

THE RELATION CULTURAL AWARENESS – TACTICAL MULTINATIONAL MILITARY STRUCTURES’ EFFECTIVENESS

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Abstract: Addressing the problem of tactical multinational military structures’ effectiveness is not new, this becoming an important concern of military specialists once with the participation of national contingents to different multinational missions. Today, recent hybrid threats generate the necessity for it to be analyzed and stressed more, because the interoperability level of NATO’s multinational military structures must ensure a common, timely, coordinated and effective response. The analyses of multinational military structures’ effectiveness from the perspective of cultural diversity have highlighted not only the positive aspects but also the negative ones. Lessons learned from numerous multinational military operations have demonstrated the fact that the reduction and elimination of negative manifestations of cultural diversity, both in static military structures (multinational commandment) and multinational maneuver structures depend largely on the cultural awareness’ level of military personnel. In this regard, the proper understanding of cultural awareness’ concept and its role in achieving the effectiveness of tactical multinational military structures and also the definition of the relationship between these two variables become significant milestones that will be addressed in this article.

Keywords: cultural awareness, cultural competence, effectiveness.

1. Introduction

The ongoing transformation of the current security environment challenges and the difficulty of allocating the armies’ budgets necessary to put in practice their specific activities have determined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to identify new solutions based on the common commitment of overall member states. One solution identified was to conduct common military operations, in this way increasing the importance of cooperation between partner states and achieving the interoperability within the alliance more than ever.

Beyond the problems generated by organizational, technical and logistic interoperability that are theoretically easier

to solve, we cannot say the same thing regarding to cultural interoperability which together with the doctrinal one form the behavioral interoperability [1]. Unlike the others, achieving the cultural interoperability requires much more time, because it is addressed to education and training of military personnel from intercultural perspective in order to form and develop the cultural awareness, then it takes a period for integrating within multinational team and improving its behavior necessary to relate positively in a multinational military context, especially in high intensity situations which require an optimum level of emotional intelligence.

Certainly, we are tempted to say that NATO is the only one responsible for

integrating and facilitating the adaptation of national contingents to the multinational team, actually largely true, but we must not neglect the aspect that for a member state to be interoperable is not sufficient having just the motivation needed to participate to the common effort of the alliance, contributing with required capabilities, in accordance with its possibilities, but also it must take itself hard efforts in order to have its capabilities compatible with those of the allies, based on the interoperability requirements previously established.

Furthermore, the lessons learned from numerous participations of military structures to multinational operations, and the military researchers' concerns in the field of multinational military structures' effectiveness have highlighted the importance of educating and training the cultural awareness to the military personnel in order to achieve an optimum level of cultural interoperability within multinational military structures, prerequisite to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of military actions in a multinational context.

2. Binom analysis: cultural awareness – tactical multinational military structures' effectiveness

The analysis of military structures' effectiveness from the perspective of cultural factor represents a permanent subject of researches in the field of multinational military operations, where cultural awareness has become essential, being considered a kind of gravity center of the common military actions' effectiveness. Having as a starting point the definition of *effectiveness within multinational military structures* and *cultural awareness*, we will try to find the type of relationship established between these two variables.

Generally, the effectiveness of an organization refers to the capacity to fulfill its objectives [2] or from other perspective "an action is effective if the results match with the objectives" [3]. Specific to the

military field, a multinational military structure, for example a multinational commandment is considered effective when it:

- is capable to fulfill its objectives;
- promotes a good leadership;
- orients the commanders;
- takes quick decisions;
- has the ability to adapt to changes and adjust its behavior to changing circumstances;
- learns from mistakes;
- gives valuable information to its structures;
- has initiative;
- is opened to cultural diversity [4].

Also, in order to develop the subject in the right direction, we feel the need to make a short clarification regarding the differences between effectiveness and efficiency which do not have the same meanings, in some situations these concepts being used in a wrong manner even by some specialists in the field of military operations. Thus, according to Herbert Simon the efficiency "dictates that choice of alternatives which provide the best result in the application of the resources." [5].

From the perspective of military structures' behavior, if the term effectiveness is related to fulfilling the roles and missions by

military forces ($\frac{\text{results}}{\text{objectives}} \rightarrow \max$), the

efficiency is linked with the use of resources required to their achievement ($\frac{\text{results}}{\text{resources}} \rightarrow \max$) [6].

The second variable, cultural awareness is generically defined in the international literature as the ability to recognize and understand the effects of culture on values and behaviors of people [7], in other words it reflects "the capacity of understanding and analyzing the cultural differences in order to adapt and evolve the behaviors necessary to reach the objectives established." [8]. On the other hand, it should be understood that in a military context there are several stages of cultural

awareness generated by the levels of understanding/cognitive hierarchy (data, information, knowledge, understanding) [9]. In this regard, Wunderle William identifies the following stages of cultural awareness:

- cultural consideration (How and Why): lies on the “incorporation of generic cultural concepts in common military training – knowing How and Why to study culture and Where to find cultural factors and expertise” [10]; this stage is required to all personnel, no matter the category, rank, gender are;
- cultural knowledge (specific training): represents the “exposure to the recent history of a target culture. It includes basic cultural issues such as significant groups, actors, leaders, and dynamics, as well as cultural niceties and survival language skills.” [11]; usually, this stage can be reached at the end of pre-deployment training period;
- cultural understanding (advanced training): focuses on “a deeper awareness of the specific culture that allows general insight into thought processes, motivating factors, and other issues that directly support the military decisionmaking process.” [12]; it is required to the military personnel with key positions;
- cultural competence (decision making and cultural intelligence): is generated by “the fusion of cultural understanding with cultural intelligence that allows focused insight into military planning and decisionmaking for current and future military operations. Cultural competence implies insight into the intentions of specific actors and groups.” [13]; this stage is the most comprehensive and it is addressed to the military decision makers.

We cannot say that a stage is more important than another or that a certain

stage should be applied at all levels. What is sure is the fact that the level of understanding required at certain echelons varies in relation to the mission specifics [14].

We notice that in Wunderle William’s opinion cultural awareness manifested at the highest level must be understood as cultural/intercultural competence that ensure to a person “the ability to adapt his attitude, behavior and knowledge to the interaction with people from other cultures, the ability to manifest openness, flexibility and a positive attitude towards people belonging to other cultures, and the capacity to review their beliefs and values from the perspective of other cultures.” [15]. Different from his view point the United Kingdom (UK) Joint Doctrine Note 1/09 make a distinction between cultural awareness and cultural competence, the differences being that the first calls for basic knowledge of cultural issues, while the second focuses on an advanced level of cultural issues. Also, if cultural awareness allows the application of knowledge, skills and attitudes to predictable scenarios for creating the desired effect, the cultural competence gives the possibility of their application in unpredictable scenarios and the analyze and evaluation of the effect in order to generate an improved effect [16]. Furthermore, between the level of cultural awareness and cultural competence it is considerate an intermediate level of cultural capability named the cultural understanding that requires “intermediate knowledge of cultural issues, the comprehension of their importance and impact, the ability to apply this knowledge, skill and attitude to unpredictable scenarios and contribute to analysis of the effect.” [17]

Based on defining the concepts, studying the sources of expertise and especially on personal experience in analyzing previously the correlation between the variables of this study, we determine that between cultural awareness and tactical multinational military structures’ effectiveness there is a

directly proportional relationship, in other words *the level of tactical multinational military structures' effectiveness is directly proportional with the level of cultural awareness reached by military personnel*.

Our statement is also sustained by the results obtained from previous researches, from which the most significant is that achieved in 2010 during ISAF TASK FORCE ZABUL mission with the 811 Maneuver Battalion in the theatre of operations from Afghanistan, which aimed

to analyze the relationship between intercultural competence and the effectiveness of multinational military action. On short, the correlation index value obtained of 0.80216 confirmed the main hypothesis of the study: *the intercultural competence level is directly proportional to the level of multinational military action's effectiveness in a positive fashion*. Figure 1 shows the graphical representation of results.

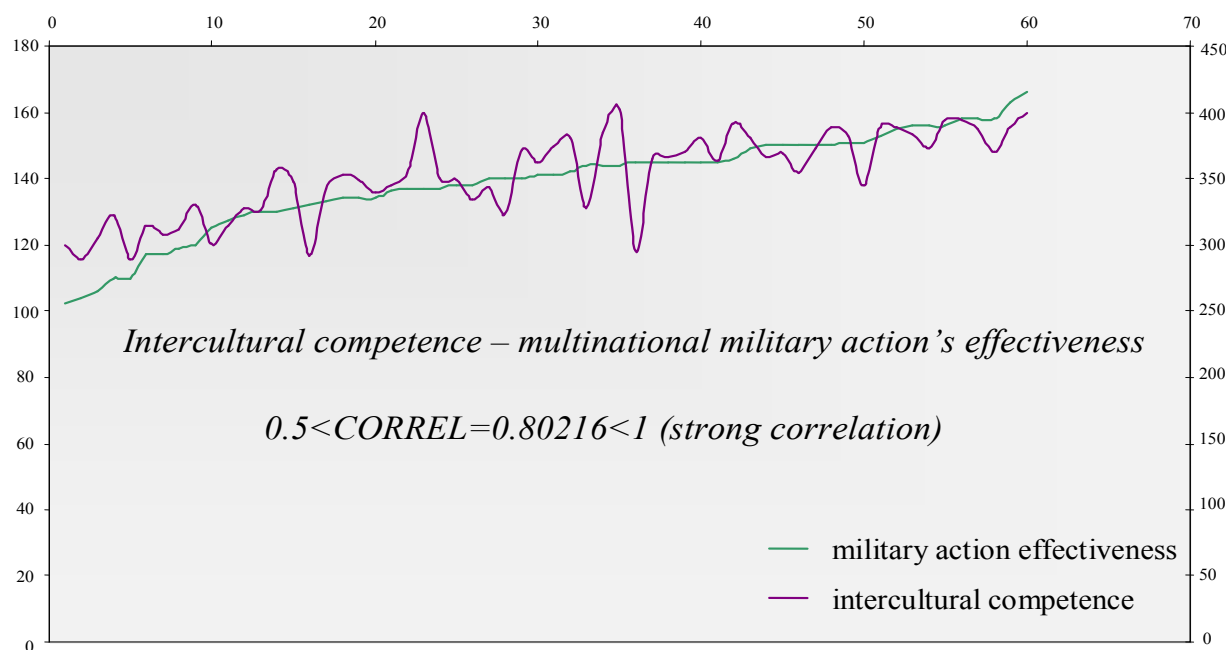


Figure 1: Correlation between intercultural competence and multinational military action's effectiveness [18]

3. Conclusion

Taking in consideration the cultural factor in the conduct of multinational military actions does not represent only an ascertainment, but also an imperative for current and future military operations. If states like United States of America (USA), Canada, Australia, and so on understood this, taking measures for educating and training its military personnel in order to achieve a certain level of cultural capability, there are some states that still seek solutions to solve this matter.

NATO's member states, generally, and Romania, especially, should take measures

to improve the education and development of military personnel from cultural/intercultural perspective. Besides adapting curricular programs of military academies it is necessary to establish some cultural training centers that focus on cultural/intercultural education and training of military personnel.

If education represents the job of military academies, not being necessary to divide the personnel per categories, because education addresses to all, the training must be conducted in training centers on personnel categories, in accordance with the positions that will be occupied within the

multinational military structures and in relation to the mission specifics.

As we are concerned about the stages of cultural capability that must be reached, we consider that all military personnel should have a cultural training that is appropriate to the cultural awareness level. The personnel with duties in the field of interaction with mission partners and local population such as the personal from multinational commandment, liaison officers (LNOs), personnel with duties in the civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) and Key Leader Engagement (KLE), and so forth should achieve the stage of cultural

understanding. The last but not the least, the ultimate stage of cultural capability, intercultural competence represents a request for the personnel with key positions.

Starting from the principle that the cultural awareness represents the fundamental level of cultural capability that must be achieved by every soldier, no matter the position in the multinational military structure is we strongly consider that it becomes an amplificatory for the tactical multinational military structures' effectiveness, prerequisite to conduct successfully multinational military operations.

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