



Translational Research Group

at the USMC Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning (CAOCL)

Do Marines Value and Use Culture? 2012 Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning Survey II Findings

BLUF: To assess the value and use of culture for Marines engaged in steady-state activities, in 2012 the Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning (CAOCL) administered a large-scale survey through the Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned (MCCLL) to 20% of all Marines listed in the Global Address List (GAL). The 1654 Marines included in the final analyses paralleled USMC demographics in terms of rank (enlisted vs. officer) and gender. Both Marines who deployed to overseas missions other than OIF-Iraq or OEF-Afghanistan/Pakistan (referred to as Group 1) and Marines who only deployed to OIF-Iraq or OEF-Afghanistan/Pakistan (referred to as Group 2) strongly value and use culture for their missions. Few differences emerged between Groups 1 and 2.

Value of Culture: The majority of Marines agreed or strongly agreed that culture is important for operational readiness and that when dealing with foreign security forces, understanding their organizational culture (e.g. relations among ranks, traditions, motivations to join/serve etc.) is important. In addition, both groups of Marines regarded culture training to be as important as other predeployment training.

Cultural Skills and Knowledge During an Overseas Mission: The majority of Marines rated the use of various culture skills (e.g., building rapport or influencing and persuading), as well as the application of cultural knowledge (e.g., to understanding second and third-order effects), as important or very important while on their overseas mission.

Ground Combat Arms: The majority of Marines in both groups who had MOS's associated with ground combat arms expressed the same pattern of positive attitudes toward the value and use of culture.

Foreign Interactions While Deployed: The majority of Marines engaged with four or fewer types of foreign groups or individuals while deployed, though Group 2 engaged a greater variety of types of foreign groups than Group 1. The majority of Marines spent ~30% of their time with their foreign groups in a typical week, including on/off duty time. Group 2 was more likely than Group 1 to interact with foreign militaries within coalition operations and to identify them as the most important foreign group for their mission. Group 1 was more likely to interact with host country foreign militaries as well as to identify them as the most important foreign group for their mission.

Use of Interpreters: The majority of Marines interacted with foreign groups or individuals who could not speak English, yet only 40% of Group 1 and 53% of Group 2 used an interpreter. Of the Marines who did not use an interpreter, only 11% (Group 1) and 10% (Group 2) said they needed one. By implication, 39% of Group 1 and 29% of Group 2 used other direct or indirect means of interaction with the foreign groups or individuals.

Cultural Resources Used Before or During Deployment: The majority of Marines used two or three types of cultural resources, though overall, Group 2 used a greater variety of cultural resources than Group 1. Over 60% of both groups chose "Other Marines" as the cultural resource they used before or during an overseas mission. While only ~30% listed "Other Marines" as their most useful resource, this was still the most frequently cited useful resource. In assessing differences, more of Group 2 (~13%) chose immersion exercises as their most useful cultural resource compared to Group 1 (3%), and more of Group 1 (~17%) chose in-country local relationships as their most useful resource compared to Group 2 (6%).

DISCLAIMER: This paper contains viewpoints that do not necessarily represent the official position of CAOCL or the United States Marine Corps.

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