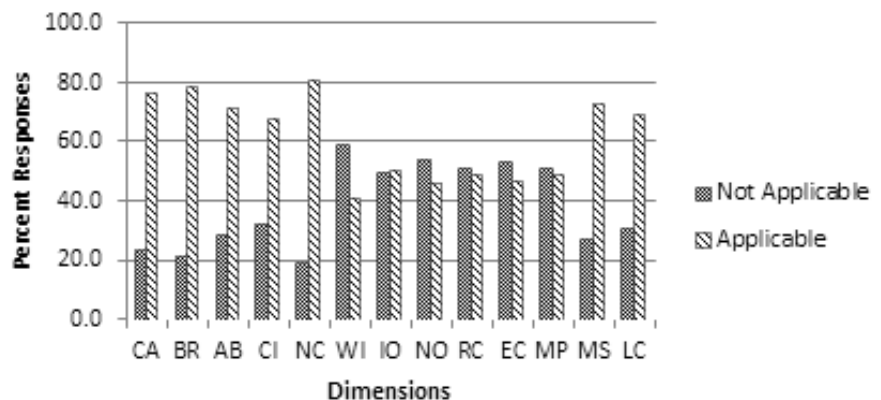
Higher ranking NCOs rated the following dimensions as more critical: Demonstrates Cultural Awareness, Builds Rapport, Works with Interpreters, Negotiates with Others, Leads Across Cultures.

Handles Ethical Challenges, and Manages Perceptions.

Neither rank nor branch group were found to be related to the frequency of any of the performance dimensions.⁷

Warrant Officer

Warrant officers showed a pattern similar to that of the enlisted Soldiers for rating performance dimensions as “Applicable” or “Not Applicable.” Specifically, the percentage of warrant officers who indicated that the activities in a given dimension applied to them was consistently lower for warrant officers than it was for officers (see Figure 12). This is likely due in part to the predominance of aviation warrant officers in the CA warrant officer group. Means ranged from a high of 81% who indicated the dimension Uses Nonverbal Communication applied to them, compared to 90% for officers, to a low of



Note. Average sample size across dimensions was 318.

Figure 12. Percentage of warrant officers who rated whether the dimension was applicable

41% for Works with Interpreters, compared with 62% for officers.

There were also differences by branch groups, such that a lower percentage of warrant officers in the CA

group tended to report that sociocultural activities applied to them, followed by those in the CSS group and then the CS group (see Figure 13). This pattern was different from

⁷ There were no significant interactions for rank by Branch groups for frequency ratings.

Army Sociocultural Performance Requirements

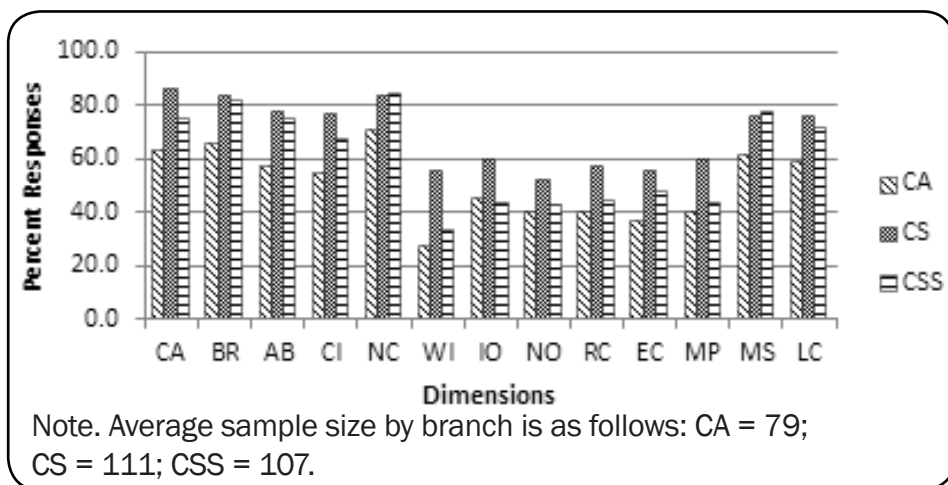


Figure 13. Percentage of warrant officers by branch who rated whether the dimension was applicable

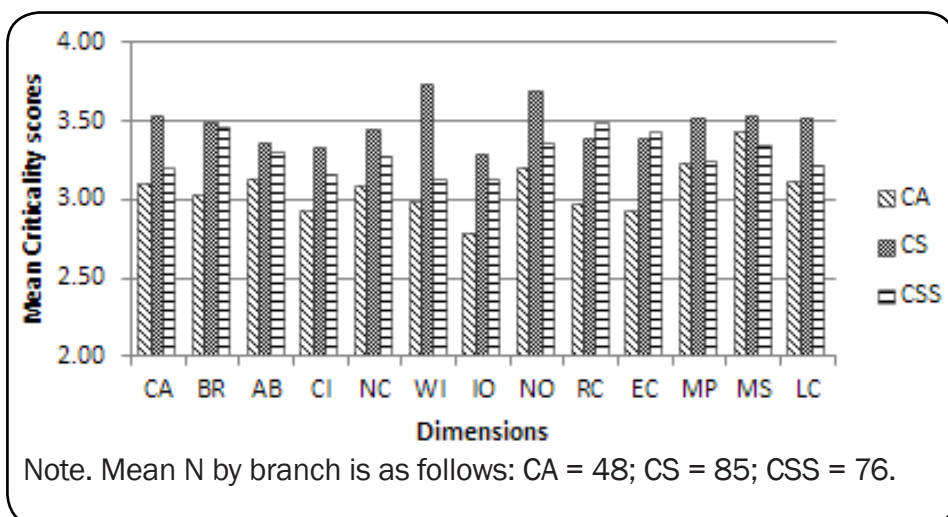


Figure 14. Mean Warrant Officer Criticality Ratings by Dimension and Branch

the commissioned officer and enlisted samples, for which a lower percentage of Soldiers in the CSS group generally reported that sociocultural activities applied to them, followed by those in the CS and CA groups, respectively.

For warrant officers who did engage in activities within a given dimension, ratings of criticality across all three branch groups were above moderate criticality (Crit > 3) (see Figure 14), with the dimensions identified as most critical including Works with Interpreters and Negotiates with Others.

Criticality scores did differ by branch group, with the CS group largely reporting the highest criticality, followed by the CSS group and then CA. These between-branch differences for criticality scores were examined further.⁸ Final results based on several analyses indicated no practical significant differences.

In terms of frequency, warrant officers performed activities within each cultural dimension less frequently than the commissioned officers and enlisted Soldiers, with most of the mean ratings across branch groups below the standard cutoff of 3.0 (see Figure 15).

This was particularly true for warrant officers in the CA and CSS branch groups.

⁸ One-way ANOVAs were conducted to examine group differences.

Army Sociocultural Performance Requirements

Dimensions including tasks that warrant officers more frequently performed included Cultural Awareness, Builds Rapport, Adjusts Behavior, and Uses Nonverbal Communication. Tasks that were less frequently performed included Resolves Conflict and Handles Ethical Challenges.

Between-branch differences were examined further.⁹ Results showed that warrant officers in the CS group engaged in activities within the Demonstrates Cultural Awareness and Manages Perceptions dimensions more

than those in the CSS group, and engaged in activities within the Works with Interpreters dimension more than those in the CA group. These differences, while statistically significant, were somewhat low in magnitude. As such, they have less practical significance in terms of whether Soldiers in these groups should actually prepare differently in regards to sociocultural activities.

Because the warrant officers in the CA branch group showed a different pattern of results than the CA officers and enlisted Soldiers with respect

to the criticality and frequency of the cultural performance dimensions, the specific occupational specialties of the CA warrant officers were reviewed. Results indicated that over two-thirds (69%) of CA warrant officers were from the Aviation field. This offers a possible explanation for their low level of cultural performance requirements, as aviators may be less likely than other occupations to engage with other cultures on deployments.

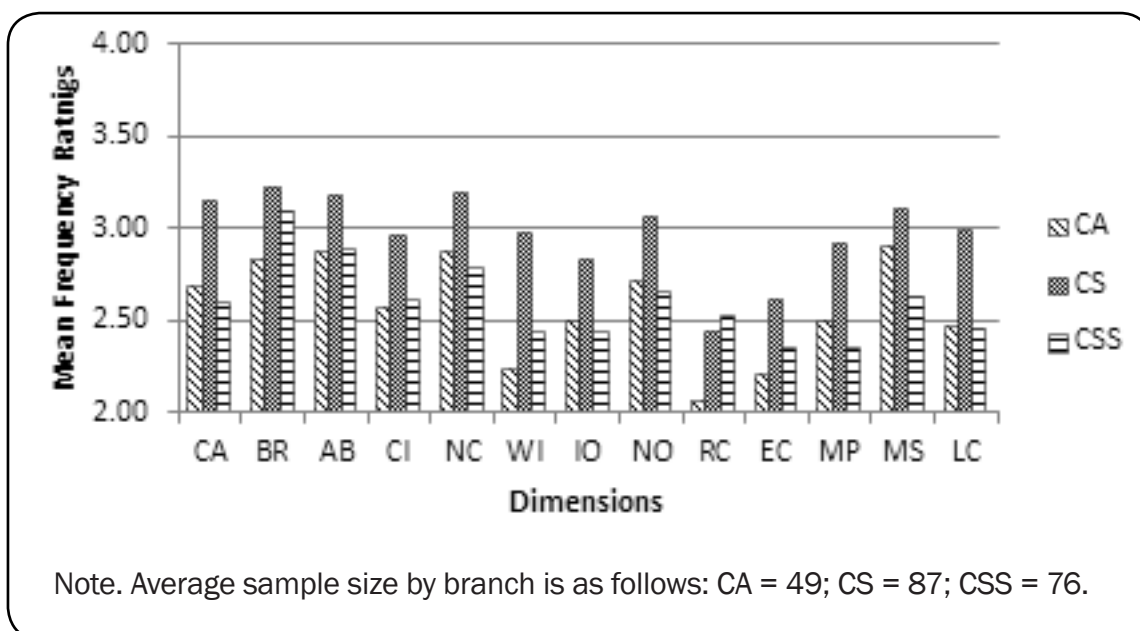


Figure 15. Mean warrant officer frequency ratings by dimension and branch

⁹ One-way ANOVAs were conducted to examine group differences

Army Sociocultural Performance Requirements

Overall Rank and Branch Comparisons

A series of group comparisons¹⁰ was conducted for each of the 13 performance dimensions to examine the individual and joint effects of overall rank and branch group on criticality and frequency scores. The three rank groups were commissioned officers, warrant officers, and enlisted, and the three branch groups were CA, CS, and CSS.

Comparisons across the *three different branches* revealed only a few significant differences in criticality scores: Demonstrates Cultural Awareness, Works with Interpreters, and Manages Perceptions. Results showed Soldiers in the CA group had higher scores than those in the CS group for these dimensions, who in turn had higher scores than Soldiers in the CSS group. For frequency, all dimensions except Builds Rapport, Adjusts Behaviors, Resolves Conflicts, Handles Ethical Challenges, and Leads Across

Soldiers in the CA branch group rated Demonstrates Cultural Awareness, Works with Interpreters, and Manages Perceptions as highest in criticality, compared with Soldiers in CS and CSS branches.

Cultures showed significant, though small, differences across branch group. In most cases, Soldiers in the CA and CS groups reported higher scores than those in the CSS group.

Comparisons across the three rank groups for criticality scores indicated that commissioned officers had slightly higher scores than warrant officers and enlisted Soldiers for several dimensions: Demonstrates Cultural Awareness, Builds Rapport, Works with Interpreters, and Influences Others. In addition, there were a number of small rank-by-branch interaction effects, which suggests that the pattern of criticality scores depended on both rank and branch

Officers rated the following dimensions higher on criticality than warrant officers and enlisted Soldiers: Demonstrates Cultural Awareness, Builds Rapport, Works with Interpreters, and Influences Others.

affiliation. An example of the most prominent effect is that warrant officers specifically in the CA group tended to have low criticality scores for a number of the performance dimensions (see Figure 16). As mentioned, this is likely due to the predominance of aviation warrant officers in the CA branch group.

Results for frequency

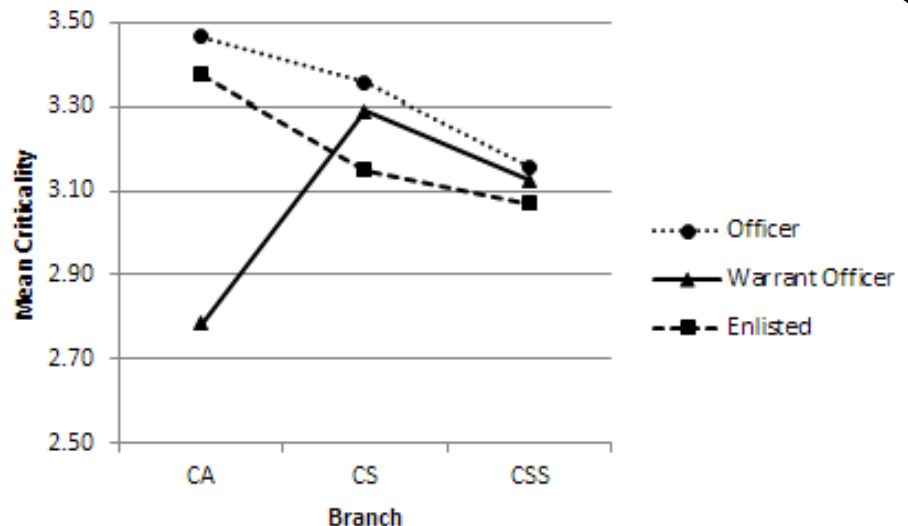


¹⁰ Two-way between group ANOVAs were conducted to examine group differences.

Army Sociocultural Performance Requirements

showed small rank group differences for all performance dimensions. In general, commissioned officers and enlisted Soldiers rated the dimensions as being performed more frequently than warrant officers. Several small rank-by-branch interaction effects were also found. Like the criticality scores, these were largely attributable to the low frequency scores for the CA warrant officers.

Officers and enlisted Soldiers indicated they performed all dimensions more frequently than warrant officers.



Note. N by Branch is as follows: CA = 637; CS = 694; CSS = 527.

Figure 16. Example rank by branch group interaction for the criticality of influences others

Summary & Recommendations

These results affirm the importance of cultural performance requirements for Soldier success on deployments or OCONUS assignments, and identify 13 specific performance dimensions that are critical in varying degrees based on rank and branch.

There are several patterns that occur with some consistency for rank and branch groups. With respect to rank, both the criticality and frequency of cultural performance requirements are generally highest for officers and lowest for warrant officers. In addition, more officers than warrant officers or enlisted Soldiers

indicated that the dimensions were applicable to their job.

With respect to branch group, although cultural performance requirements applied to all branches, Soldiers in the CA group generally reported the highest criticality and frequency for engaging in cultural performance activities, with those in the CSS group showing the lowest levels. The exception to this was CA warrant officers. Branch differences were particularly noticeable for commissioned officers: officers in the CA group were more likely to rate a dimension as applicable compared to officers in the CS

and CSS groups. Also, officers in the CS group were more likely than officers in the CSS group to rate a dimension as applicable. This pattern was not repeated for enlisted Soldiers or for warrant officers. Importantly, across all branch groups, while some cultural performance dimensions were performed less frequently than others, even the low-frequency activities were perceived as highly important.

The patterns of applicability and frequency across ranks and branch groups suggest that it might be useful to approach these 13 sociocultural performance

Army Sociocultural Performance Requirements

dimensions in different ways during training and development. More specifically, three overarching performance categories can be identified in the patterns of these results: (1) Foundational Dimensions, (2) Leader Dimensions, and (3) Deployment Dimensions.

The *Foundational Dimensions* include Demonstrates Cultural Awareness, Builds Rapport, Adjusts Behavior, Collects Information and Uses Nonverbal Communication. For each of these dimensions, the majority of the respondents – 70-90% – indicated that these were applicable, at least to some degree, on their last deployment or OCONUS assignment. For those who indicated these dimensions

did apply to their last deployment, they agreed that the dimensions were critical – rating them as at least moderate in criticality. These performance dimensions, therefore, appear to form a set of Foundational Culture requirements – ones that are highly applicable across all ranks and branches. Because of the high level of relevance of these dimensions, it is recommended that specific courses are provided or developed that will ensure that the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) required to succeed in these areas are actively developed in Soldiers across ranks and branches, as well as throughout their careers.

The *Leader Dimensions* include Influences Others, Negotiates with Others, Resolves

Conflicts, Leads Across Cultures, and Manages Stress. These are performance dimensions that are often identified as key leader performance areas, and they were more applicable to officers in the current dataset, with the exception of Manages Stress and Leads Across Cultures, which were also rated as highly critical by enlisted Soldiers. These dimensions were generally rated as lower in frequency, but high in importance and overall criticality. Because these dimensions were associated with performance areas that are already identified as important for leaders, it is recommended that, rather than creating courses to specifically target these topics, these elements should be integrated into existing professional



Army Sociocultural Performance Requirements

military education (PME) for officers. The goal would be to ensure that a specific lesson on performing these leader-oriented actions within multicultural settings is integrated into the existing material. This could be done as needed for enlisted Soldiers (leader cross-cultural concepts are highly relevant to senior NCOs in particular) and warrant officers, as well. While leader dimensions such as Influences Others and Resolves Conflicts were less frequently used for enlisted Soldiers and warrant officers, Manages Stress, and, to some extent, Leads Across Cultures, were rated as frequently used and critical to effective performance. As such, it would be important to include training that addresses managing stress and leading across cultural situations in the NCO PME. This approach would enable leaders to build these specific sociocultural skills within the broader context of developing core leader KSAs across their careers.

The final three dimensions fit within a category labeled *Deployment Dimensions*. These include: Works with Interpreters, Handles Ethical Challenges, and Manages Perceptions. Each of these performance areas is rated as highly important but relatively low in frequency, and comprise skills that are likely to be best developed in pre-deployment training, though each for different reasons.



- For Works with Interpreters, this activity varies greatly across branch groups and ranks. For example, only 27% of the CA warrant officers had an opportunity to work with an interpreter, compared to 78% of CA officers. This is likely due in part to the predominance of aviation warrant officers in the CA warrant officer group. Given such variability, as well as the fact that the type of interpreter (e.g., a U.S. citizen vs. non-U.S. citizen) can make a difference with regard to the specific working relationship, the most effective use of training resources would be to focus only on those individuals who need particular interpreter skills in order to prepare for deployment.
- Handles Ethical Challenges is an important dimension for all Soldiers, although data suggest it is encountered quite infrequently. As is the case for working with interpreters, ethical issues that arise will likely differ based on deployment location and mission type. Additionally, perceptions of what is ethical (or not) are often culturally-based; what is considered not ethical by U.S. standards may be standard practice elsewhere. Therefore, pre-deployment training can serve to raise awareness of specific issues that may be encountered by Soldiers, as well as develop strategies and tactics for handling them. For these reasons, this dimension, too, would be efficiently and effectively trained by targeting Soldiers preparing for a deployment.
- For Manages Perceptions, another infrequent but important dimension, the nature of perceptions will be largely motivated by the specific mission and deployment location. Therefore, pre-deployment training could effectively develop the necessary knowledge and skills in a targeted manner to ensure that Soldiers encountering new situations respond in a way that is most conducive to meeting the mission.

Army Sociocultural Performance Requirements

Utilization of Results/Application

These results describe specific actions that Soldiers may need to accomplish while deployed in a multicultural setting. Trends in the data informed recommendations for three different methods to incorporate cultural performance requirements into Army training. It is strongly suggested that TRADOC consider these results and more specifically, identify gaps that exist between these requirements and their current curriculum.



Army Sociocultural Performance Requirements

Key Sources for Model Development

- Abbe, A., Gulick, L. M. V., & Herman, J. L. (2007). *Cross-cultural competency in Army leaders: A conceptual and empirical foundation* (Study Report 2008-01). Arlington, VA: U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences.
- Carpenter, T. D., & Wisecarver, M. M. (2004). *Identifying and Validating a Model of Interpersonal Performance Dimensions*. (Technical Report 1144). Arlington, VA: U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences.
- Hardison, C. M., Sims, C. S., Fargabam, A., Villamizar, A., Mundell, B., Howe, P. (2009). *Cross-cultural skills for deployed Air Force personnel: Defining cross-cultural performance*. Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation.
- Johnston, J. H., Paris, C., McCoy, C. E. E., Severe, G., & Hughes, S. C. (2010). *A framework for cross-cultural competence and learning recommendations*. Orlando, FL: Naval Air Warfare Center Training Systems Division.
- McCloskey, M. J., Grandjean, A., Behymer, K. J., & Ross, K. (2010). *Assessing the development of cross-cultural competence in Soldiers*. (Technical Report 1277). Arlington, VA: U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences.
- McCloskey, M. J. Behymer, K. J., Papautsky, E. L., Ross, K. G., & Abbe, A. (2010). *A developmental model of cross-cultural competence at the tactical level*. (Technical Report 1278). Arlington, VA: U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences.
- McDonald, D. P., McGuire, G., Johnston, J., Selmeski, B., & Abbe, A. (October 2008). *Developing and managing cross-cultural competency within the Department of Defense: Recommendations for learning and assessment*. Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI/J-9), 366 Tuskegee Airmen Drive, Patrick Air Force Base, FL 32925-3399.
- Ross, K. G., & Thornson, C. A. (2008). *Toward an operational definition of cross-cultural competence from the literature*. (DEOMI Internal Report CCC-08-3). Patrick Air Force Base, FL: Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI/J-9).
- Ross, K. G., MacNulty, C., Bencaz, N. A., Thornson, C. A., Johnson, J. (2010). *A framework for cross-cultural competence (3C) learning outcomes*. Patrick Air Force Base, FL: Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI/J-9).
- Russell, T. L., Crafts, J. L., & Brooks, J. E. (July 1995). *Intercultural communication requirements for Special Forces teams*. (Study Report 1683). Arlington, VA: U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences.
- Wisecarver, M., Ferro, G., Foldes, H., Adis, C., Hope, T., & Hill, M. (2012). *Regional Expertise and Culture Proficiency*. (DLO Project Report 2012-01). Arlington, VA: Defense Language and National Security Education Office.
- Zbylut, M. R., Metcalf, K. A., McGowan, B., Beemer, M., Brunner, J. M., & Vowels, C. L. (2009). *The human dimension of advising: An analysis of interpersonal, linguistic, cultural, and advisory aspects of the advisor role*. (Technical Report 1248). Arlington, VA: U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences.
- Zbylut, M. R., Metcalf, K. A., & Brunner, J. M. (2011). *Advising foreign security forces: Critical incidents describing the work of advisors*. (Research Report 1951). Arlington, VA: U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences.

Army Sociocultural Performance Requirements

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE					
1. REPORT DATE (dd-mm-yy): June 2014		2. REPORT TYPE: Final Report		3. DATES COVERED (from. . . to) May 2011 – Jun 2013	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Army Sociocultural Performance Requirements				5a. CONTRACT OR GRANT NUMBER W5J9CQ-11-C-0034	
				5b. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER 622785	
6. AUTHORS Michelle Wisecarver, Hannah Foldes, Cory Adis Personnel Decisions Research Institutes, Inc. Jessica Gallus, Jennifer Klafehn U.S. Army Research Institute				5c. PROJECT NUMBER A790	
				5d. TASK NUMBER 401	
				5e. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Personnel Decisions Research Institutes, Inc 1777 North Kent Street, Suite 401 Arlington, VA 22209				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U. S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral & Social Sciences 6000 6 th Street (Building 1464/Mail Stop 5610) Fort Belvoir, VA 22060-5610				1. MONITOR ACRONYM ARI	
				11. MONITOR REPORT NUMBER Special Report 72	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES Contracting Officer's Representative: Jessica Gallus, Ph.D.					
14. ABSTRACT (<i>Maximum 200 words</i>): This report provides information regarding the cultural performance requirements for a sample of Soldiers who deployed or held a position outside of the continental U.S. within the past five years. Cultural performance requirements are actions Soldiers must take on their jobs to work effectively with people who hold different cultural values, beliefs, and norms in order to achieve the goals of their mission. Data were collected from a sample of 4,157 active duty Soldiers of varying ranks and Branches regarding the importance and frequency with which they engaged in 13 specific performance dimensions. Results found that for each of the dimensions, between one-fifth and one-half of the sample did not perform activities related to that dimension. For those who did perform activities in the dimension, however, they rated each of the dimensions as being moderate to very critical in successfully performing their mission. As a group, officers were more likely to engage in the cultural performance activities than were enlisted or warrant officers. Patterns also emerged based on whether a Soldier was in a combat or support Branch. Recommendations are presented for the training and education related to these sociocultural performance dimensions.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS Cross-cultural competence, measuring cultural performance, culture					
SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF			19. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT Unlimited	2. NUMBER OF PAGES 23	21. RESPONSIBLE (Name and Telephone Number) Dorothy Young, 703-545-2316
16. REPORT Unclassified	17. ABSTRACT Unclassified	18. THIS PAGE Unclassified			