CULTURAL AWARENESS IN MARINE CORPS LEADERSHIP

Michael Relucio

**Dr. Cathie Hughes**

Chair, Capstone Committee

**Dr. Curtis McClane**

Member, Capstone Committee

**Dr. Anique Elmes-Matthew**

Member, Capstone Committee

**Richard Gamble, M.A. MLitt Advisor**

Member, Capstone Committee

A Capstone Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Letters

Omega Graduate School

September 2022CULTURAL AWARENESS IN MARINE CORPS LEADERSHIP

Michael Relucio

A Capstone Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Letters

Omega Graduate School

June 2023

Capstone Committee:

Dr. Cathie Hughes, Chair

Dr. Curtis McClane, Reader

Dr. Anique Elmes-Matthew, Senior Tutor

Richard Gamble, M.A., Masters Degree Advisor

Copyright 2023 by Michael Relucio. All rights reserved.

ABSTRACT

Cultural awareness is a significant subject matter because it affects ethnic minorities directly. Acknowledging cultural differences produces tolerance, which allows leaders to be more empathetic to subordinates from different cultures and thereby, more effective in their communication with them (Iscan et al., 2017). According to Bonsu “, Empathy, furthermore, allows leadership to be more inclusive and accepting.” Leaders play a vital role in stting the culture and environment for those who follow them. People differ in how they process information, prioritize tasks, value relationships, and respond emotionally to events. Leadership at every level will benefit tremendously from increased cultural awareness. The work environment is sensitive to its diverse workforce for it brings about a culture of kindness, care, inclusiveness, tolerance, and understanding. Culture will unite the organization to be more productive. One of the benefits of cultural awareness in leadership is the increase in emotional intelligence. Transformational leadership must involve effective communication to understand subordinates' strengths and weaknesses and appeal to their emotional and cognitive abilities to affect positive changes in performance (Bonsu, 2018). Cultural awareness in leadership also gives subordinates a sense of belonging, which boosts morale and job satisfaction. Stakeholders are more likely to perform better, adapt, and have the flexibility to work with challenges and obstacles. According to Hasmi, et al. (2018), a sense of community is desperately needed in this present time and environment. Accordingly, increased empathy through cultural awareness should increase a sense of community in organizations.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this achievement to my family and friends, who, with love, patience, and support, walked along with me in the process. To my wife Loann, my daughter Leila, and all those who made this achievement possible. I will always appreciate the love and understanding given to me, allowing me the time to invest in my studies.

.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank my committee members, who were more than generous with their expertise and precious time. A special thanks to Richard Gamble, my tutor, for his countless hours of commitment to making sure I succeed. I am thankful for his dedication, encouragement, and, most of all his patience throughout the entire process. Thank you, Dr. Hughes and Dr. McClane, for keeping me on track. Finally, I would like to thank Phyllis Quan-Steinberg, my mentor for keeping me motivated to strive to be better. Their excitement, projection, and willingness to provide feedback made completing this research both rewarding and an enjoyable experience.

EPIGRAPH

Making cultural awareness a priority embodies acceptance and good faith.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

[CULTURAL AWARENESS IN MARINE CORPS LEADERSHIP iii](#_Toc128338064)

[ABSTRACT vi](#_Toc128338065)

[DEDICATION vii](#_Toc128338066)

[ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ii](#_Toc128338067)

[EPIGRAPH ii](#_Toc128338068)

[TABLE OF CONTENTS i](#_Toc128338069)

[CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION 1](#_Toc128338070)

[CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE 8](#_Toc128338071)

[CHAPTER 3: SUMMARY OF RESEARCH AND CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW 23](#_Toc128338072)

[Analysis 23](#_Toc128338073)

[CHAPTER 5: RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH 37](#_Toc128338074)

[WORKS CITED 41](#_Toc128338075)

[CURRICULUM VITAE 48](#_Toc128338076)

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The Marine Corps strives to improve its leaders' leadership quality by enhancing communication channels and improving Marines' morale. Although cultural awareness is crucial to meeting this goal, the Marine Corps leadership’s lack of cultural awareness can cause division between military leaders and followers (Geougoulas-Sherry, 2021). An emphasis on cultural awareness among leaders is examined in this research. This chapter introduced the problem and its background, the context of this research, its significance, a thesis statement, and an overview of the study. Cultural awareness is defined, and its critical importance in organizational growth and success is highlighted. The benefits of cultural awareness in leadership are crucial in developing trust and boosting troops' morale. Making cultural awareness a priority embodies acceptance and good faith (Adam & Harika, 2017).

The research explained the role of cultural intelligence in the military as instrumental to enhanced mission success, and cultural awareness as a valuable tool for eliminating bias. Leadership training that implements cultural awareness education reduces unconscious bias by educating leaders that different perspectives are not always defined as good or bad (Swartz et al., 2019). The research also explored gaps in the literature that did not address cultural awareness roles or only did so sparingly. The study concluded with offering an understanding of the role that cultural awareness in positively impacting work performance, as well as educating military leadership on appropriate cultural awareness training for future leaders.

***The Problem Being Addressed***

This research has highlighted a lack of cultural awareness in The Marine Corps community. Cultural awareness is important because it allows marines to better understand different points of view and worldview perspectives among the Corps. Cultural awareness fosters an appreciation of fellow marines from different backgrounds, a fundamental attribute to developing respect and unity in the Corps. According to Iscan et al. (2017), " Cultural awareness can be defined as understanding culture and being aware of the different beliefs and ideas " in a particular culture (p. 54). When leaders lack cultural awareness, followers may view interactions as biased and not conveying mutual respect because of the inability to be culturally sensitive. The lack of cultural awareness, according to Shaari et al. (2020), " creates a divide between leaders and subordinates, which causes low productivity and strained environment in the organization " (p. 14). These hurdles of division and distrust negatively impact military services and directly conflict with the Marine Corps motto, *Semper Fidelis* ( "always faithful" ). The motto has many implications; however, primarily the motto expresses the ideas of acceptance and cohesiveness. Marine Corps leadership cannot adequately live out the motto without cultural awareness. Lacking the tools for understanding promotes distrust and division. Learning cultural awareness skills, in contrast, could be one way to break through the barriers of division and distrust and create the " faithfulness " the motto discusses (Lane & Fosher, 2020).

The most important aspect of leadership is the trust formed between leaders and their followers. Leaders who embrace cultural awareness understand the need to cultivate trust through mutual respect and understanding. On the other hand, leaders who lack cultural awareness will diminish the trust between them and their followers as well as promote disloyalty (Jin et al., 2017). To avoid these adverse effects and create an organizational culture of trust, leaders should promote cultural awareness in their workplace. Creating a culture of trust through corporate practices will ensure cohesiveness and promote morale in the organization (Hashmi et al., 2018). This culture is important, especially in high-stress situations, because the psychological and social culture of the workplace dictates how employees handle stressful situations. A culture of trust enables employees to handle these situations better and cultural awareness is essential to building workplace culture. It is critical to observe ethical practices to ensure trust and morale within the organization (Haque, 2021). Cultural awareness reflects the standard of how people interact respectfully and in turn determine right and wrong.

Leadership is of utmost importance because it creates the organization's culture by introducing norms and expectations. The inability to adequately address problems leads to negative emotions that adversely impact work performance and morale (Hutt & Gopalakrisman, 2020). A lack of cultural awareness hinders leaders' appropriate problem-solving responses because of the absence of empathy for their followers (Shaari et al., 2020). Cultural awareness is helpful in understanding standards of behavior and cultural norms. Accordingly, this research proposes that cultural awareness training is an appropriate response for leaders that will enhance the organizational environment and performance.

***Background of the Problem in the Marine Corps***

The Marine way of leadership is handed down from senior leaders to the young Marines. Leadership is the backbone of the organization. Four different components may highlight background problems in the Marine Corps that stem from the lack of flexibility in the changing culture. These components are the lack of acceptance in the Marine Corps, distrust within the ranks, lack of respect, and situational flexibility. Cultural awareness improves the ability to understand and have a better grasp of how to adapt to the changing Marine Corps culture.

The lack of flexibility in the Marine Corps results from misunderstandings and biases. Misunderstandings will cause division and unnecessary conflict resulting in work disruption. The divide occurs when ideas from an individual hailing from a different culture are not given the same importance. Biases are formed when people are categorized and treated poorly because of a certain stereotype. It can cause stress and the feeling of alienation from the group. The lack of acceptance in the Marine Corps is the culprit of division which will negatively impact mission success (Lane & Fosher, 2020).

Marine Corps issues with distrust within the ranks are caused by not meeting the needs of those being led. Cultural awareness within Marine Corps leadership is necessary to address issues positively. Understanding cultural norms are critical in developing empathy. Distrusts within the ranks occur when it is assumed that leadership will not be supportive even when presented with good reasons. Displaying bias, unfair treatment, and failure to comply with protocols create distrust (Mitchell & Reese, 2022). Distrust within the Marine Corps ranks results from leadership's lack of empathy and understanding toward the Marines.

The lack of respect hinders the Marines' ability to maneuver around obstacles, directly affecting situational flexibility. It will be challenging to implement change if those being led are not receptive and unwilling to carry out orders. Respect plays a vital role in ensuring Marines follow their leaders' directives. Following orders is essential to mission success. Failure to follow directives negatively impacts the mission and, worst, loss of lives. The obstacles that a lack of respect represents need to be addressed to make a positive change moving forward. The diverse Marine Corps community will benefit from cultural awareness by emphasizing the Marine Corps' mission of inclusiveness and understanding, making all Marines a priority (Pollman, 2018). Lacking cultural awareness negatively impacts communication channels. Mission readiness will be positively impacted by leaders' ability to understand the situational needs of their Marines. The Marine Corps is very diverse, a vast melting pot that a " one size fits all " approach will not suffice. The wide range of missions across the U.S. military, the hierarchical structure, and various military occupation specialties mandate a broad, multicultural approach to intercultural training to be successful (Miller, 2017). The Marine Corps is constantly evolving. The Marine Corps faces multi-ethnic challenges and difficulties from cultural and generational gaps. The cultural landscape is comprised of diverse populations, unique situations, and hierarchical structures, which will need better leadership and cultural awareness (Tashev & Fosher, 2020, Lane & Fosher, 2020, Abbe, 2021). The contributing factor to the problem of the lack of cultural awareness in the Marines is not having enough learning opportunities.

The Marine Corps' goal is to train leaders to have the flexibility to adapt to situational needs and difficult obstacles. Leaders are trained to assess and respond accordingly to ensure safety and reduce casualties. The cultural awareness component of the mission at times may be compromised, depending on the severity of the situation at hand. Situational flexibility is crucial to leadership success and effectiveness (Geougoulas-Sherry, 2021). Cultural awareness is necessary for effective communication. When Marine Corps leaders possess cultural awareness, they understand the differences and similarities of culture without labeling it as good or bad. Knowledge of differences allows recognizing and reacting appropriately to those Marines from different cultural groups. Such knowledge allows for Marine Corps leadership to relate to their Marines' operational understanding and perception. Marines respond to leaders that are receptive to ethics, good morals, and attentive to their needs. The perception of well-intentioned leadership develops loyalty and increases mission success. In contrast, a lack of cultural awareness in the military creates disloyalty and disobedience.

The culture of respect cultivates value and inclusion, enabling cooperation (Galbraith, 2017). The Marine Corps motto of "no man left behind" can only be attested if all Marines are entirely accepted and understood by their leaders. The lack of cultural awareness manifests when the Marine Corps places no importance on educating those in charge. Prioritizing cultural awareness in the Marine Corps leadership creates a culture of acceptance, inclusiveness, trust, and respect. Understanding cultural differences and norms allows for a more meaningful interactions. Cultural awareness is important in breaking down barriers, allowing for a better understanding of those from different backgrounds. It enables leaders to build stronger connections in a more meaningful way. Cultural awareness builds better leaders by enabling them to have empathy which lessens cultural conflict. It strengthens the leadership's ability to have flexibility when facing difficult obstacles. Leadership should have the capacity to handle challenging environments and possess situational flexibility when it comes to mission readiness.

***Thesis Statement and Structure***

In this Capstone Project, the researcher argues that a lack of cultural awareness in the military creates a division between leaders and followers in the Marine Corps. The analysis begins with a literature review on the impact of cultural awareness on organizational leadership, especially related to the military (Chapter 2). Next, an analysis and summary of the research is contextualized from within a Christian worldview perspective (Chapter 3). Based on the analysis, the researcher interprets the research and provides conclusions (Chapter 4). Finally, the study will end with recommendations that can work toward lessening the problem and ideas for future research (Chapter 5).

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This literature review covers the impact of cultural awareness in organizational leadership, with a particular focus on leadership in the military. The researcher found sources for the review using Google Scholar, ProQuest, and JSTOR. The sources used are all within the last five years (2017-2023). The theme covered in the literature review include the benefits of cultural awareness on organizational leadership and organizational performance in the Marine Corps. The final part of the review identifies gaps in the research literature.

**Cultural Awareness in Organizational Leadership**

This section focuses on cultural awareness among organizational leadership. Cultural awareness is defined, and the benefits of increased cultural awareness for organizational leadership are described. A concluding summary frames the negative impacts of leaders' cultural incompetence on an organization.

***Definition of Cultural Awareness***

Cultural awareness is the understanding of and sensitivity to the differences and similarities between groups of people from different cultures. It is the recognition that just because one person's culture is different from another person’s does not necessarily mean that they are bad (Swartz et al., 2019). Cultural awareness gives individuals the tools to use experiential, academic, and interpersonal skills to understand and appreciate others. Cultural awareness is critical to building positive personal and working relationships.

**Increased Cultural Awareness Leads to Better Communication**

Cross-cultural sensitivity is the product of cultural awareness through understanding and accepting different cultural identities (Liu et al., 2021; Chated et al., 2020). Cross-cultural sensitivity is the key to navigating the increasing workplace diversity. Recognizing other cultures' strengths, weaknesses, biases, cultural roles, and worldviews builds cultural bridges that improve employee relationships. Cultural sensitivity improves dialogue and relationships because it fosters caring (Maryati et al., 2020). Communication is a critical part of effective leadership. Leaders' ability to be empathetic breaks down barriers and promotes a positive working environment. Empathy and understanding are critical components of an effective communication style (Guerrero et al., 2017).

Cultural awareness includes the ideas of self-examination, acquiring increased cultural knowledge, expanding interpretive skills and abilities, exposure to different backgrounds, which will improve cultural encounters, self-learning motivation, and the capacity to function effectively in a diverse work setting which will improve the relationships with colleagues (Kratzke & Bertolo, 2013). Understanding gained from defining cultural awareness is critical in furthering and deepening strong personal bonds (Guerrero et al., 2017; Liu et al., 2021). Strong deep bonds between colleagues will determine how much investments are placed in the organization.

**Benefits of Increased Cultural Awareness in Organizational Leadership**

***Cultural Awareness Training is necessary for a better understanding of differences***

Cultural awareness training is a tool necessary to expand the understanding of differences within the workforce. Understanding allows leadership to be empathetic to diverse points of view. Differences should not be viewed as a disadvantage but rather an opportunity to approach situations in a different light. A lack of cultural awareness promotes misunderstandings and negatively affects communication.and leads to decisions triggered by quick judgments, assessments, and stereotypes without merit. Bad decisions will doom organizational chances of success due to miscommunication and misdirection. The development of cultural diversity in leadership improves organizational chances of success (Raewf & Mahmood, 2021).

Cultural diversity, the existence of different cultures throughout society, is advantageous. Diversity provides a platform for various perspectives that contribute to problem-solving. It is advantageous to have people from multiple ways of life with codes of religion, languages, rituals, and more to solve critical problems. Cultural diversity in leadership gives way to a non-traditional way of prioritizing goals and expectations (Adam & Harika, 2017). The development of cultural diversity in leadership improves innovation and fosters respect. Diversity in leadership enables members to appreciate differences among other members (Raewf & Mahmood, 2021; Adam & Harika, 2017).

According to Liu et al. (2021), an ecological system must produce a developmental cultural workforce to enhance employers' development. Leadership highlights acceptance when different ideas are welcomed and not dismissed because of non-traditional approaches. Organizations believe that when leaders prioritize the workers, it also makes the organization more valuable. Cultural awareness is important in promoting cultural diversity in leadership (Liu et al., 2021; Gopalkrishnan, 2018; Maryati et al., 2020). Promoting cultural diversity in leadership embodies acceptance and good faith, and acceptance in an organization cultivates a culture of loyalty. Having culturally sensitive leaders positively influences employees' performances (Maryati et al., 2020).

***Cultural Awareness Improves Cohesiveness in the Organization.***

Barakaat et al. (2019) suggest that culturally sensitive leaders produce a cohesive environment. Cultural diversity in leadership enhances employees' buy-in and promotes trust. Employees' buy-in and trust allow leadership the ability to make necessary changes without backlash from subordinates. Also, a strong foundation in cultural awareness improves leadership (Barakat et al., 2019). It is essential for management and leadership to understand the challenges of having workers from different backgrounds and possessing different expectations. Cultural awareness addresses issues that improve leadership styles which will help successfully achieve organizational objectives (Bhatti et al., 2019; Borrego & Johnson, 2017). Putting a value on the workforce improves morale and loyalty because they feel appreciated. A diverse workforce offers a valuable commodity of different points of view in overcoming obstacles. More ways of solving problems allow for a more successful outcome. Organizations that impose higher values on diversity are more successful (Ng & Sears, 2020).

A talented workforce is not merely attracted to financial gains but a healthy and positive work environment. Institutions that successfully mitigate bias and achieve greater levels of equity experience growth (Swartz et al., 2019). Organizations that offer their employees respect and equity are more likely to have successful talent recruitment. Innovative work behavior that helps achieve competitive advantage stems from cultural awareness in the workplace (Swartz et al., 2019; Suprapti et al., 2020). Cultural intelligence bridges the gap between the connection with productivity in terms of culture, age, race, and ethnicity (Tamunomiebi & John-Eke, 2020).

Cultural awareness broadens cultural intelligence. It allows for a better understanding of cultural norms and standards. Cultural intelligence is defined and contextualized in several informative but related ways. According to Ang et al. (2020), cultural intelligence is people's capability to relate to and work effectively with others. Cultural awareness amplifies cultural intelligence by highlighting people's differences as an asset. Cultural awareness is the foundation of cultural intelligence. Without cultural awareness, one cannot be culturally intelligent. The ability to recognize shortcomings and inequities is the product of understanding your audience. Cultural Intelligence enhances the knowledge and perspectives of organizations (Yadav & Lenka, 2020). The ability to invest resources where needed gives the organization an edge.

**Negative Effects of a Lack of Cultural Awareness in Organizational Leadership**

***Inadequacy in Cultural Awareness Leads to Poor Performance***

According to Mehng et al. (2019), the consequence of leadership's lack of cultural awareness is poor performance amongst its workers. It negatively impacts the work environment, productivity, and the motivation of workers to perform their best. When workers' needs are constantly neglected, it will negatively impact the production and quality of the product because unhappy employees are less productive (Haque, 2021). Leadership's lack of cultural awareness negatively impacts morale, and employees' perception of not being a priority reduces their desire to excel.

***Leaders' Inadequacy in Cultural Intelligence Diminishes Morale.***

Disloyalty and poor work performance are all attributed to poor morale. Cultural awareness is a positive resource but can have adverse outcomes if not utilized. A lack of cultural intelligence negatively affects morale and hinders positive organizational growth (Swartz et al., 2019; Tamunomiebi & John-Eke, 2020; Vito & Sethi, 2020; Yadav & Lenka, 2020). The ideal work environment is inviting and projects a work-life balance. It is a safe space where workers feel respected and allowed to be vocal regarding improving work conditions. The inability to create a desirable environment for shareholders can negatively affect performance and quality outcomes.

***Inadequacy in Cultural Awareness Lowers Recruitment and Retention***

Inadequacy in cultural awareness adversely impacts recruitment and employee retention (Clark & Polesello, 2017; Haque, 2021; Hutt & Gopalakrishnan, 2020; Swartz et al., 2019). Organizations with adequate cultural intelligence have better employee-management relationships and employee retention (Haque, 2021). Cultural awareness positively impacts the workforce environment and increases morale (Hutt & Gopalakrishnan, 2020). Ensuring that leaders are well-equipped to handle multicultural/diverse followers is an investment worth pursuing, for it solidifies the organization's retention strategy. Leaders should foster cultural awareness in organizations because it develops employee cohesiveness, morale, and retention (Haque, 2021; Hutt & Gopalakrishnan, 2020).

***Lack of Cultural Awareness Hinders Organizational Progress***

Leadership's lack of cultural awareness makes it difficult to maneuver and adapt to changes. The resource of having diverse perspectives on problem-solving will allow for a greater chance of success. Implementing cultural awareness education is necessary for organizations to flourish and sustain growth (Madden-Dent, 2021; Raewf & Mahmood, 2021). Leadership sets a positive culture that directly affects the well-being of their subordinates by ensuring that they are seen as a priority. Insufficient training in Cultural awareness negatively affects leaders' ability to lead efficiently (Lisak & Harush, 2021). Educating leadership in cultural awareness will ensure the workforce remains productive because their needs are being heard and understood. Diversity and cultural sensitivity are related to the organization's future success (Raewf & Mahmood 2021). Cultural awareness in leadership allows for a better understanding of those being led. Increasing cultural awareness in the workplace will decrease unconscious bias, promote inclusiveness, and boost morale. Education is the key component in solidifying the monumental impact that cultural awareness brings to the workforce.

***Insufficient Education in Cultural Awareness May Increase Discriminatory Behavior****.*

Discriminatory behavior occurs when an individual or group of people are mistreated because of origin, gender, religious belief, and sexual orientation. Biases increase due to the lack of cultural awareness education among workers with different cultures and ethnic origins (Brolis et al., 2018; Sprouse, 2021). The lack of cultural awareness results in misunderstandings which leads to a lack of empathy. Education in cultural awareness provides a point of reference for understanding and empathy amongst shareholders (Chated et al., 2020). The organization is stronger when there is empathy and unity. Empathy and cultural sensitivity minimize discriminatory behaviors amongst workers and leaders (Sprouse, 2021; Tamunomiebi & John-Eke, 2020; Maryati et al., 2020).

**Cultural Awareness in Military (Marine) Leadership**

***The Organizational Culture of the Marine Corps.***

The Marine Corps culture is unique; it weighs heavily on tradition and the ability to adapt and overcome (Taaffe, 2021). The hierarchy of ranks is identical to the other branches, but the structure is defined differently. The Marine unit's "backbone" is the core of leadership. The enlisted Marines are the "backbone" carrying out responsibilities aligned with their Military Occupation Specialty (MOS) and ranks. A tradition of loyalty and servitude binds the Corps. The Marines pride themselves on being an elite group of service members that accomplish more with less. Missions are carried out almost unquestioned. The Marine Corps values stability and control so much that it is virtually incapable of allowing real innovation (Pollman, 2018). Marines are hardwired to follow and serve without question.

**The Need for Increased Cultural Awareness in Marine Leadership**

The Marine Corps is reevaluating and restructuring its stance on cultural awareness (Mitchell & Reese, 2022). The Marine Corps leadership recognizes the need to understand and adapt to cultural norms during mission assignments. A better understanding of mission requirements allows for a higher rate of success. Training objectives for the military focus on understanding cultural dynamics, self-awareness, self-management, and communicating effectively with the local population. The cultural dynamics objective gives service members an understanding of how information is effectively relayed and how it is received. Cultural understanding allows for not only empathy but patience. The self-awareness objective reflects how people interpret others' differences and perspectives. The generational gap in the Marine Corps manifests in the generations' expectations and how they perceive the institution (Tashev & Fosher, 2020). Better interpretation management will result in effective communication (Abbe, 2021).

***Reducing Friction within Ranks***

Cultural awareness in leadership roles enables followers to trust and eliminates pushbacks regarding mission objectives. Cultural awareness can reduce friction within the ranks (Davina et al., 2020; Lisak & Harush, 2021; Ng & Sears, 2020). Friction within the ranks happens when leaders' expectations are not aligned with what they represent. Respect develops in any environment by reciprocation, which means it should first be shown. Cultural awareness allows for mutual respect by putting effort into understanding others' points of view. It gives leadership empathy on how directives are being received and how they can be best served. Leaders that possess cultural awareness are more respected because of their ability to connect with those they lead (Lisak & Harush, 2021). The leaders' ability to understand and display sensitivity to the differences in subordinates' backgrounds allows for trust development. The connection developed due to trust and transparency between leaders and followers empowers mission effectiveness (Lisak & Harush, 2021).

***Increasing Cohesiveness in Military Communities***

Cultural awareness increases cohesiveness in the military community by making service members and their families a priority (Barakat et al., 2019; Borrego & Johnson, 2017; Brolis et al., 2018; [Clark](https://www.emerald.com/insight/search?q=Jeremy%20Michael%20Clark) & [Polesello,](https://www.emerald.com/insight/search?q=Daiane%20Polesello) 2017). Cohesiveness in the military communities is attributed to leaders understanding the needs of those they lead by possessing cultural awareness. Acceptance and inclusiveness greatly contribute to cohesiveness. Cultural awareness in the ranks embodies acceptance and inclusiveness (Borrego & Johnson, 2017; Brolis et al., 2018). The promotion of cultural awareness in the organization shows caring and support. Cultural awareness is a critical tool in managing a diverse workforce to attain unity (Barakat et al., 2019; Borrego & Johnson, 2017).

***Promoting Mission Effectiveness***

Cultural awareness promotes mission effectiveness by having the insight necessary to communicate better and understand the intent of the local population. It is also critical for the Marines to engage properly and not provoke unnecessary aggression. Cultural awareness is instrumental in promoting peaceful interactions to ensure Marines' safety and reduce casualties. Cultural awareness in leadership promotes mission effectiveness by knowing what is needed, showing respect, and giving undivided support (Galbraith, 2017; Gopalkrishnan, 2018). Diversity needs to be nurtured for subordinates to feel cared for and valued. Subordinates' performances improve when leadership shows undivided support and understanding (Gopalkrishnan, 2018). Inclusion is a high priority in the implementation of cultural awareness. As such, this inclusion empowers leaders to accomplish mission effectiveness because the troops are made to feel important and valued even though they come from diverse backgrounds.

Marine Corps missions are challenging, and the bond that holds the Marines together will be critical to mission success. The Marine Corps community will benefit from cultural awareness because of its diverse population. Lacking cultural awareness will hinder communication channels. Leaders who understand the situational needs of their followers positively impact mission readiness. Cultural awareness training reduces unconscious bias (Getha-Taylor et al., 2020; Gopalkrishnan, 2018; Hughes, 2018). Unconscious bias exists in organizations' environments because of the lack of cultural awareness education. Although there is little question that the military represents a crucial population for which intercultural training is directly applicable, it can be difficult to prescribe a "one size fits all" approach. Cultural awareness is necessary to establish respect and build trust (Hughes, 2018). Creating a supportive dialogue that values employees develops a culture of inclusion. Organizations' effort to be inclusive, respectful, understanding, and show interest in their employees' diverse cultures decreases bias incidence (Getha-Taylor et al., 2020; Gopalkrishnan, 2018; Hughes, 2018).

**Cultural Awareness Education**

***Cultural Awareness Education Benefits Leaders' Mission Success***

The wide range of missions across the U.S. military, the hierarchical structure, and the variety of military occupation specialties mandate a broad, multicultural approach to intercultural training. Cultural Awareness training prepares leaders to efficiently lead a diverse workforce (Barakat et al., 2019). Cultural awareness improves work relationships and strengthens bonds between leadership and Marines. Education in cultural awareness is critical to establishing positive work relationships (Wieczorek-Szymańska, 2017). Positive interactions in the unit promote the psychological wellbeing of the troops, which will keep them focused on the mission at hand. Cultural awareness empowers the ability of the organization to adapt to situational needs (Wieczorek-Szymańska, 2017). A united front is a strong front, a no man left behind attitude. Cultural Awareness Education strengthens organizational unity, which is critical to successfully meeting objectives ([Bhatti et al.,](https://www.emerald.com/insight/search?q=Muhammad%20Awais%20Bhatti) 2019). Marines during mission deployment may suffer from isolation, depression, and loneliness. The wellbeing of Marines is vital because, without it, the ability to cope diminishes, the ability to be creative, think outside the box, and focus on objective becomes limited. Cohesiveness is instrumental in keeping the unit intact and alignment with leadership. Work relationships are impacted by cultural awareness, allowing sensitivity, acceptance, and empathy to develop (Raewf & Mahmood, 2021; Tamunomiebi et al., 2020).

***Cultural Awareness Training is Necessary for Organizational Success***

The continuation of the military might of the Marine Corps depends upon the successful implementation of cultural awareness in the training of its leaders. Cultural awareness training is needed for the organization to properly groom employees to reach their peak potential and be future leaders ([Bhatti et al.,](https://www.emerald.com/insight/search?q=Muhammad%20Awais%20Bhatti) 2019; [Madden-Dent,](https://www.emerald.com/insight/search?q=Tara%20Madden-Dent) 2021; Suprapti et al., 2020). Cultural awareness training is necessary for organizational success (Barakat et al., 2019; [Bhatti et al.,](https://www.emerald.com/insight/search?q=Muhammad%20Awais%20Bhatti) 2019; [Madden-Dent,](https://www.emerald.com/insight/search?q=Tara%20Madden-Dent) 2021; Suprapti et al., 2020). It is important to have loyalty in the Marine Corps and preserve integrity. Leaders can maintain the culture of honor and integrity by passing the torch to the next generation of leaders. It is of utmost importance to have the values consistently aligned with the organization's mission and projection.

***Cultural Awareness Education Promotes Unity***

Cultural awareness education strengthens organizational unity, which is critical to successfully meeting objectives ([Bhatti et al.,](https://www.emerald.com/insight/search?q=Muhammad%20Awais%20Bhatti) 2019). Unity gives individuals strength and courage to withstand adversities. It allows individuals to go beyond what they can achieve by themselves. Cultural awareness training is needed for the organization to properly groom employees to reach their peak potential and be future leaders ([Bhatti et al.,](https://www.emerald.com/insight/search?q=Muhammad%20Awais%20Bhatti) 2019; [Madden-Dent,](https://www.emerald.com/insight/search?q=Tara%20Madden-Dent) 2021; Suprapti et al., 2020). To ensure the organization's success, long-term, proper investment in leadership is crucial. Education plays an integral part in the preservation of values and culture. Cultural awareness training prepares leaders to efficiently lead a diverse workforce (Barakat et al., 2019). Unity makes it easier to maintain objectives and targets easier to achieve. The mandatory inclusion of cultural awareness training helps eliminate the cultural barriers that hinder employees' performance and growth ([Madden-Dent,](https://www.emerald.com/insight/search?q=Tara%20Madden-Dent) 2021; Suprapti et al., 2020). When barriers are reduced, unity is easier to accomplish. People with common goals and who view their peers as equal make the challenges of cooperation and unity doable.

**Mentorship in the Marine Corps**

The Marine Corps is beginning to implement a leadership series that will focus on talent management. The program is focused on effectively engaging young Marines by addressing subject matters that are most important to them. The Marine Corps is formulating a teaching platform that will be readily available. Within this initiative, a mentorship program will be highlighted. This mentorship program accounts for an individual's skill set, knowledge, attributes, and behavior (Mitchell & Reese, 2022). The program will address cultural awareness based on ethnicity and generational culture. The program will identify cultural awareness as a factor that may reduce insubordination within the ranks. Insubordination in the Marine Corps is rarely discussed because it directly impacts the Corps' structural integrity. When insubordination occurs, punishment is swift for the offenders; but discussions are often ignored. There is limited data about insubordination and how leadership can mitigate it. Cultural awareness may positively

impact morale and reduce suicide rates. There is a correlation between improved morale and the number of suicides in the Marine Corps (Allard, 2022).

**Gaps in Knowledge.**

***Long-term Effects of Cultural Awareness* *Training***

The long-term benefits of cultural awareness in military missions are usually left unexplored because it ends as the mission reaches its maturity. An example of the knowledge gap regarding the impact of cultural awareness on mission implementation is the war in Afghanistan. The long-term benefits of cultural awareness during the Afghanistan mission will not be realized because the mission has concluded and involvement stopped.

***Tools Used to Effectively Teach and Impact Cultural Awareness in the Military***

The Marine Corps is in the works of implementing a leadership series that will focus on talent management. The talent management leadership mentioned above focuses on cultural awareness from an ethnic perspective. The focus of the program is to treat cultural awareness from a generational perspective. There are differences in perception between younger and older marines regarding mission interpretation, combat deployment, and leadership. The training is one of only a few tools that are now being used. The younger Marines require more guidance versus just following orders (Mitchell & Reese, 2022).

***Cultural Awareness Training Impacts Reduction of Insubordination within the Military***

As mentioned above, The Marine Corps does not discuss insubordination in the ranks, and the leadership sweeps it under the rug when it happens and administers punishment. There is limited data about subordination and how it could be mitigated by better leadership practices, including cultural awareness. Mitchell and Reese (2022) argued that leadership integrity may promote adherence and respect in the ranks.  For example, Lane et al. (2020) found that the mentorship between Non-Commissioned Officers and their Junior Marines eliminated friction and helped establish positive rapport.

***Cultural Awareness' Correlation with Suicide Rates***

Cultural awareness in the military positively impacts morale and reduces suicide rates. Junior Marines are vulnerable to loneliness, isolation, and depression. Most Marines are away from home for the first time. Coping with a new environment and high expectations from their Commanding Officers elevate stress. Marines are in desperate need of guidance as well as mentorship. The prevention of suicide rates in the Marine Corps is taken very seriously. Numerous avenues are available for service members to reach out and seek assistance. There is a correlation between cultural awareness, morale, and reduced suicide rates in the Marine Corps (Allard, 2022). Increases in funding for suicide research, treatment, and interventions are the Department of Defense's initiative to combat the increased suicide rates. Leadership awareness in the subject matter is of utmost importance. The Department of Defense's initiative to reduce suicide rates may only be effective if its programs are implemented and accepted by Marine Corps leadership.

CHAPTER 3: SUMMARY OF RESEARCH AND CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW

Analysis

This chapter summarizes the research findings in the literature review and analyzes the findings from a Christian worldview. Cultural awareness is necessary for cohesiveness amongst personnel and organizations. This section will highlight its significance in Christian teachings, perspective, and implementing the salient features of cultural awareness.

**Summary of Research**

Cultural awareness training enables all cultures, languages, and ethnicities to merge harmoniously. Being accepting and empathetic is critical in successfully promoting organizational unity, and it allows leadership to navigate around subordinates' differences. As seen in the literature review, the research will shed light on the importance of acceptance, empathy, understanding, and seeing people's commonality through their differences.

***Cultural diversity in leadership***

Diversity in leadership in the Marine Corps allows for a better representation of those being led and served. It allows for a better understanding of needs. The development of cultural diversity in leadership improves organizational chances of success (Raewf & Mahmood, 2021). Cultural diversity in Marine Corps leadership creates an even playing field and gives representation and importance to cultural differences.

***Inadequacy in cultural awareness leads to poor performance.***

The lack of cultural awareness in the workplace negatively impacts productivity and performance. When workers feel that leadership is not concerned with their needs, their motivation diminishes. The lack of cultural awareness leads to diminished employee performance (Mehng et al., 2019). Prioritizing and putting a value on the workforce improve work quality and morale. Organizations with higher values in diversity are more successful than others (Ng & Sears, 2020). Workers must be recognized, respected, and valued to achieve their full potential.

***Cultural awareness improves cohesiveness in the organization.***

Cultural awareness improves the quality of work, organizational cohesiveness, and overall morale. Culturally sensitive leaders produce a cohesive environment (Barakat et al., 2019). Cultural diversity in leadership ensures representation and the perception of equal opportunities. Cultural awareness addresses issues that improve leadership styles which will help achieve organizational objectives (Bhatti et al., 2019; Borrego & Johnson, 2017). The negative impacts of cultural incompetence on organizational leadership hinder growth. The ability of the Marine Corps' leadership to understand and provide for their Marines allows for better talent retention.

**Christian Worldview Analysis**

**Cultural Awareness, Discriminatory Behavior, and the Imago Dei**

The literature showed that discrimination in the workplace negatively impacts opportunities for those affected. Discriminatory behavior may increase due to the lack of cultural awareness education among workers with different cultures and ethnic origins (Brolis et al., 2018; Sprouse, 2021). Discriminatory behaviors exist because lack of understanding and empathy for those who are different. Empathy and cultural sensitivity minimize discriminatory behaviors amongst workers and leaders (Sprouse, 2021; Tamunomiebi & John-Eke, 2020; Maryati et al., 2020). Equity will not happen when the workforce is not on an even playing field resulting in an unhappy and disloyal workforce. According to the apostle Peter, God shows no partiality (English Standard Version, Acts 10:34). In God’s eyes everybody is on an even plain and should be treated with respect. In reference to Genesis 1:27, it is explained that humans are created in God’s image. This signifies the symbolic connection between God and humanity; humans are in the image of God with in their intellectual, spiritual and moral quintessence. According to Acts 10:28, Peter declares that “it is unlawful for a Jew to cling to or approach anyone of another nation, but God has shown me that I should not call any person common or unclean.” (Schaser, 2018).

***Lack of Cultural Awareness and Christian Love***

A lack of cultural awareness in leadership negatively impacts organizational growth. For instance, a lack of understanding can lead to an unconscious bias, with leadership favoring those with whom there is a connection. Unconscious bias causes leaders to disregard subordinates' cultural differences and, instead, try to create subordinates who are versions of themselves. The unconscious bias contrasts with the idea that people from all cultures are created in the image of God. God intended for people from all nations to be part of his holy people. It is said that 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." (English Standard Version, Mark 12:31).  Cultural and professional awareness creates culturally congruent care. Biblical teachings remind us to love one another. The Christian view of caring, theoretical and ethical underpinnings of cultural care, and the organizational and legal aspects of doing what is right (Gunn et al., 2019). He always wanted the nations to be His. If God desires his people to consist of people from every cultural background, those who lead people need to be cognizant of the differences between cultures. Biblical teachings remind us to love one another; laws require culturally appropriate care, and nursing theory lays the path to understanding (Gunn et al., 2019). When this does not happen, it goes against God's original design; thus, the negative consequences make sense.

***Pauline Argument for Leaders Developing Cultural Awareness Skills***

Developing increased cultural awareness is consistent with the Christian worldview. The Apostle Paul taught that in the life of salvation, "it doesn't matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, civilized, slave, or free. Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us." (New International Version, 1973, Col. 3:11). From this passage, readers can infer that all nationalities are equal in the eyes of the Lord. From this passage, Balabanski (2018) argued that God sees all people as equal regardless of race, background, or gender. But this equality does not mean that people of different ethnic backgrounds must lose their ethnic distinctiveness (cf. Acts 15:6-11). God desires for people from every ethnic background to be a part of his holy people (Rev. 7:9). Tolerance and embracing others' differences bring people closer together as believers. Leaders, in turn, should be willing to sacrifice their personal

preferences to be sensitive to their subordinates' cultural distinctiveness (cf. Phil. 2:3).

Cultural awareness in the workplace places value and priority on those being led. Cultural awareness in the workplace allows for acceptance and empathy, resulting in unity. A united front allows organizations to withstand, have the flexibility to adapt, and have higher chances of surviving obstacles (Barakat et al., 2019). The best biblical example of cultural awareness in leadership is the Apostle Paul, who stated:

To the Jews I became like the Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law, I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. (New International Version, 2012, 1 Cor. 9:20-22).

The Apostle Paul, who was Jewish, became culturally aware of the Gentiles to whom he was ministering. Because of Paul’s awareness, he effectively communicated the gospel to them in a way they understood (cf. Acts 17:16-34). The message is explained in a way that will be align to what people can relate to and understand (Lubardić, 2019). The Pauline Epistle provides support; from a Christian worldview; for leaders increasing cultural awareness.

***Increased Cultural Awareness, Servant Leadership, and Kenosis***

The literature showed that cultural awareness in the Marine Corps is important for developing cohesiveness among leaders and followers. When leaders put serving their followers according to their cultural needs, ahead of their own priorities, it establishes trust and commitment to mission success among the followers. The trust and commitment created by the increased cultural awareness allows leaders and followers from different backgrounds to operate as a functioning whole. A united front strengthens the Marine Corps, increases mission effectiveness, and leads to the desired outcome (Tashev & Fosher, 2020).

Leaders increasing their cultural awareness fits well within a servant leadership style framework. Servant leadership was defined as a holistic leadership approach that engages followers in multiple dimensions (e.g., relational, ethical, emotional, spiritual), such that they are empowered to grow into what they are capable of becoming (Eva et al., 2019). Becoming culturally aware of their followers is a way for servant leaders in the Marines to prioritize the well-being of their followers because it allows for mutual understanding and recognition of situational needs. Prioritizing follower well-being fits within the Christian worldview in the concept of kenosis. This concept is found in Paul’s letter to the Philippians 2:3 – 4, in which Paul encourages his followers to look out for the interests of others in the same way that Jesus did. Even though Jesus was equal to God, he prioritized the well-being of his followers over his own life and needs, dying on the cross for them. In the same way, leaders should prioritize followers’ needs over their own. Leaders should not discount others’ perspectives and the possibilities they bring to the organization (Nyland, 2021). Kenotic, servant leadership, which includes cultural awareness, will support followers’ success and greater cohesiveness in the Marines.

***Diversity in Leadership and the Early Church***

Increased cultural awareness develops cultural diversity in leadership. Diversity in Marine Corps' leadership positions allows for a different problem-solving perspective. This is consistent with a Christian worldview because God utilized a diverse group of people to pass on his teaching. According to Ephesians 4:11-14:

Paul stated that the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers are; to equip the saints for the work ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and from by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.

Diversity in Marine Corps leadership opens opportunities to better understand and represent subordinates. Mentorship is to create a positive impactful teaching which does not only dictate but lead by example (Eva et al., 2019).

***Cultural Awareness Reduces Friction***

The ability to understand the diverse cultural landscape of the Marine Corps allows for the reduction of friction within the ranks. The lack of understanding negatively impacts communication, trust, and respect within the unit. Authentic leadership comes with putting the needs of those they lead first. Trust is earned through empathy.

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day drawing near. (English Standard Version, Hebrews 10:24-25).

Leaders’ ability to lead in accordance to prioritizing the needs of those being led, motivating through example, and having the followers’ best interest develop trust. A well-structured leadership model preserves the integrity of the Marine Corps.

***Cultural Awareness and Leader Learning***

There are numerous reasons why cultural awareness is critical to mission effectiveness. Marines may experience dissonance when faced with something with which they are unfamiliar. The goal is to expose and educate service members to equip them better to do the assigned mission. The better the conditioning, the better adept the Marines become. To properly maneuver through obstacles, one must be open to learning.

To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding; to receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity; to give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion.  A wise man will hear and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels. (King James Version, Proverbs 1:5)

Seeking counsel to increase knowledge was described one of the six important aspects of biblical wisdom (Backfish, 2019). Leaders should communicate and seek as much information necessary to make sound decisions. It is in the best interest of leaders to recognize the strengths and talents within those being led. A wise leader will seek to consult and not blindly make decisions. Situational adaptability is the keen sense to recognize what is necessary, the ability to gather valuable information by consulting those involved, and the acceptance of different options in problem-solving. Situational adaptability is a valuable part of mission effectiveness.

***Cultural Awareness is Necessary for Cultural Intelligence***

Leadership preparation is essential to Marine Corps' integrity and cultural preservation. Cultural awareness is needed to be culturally intelligent; it is crucial in properly preparing future leaders. For the Marine Corps to effectively address its force's needs, it must first understand the population it serves. Having an understanding of those being served is consistent with a Christian worldview. For example, the Apostle John stated that the most honorable quality of a leader, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." (English Standard Version, 2016, John 10:11). The willingness of leaders to sacrifice magnifies their influence and impacts those they lead to do the same. Inadequacy in cultural awareness leads to poor performance. It can also result in poor decision-making and negatively affect mission success. The relationship between the Marine Corps hierarchy and its infantry is critical to a smooth transition when obstacles are present. Trusting leaders' decisions may determine whether the assignment is successful or otherwise. Cultural awareness in leadership wil help gain trust and cooperation. The Apostle Peter explained that leaders should not be domineering over subordinates but be an example to the flock. (English Standard Version, 2016, 1 Peter 5:3). Marines follow those who try to understand and have their best interest at heart. Following directives is mission essential and critical for preventing loss of lives.

***The lack of Cultural Awareness Negatively Affects Success***

Insufficient education in cultural awareness hinders organizational progress. Leaders' influence over those they lead significantly affects how subordinates view and handle situations. They set the example and create a culture within a culture. Marine leaders set the tone for their units. Education and training shape how leadership will evolve and develop. The Apostle Paul argued that all scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work. (English Standard Version, 2 Timothy 2:2). It is essential to pass down training and equip those being led with the knowledge necessary to succeed. Leadership's success depends on getting the tools necessary to foresee the mission and troops' requirements to do the best job possible. Cohesiveness and cooperation are essential for the Marine Corps to improvise, overcome, and adapt. Unity is achieved when a clear message is employed, harmony is employed, and the unit believes in its mission. Cultural awareness plays a pivotal role in gaining harmony. Harmony is achieved by noticing the little things that matter, being aware of things that offend, and connecting with others positively. The Apostle Peter communicated that his followers should be united in spirit "Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble." (New International Version, 2012, 1 Peter 3:8). Unity allows Marines to feel strong, survive obstacles and the feeling of security that they can rely on other Marines (Pollman, 2018).

***Leadership needs cultural awareness to be inclusive***

Cultural awareness recognizes that others' perspectives should not be dismissed but celebrated. We are one people in God's eyes, "For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord to all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him." (English Standard Version, Romans 10:121). Respecting everybody's views will give us the gift of an unbiased perspective. Those with deeply held convictions desire work/career to mean something more than earning a paycheck or impressing colleagues. They want to pursue a life where the concerns of career and everyday life are interwoven through morality (Kim et al., 2012). The rewards of doing what is right supersedes physical wealth. This perspective is consistent with the Christian worldview, which argues that all humans are made in God's image and deserve equal standing (King James Version, Genesis 1:27). The Christian perspective of inclusiveness and acceptance is the needed ingredient in leadership evolution (Anderson et al., 2017). Cultural awareness education will directly impact Marine Corps' evolution of leadership. The Marine Corps’ vision is geared towards flexibility, focusing on talents, and abilities (Allard, 2022). To fully integrate unity and cohesiveness, it is of absolute importance to be adaptable and progressive. Cultural awareness education in emerging leaders is important for setting objectives and creating the landscape of how their Marines operate.

The Marine Corps' overall agenda is to create a progressive and inclusive Corps. Mission readiness is dependent upon getting Marines aligned with leadership. Cultural awareness in the Marine Corps leadership is critical in earning trust and getting support from those being led. Cultural awareness is also instrumental in meeting Marines' requirements to be flexible and complete missions.

**CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSIONS AND INTERPRETATION**

This chapter will make conclusions from the research and provide an interpretation that will describe the significance of the findings in bringing about constructive social change in the Marine Corps and society at large. It will provide the connection between how inclusiveness will strengthen organizational unity. This chapter will clarify how diversity positively affects the Marine Corps moving forward.

**Conclusions**

The Marine Corps is an institution full of rich traditions. They are the few, the proud, the Marines. They are unique from all the other branches of the military because they pride themselves on being able to do more with less. Marines are made up of a very diverse population; they come from all walks of life. The Marines comes from different ethnicity, religious backgrounds, social standings, and belief systems. Despite the Marines' differences, they are bound together by Marine Corps traditions and culture. The future of the Marine Corps rests upon its ability to adapt. The institution's diversity needs to be addressed, dissected, and used to impact the missions positively.

***Cultural Awareness in the Marine Corps***

The Marine Corps is made up of a very diverse group. Cultural awareness in the Marine Corps is critical in breaking down barriers caused by cultural differences. Culturally sensitive leaders produce unity and trust. Cultural diversity in the Marine Corps enhances Marines' loyalty and morale. Cultural awareness addresses issues that improve leadership styles, which will help achieve organizational objectives (Bhatti et al., 2019; Borrego & Johnson, 2017). Mission effectiveness depends upon leadership's ability to increase morale and keep a united front.

***Leadership Diversity***

It is important to have diversity in Marine Corps leadership because of representation. It is a catalyst that empowers and enables team members. Leadership diversity builds trust and warrants an enhanced ability to relate to subordinates. The development of cultural diversity in leadership improves innovation and fosters respect. Diversity in leadership enables members to appreciate differences among their members (Raewf & Mahmood, 2021; Adam & Harika, 2017) and allows for more inclusive decisions and problem-solving from multiple angles.

***Cultural Awareness Reduces Frictions***

Understanding the diverse cultural landscape of the Marine Corps allows for the reduction of friction within the ranks. Leadership empathy enables trust to develop. A strong foundation in cultural awareness improves leadership (Barakat et al., 2019). Culturally intelligent leader shapes how the Marine culture thinks and perceive missions. Well-respected leadership prevents subordination. A well-structured leadership model preserves the integrity of the Marine Corps.

**Interpretation**

Cultural awareness in the Marine Corps is not only needed but necessary. Cultural awareness is the ability to understand, be sensitive and acknowledge the needs of others. The effectiveness of cultural awareness to be impactful lies in leadership's ability to make it a priority and a valuable tool. It is essential to have direct and clear communication between leaders and followers. Direct and clear communication cannot be reached until cultural barriers are taken down. Leaders can remove these barriers by knowing the audience that one is serving. Prioritizing and meeting needs allows for trust to flourish.

***Developing Trust***

Trust is the foundation of a strong and united Marine Corps. Developing trust within ranks help reduce friction. Trust allows flexibility to adapt and maneuver when difficult obstacles arise during missions. There is a higher probability of mission success when Marines are united and willing to sacrifice for the objective. Marines tried to foster an environment that promotes unit cohesion and values individual contributions (Lane et al., 2020). When leaders display care and empathy, Marines follow.

***Fostering Talent Retention***

Turnover in organizations is not only costly but hinders organizational progress. Retaining a fully trained workforce is cost-effective and shows stability within the organization. Cultural awareness within the organization is effective in talent retention. Intercultural sensitivity and cultural competence are instrumental in improving retention and recruitment (Davina et al., 2020). An organization's ability to connect and understand the workforce's needs elevates morale.

Research has shown the adverse effects of a lack of cultural awareness and the benefits of increased cultural awareness. It has also shown that the Marine leadership wants to increase cultural awareness. An educational training program in cultural awareness is needed; this need is addressed in Chapter 5 recommendations). If the Marine Corps grows in cultural awareness, its organizational success will improve.

CHAPTER 5: RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In this chapter, the researcher will provide recommendations to address the challenges presented in the previous chapters and make suggestions for future research.

**Recommendations**

Several recommendations for improvement emerged from the capstone research. These recommendations include cultural awareness implementation, flexibility in teaching protocols and applications, military culture inclusiveness, and relevancy to the Marine mission.

***Continued Cultural Competence***

The research identified a lack of data regarding the effectiveness of the long-term benefits of cultural awareness during missions. Continued cultural awareness implementation and its benefits are left unexplored when missions conclude. The goal is to ensure that the needed resources are met to improve cultural awareness in the Marine Corps. Subsequent data collection will help justify how the project will be mission essential to future endeavors. Educating Marines and other military personnel to be culturally aware when embarking on foreign missions will not only save resources and time but also assist with effective communication and may save lives. Marine Corps Headquarters is rolling out a new emphasis on leadership development. Leadership focus is geared towards talent development and engagement. The leadership training series implemented in Marine Corps Air Station Miramar in August 2021 will be the training model used for a post-capstone research project. The training is designed to recognize the cultural requirements of the Marines and their civilian counterparts. The training is also designed to carry over to missions. Educating Marines on what to expect from foreign nationals when deployed will be essential to adaptation to the new surroundings. The faster the Marines get accustomed to the new culture, the less stress it will be for the unit. Knowing what to expect alleviates the nerves and allows for better decision-making.

***Flexibility in Teaching Protocols and Applications***

The research also discovered that the training tools used by the Marine Corps had not produced enough concrete evidence to stay relevant. The Marine Corps wants to be progressive but relies heavily on old traditions to change its foundational beliefs (Pollman, 2018). The inability to apply flexibility in leadership hinders progression. Change does not always equate to success but is necessary for adjustments. The recommendation is to apply protocols regarding adapting to changing times, culture, and age gaps in the Marine Corps.

The changing times in the Marine Corps include the use of social media, the Marines' attitude regarding how leadership should look like, and what mission readiness entails. The new generation of Marines brings additional dynamics to the military. Examples of generational differences are sensitivity to gender identification, mental health challenges, cancel culture and non-traditional views on morals and values.

***Military Culture is Moving in the Direction of Inclusiveness.***

The Department of Defense and the Marine Corps leadership focus on talent management in conjunction with its traditional training. The program is dedicated to addressing mentorship and effectively engaging young, uniformed service members. The mentorship emphasizes subject matters of most importance to the young Marines. The dilemma is providing a teaching platform that will be readily available for the Marine Corps.

The program will include cultural awareness education based on ethnicity and generational culture. For the program to be effective, it must show opportunities for promotional growth, leading by example, straightforward communication, showing that what they do makes a difference and that mistakes are an opportunity for improvements (Swartz et al., 2019). A mentorship program will be critical to improving and expanding on the natural abilities of mentees.

***Relevancy to Mission***

Cultural awareness in the Marine Corps should be relevant to the goals and focus on positive improvements. Cultural awareness implementation in Marine Corps leadership training will ensure that leaders understand the importance of adequately addressing the needs of their Marines and their families. Cultural aware leaders give them cultural intelligence to lead effectively and minimize unconscious bias. Leadership's ability to ensure that those they lead receive equity in the institution develops cohesiveness amongst shareholders (Ng et al., 2020). Cohesiveness will be the driving force to do better, and the flexibility to adjust when the mission hits obstacles.

**Suggestions for Future Research**

The suggestions for future research include how cultural incompetence impacts insubordination in the Marine Corps. More discussions are necessary to destigmatize why Marines are not following directives—bridging the gap between educating leaders and how the increased cultural awareness will affect how subordinates perceive authority. The research should also expand on how including leadership mentoring subordinates assists in mitigating insubordination. Further studies are needed on how increased cultural awareness education in the Marine Corps decreases friction within the ranks. A better understanding of different cultures and backgrounds improves effective communication by properly addressing concerns, issues, and necessities. The studies may include Marine units taking inventory of what is most important to sustaining positive morale. Marine Corps Headquarters will need leadership to take accountability for the disconnect between the ranks and have a contingency plan to correct the discrepancies.

WORKS CITED

Abbe, A. (2021). Evaluating military cross-cultural training programs. *Expeditions*

*with MCUP*, *2021*(1), 1-59.

Adam E., & Harika S. (2017) Workplace diversity and intercultural communication: A

phenomenological study.*Cogent Business & Management, 4(1)*, https://  
doi: [10.1080/23311975.2017.1408943](https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2017.1408943)

Allard, S. (2022). Cultural problems require cultural solutions: Partnership between

Anthropology and the US Marine Corps to prevent suicide. *Expeditions with MCUP*, *(*1), 1-43.

Anderson, T. J., Clark, W. M., & Naugle, D. K. (2017). *An Introduction to Christian*

*Worldview: Pursuing God's Perspective in a Pluralistic World*. InterVarsity Press.

Ang, S., Ng, K. Y., & Rockstuhl, T. (2020). Cultural intelligence. *The Cambridge*

*Handbook of Intelligence* (pp. 820–845). Cambridge University Press. [https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108770422.035](https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1017/9781108770422.035)

Backfish, E. H. (2019). Biblical wisdom as a model for Christian liberal arts

education. *Christian Higher Education*, *18*(5), 382-396.

Balabanski, V. (2018). "Neither Greek nor Jew… for Christ Is All and in All" (Col 3: 11-17), A Bible Study. *Receptive Ecumenism: Listening, Learning and Loving in the Way of Christ*, 5-14.

Barakat, M., Reames, E., & Kensler, L. A. (2019). Leadership preparation programs: Preparing culturally competent educational leaders. *Journal of Research on Leadership Education*, *14*(3), 212-235.

[Bhatti, M.A.](https://www.emerald.com/insight/search?q=Muhammad%20Awais%20Bhatti), [Alshagawi, M.](https://www.emerald.com/insight/search?q=Mohammed%20Alshagawi" \o "Mohammed Alshagawi), [Zakariya, A.](https://www.emerald.com/insight/search?q=Ahmad%20Zakariya), & [Juhari, A.S.](https://www.emerald.com/insight/search?q=Ariff%20Syah%20Juhari" \o "Ariff Syah Juhari) (2019) Do multicultural

faculty members perform well in higher educational institutions. Examining the roles of psychological diversity climate, HRM practices and personality traits. [*European Journal of Training and Development*](file:///C:\Users\mikerelucio\Documents\European%20Journal%20of%20Training%20and%20Development), *43*(1), 166-187. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EJTD-08-2018-0081>

Borrego, E., & Johnson, R. G. (2017). *Cultural competence for public managers: Managing diversity in today's world*. Routledge.

Bonsu, S., & Evans, T. (2018). Leadership style in a global economy: A focus on

cross- cultural and transformational leadership*. Journal of Marketing and Management*, *9 (2),* 37-52. https://gsmi-ijgb.com/wp-content/uploads/JMM-V9-N2-P04-Samuel-Bonsu-Global-Economy.pdf

Brolis O., Courtois M., Herman G., & Nyssens M. (2018) Do social enterprises

discriminate less than for-profit organizations? The influence of sector and diversity policies on managers' prejudice toward immigrants. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, *47(4),* 745-766. doi:[10.1177/0899764018758461](https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764018758461)

Chated, M., Wisetsri, W., & Charoensak P. (2020). Cross cultural and

diversity management in globalization. *Nimitmai Review Journal*, *3*(1), 1-7. <https://so04.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/nmrj/article/view/248710>

[Clark, J.M.](https://www.emerald.com/insight/search?q=Jeremy%20Michael%20Clark" \o "Jeremy Michael Clark), & [Polesello, D.](https://www.emerald.com/insight/search?q=Daiane%20Polesello) (2017), Emotional and cultural intelligence in diverse

workplaces: getting out of the box. [*Industrial and Commercial Training*](https://www.emerald.com/insight/publication/issn/0019-7858), 49, 337-349. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ICT-06-2017-0040>

Davina D., Cherrie J. Z. & Ramanie S. (2020) Examining the role of cultural exposure in

improving intercultural competence: implications for HRM practices in multicultural organizations. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management,* 31(11), 1359-1378. doi: [10.1080/09585192.2017.1406389](https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2017.1406389)

Eva, N., Robin, M., Sendjaya, S., Van Dierendonck, D., & Liden, R. C. (2019). Servant

leadership: A systematic review and call for future research. *The leadership quarterly*, *30*(1), 111-132.

Galbraith, K. B. (2017). Practitioner application: Blueprint for sustainable change in diversity management and cultural competence: Lessons from the national center for healthcare leadership diversity demonstration project. *Journal of Healthcare Management*, *62*(3), 183-185.

Getha-Taylor H., Holmes M. H., Moen J. R. (2020). Evidence-based interventions for cultural competency development within public institutions. *Administration & Society*, 52(1), 57-80. https://doi:[10.1177/0095399718764332](https://doi.org/10.1177/0095399718764332)

Gopalkrishnan N. (2018) Cultural diversity and mental health: Considerations for policy and practice. *Front. Public Health* 6:179, 1-7. https://doi: 10.3389/fpubh.2018.00179-

Guerrero, E. G., Fenwick, K., & Kong, Y. (2017). Advancing theory development: exploring the leadership–climate relationship as a mechanism of the implementation of cultural competence. *Implementation Science*, *12*(1), 1-12.

Gunn, J., Bydalek, K., Rikabi, G., Hammonds, L. S., Hebert, W., Hughes, C., & Lincoln, B. (2019). Offering culturally congruent Christian care. *Journal of Christian Nursing*, *36*(3), E43-E48.

Haque, M. J. (2021). Knowledge diversity and employee outcomes: Moderating role of

workforce diversity management. *International Journal of Knowledge-based Organizations (IJKBO), 11*(4), 25-43. <http://doi.org/10.4018/IJKBO.2021100102>

Hashmi, M., & Asaari, A.H., (2018). Impact of leadership styles on organizational

performance*. Journal of Human Resources Management Research, 2*, 1-10. https://ibimapublishing.com/uploads/articles/JHRMR/2018/687849/687849-1.pdf

Hughes C. (2018) Conclusion: Diversity intelligence as a core of diversity training and

leadership development. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 20(3), 370-378. doi:[10.1177/1523422318778025](https://doi.org/10.1177/1523422318778025)

[Hutt, C.](https://www.emerald.com/insight/search?q=Camille%20Hutt), & [Gopalakrishnan, S.](https://www.emerald.com/insight/search?q=Shanthi%20Gopalakrishnan) (2020). Leadership humility and managing a

multicultural workforce. [*South Asian Journal of Business Studies*](file:///C:\Users\mikerelucio\Documents\South%20Asian%20Journal%20of%20Business%20Studies), 9(2), 251-260. <https://doi.org/10.1108/SAJBS-08-2019-0147>

[Jin, M.](https://www.emerald.com/insight/search?q=Myung%20Jin), [Lee, J.](https://www.emerald.com/insight/search?q=Jaeyong%20Lee) & [Lee, M.](https://www.emerald.com/insight/search?q=MiYoung%20Lee) (2017), Does leadership matter in diversity management?

Assessing the relative impact of diversity policy and inclusive leadership in the public sector. [*Leadership & Organization Development Journal*](file:///C:\Users\mikerelucio\Documents\Leadership%20&%20Organization%20Development%20Journal), 38(2), 303-319. <https://doi.org/10.1108/LODJ-07-2015-0151>

Kim, D., McCalman, D., & Fisher, D. (2012). The sacred/secular divide and the Christian

worldview. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *109*(2), 203-208.

Kratzke, C., & Bertolo, M. (2013). Enhancing students' cultural competence using cross-

cultural experiential learning. *Journal of Cultural Diversity, 20*(30), 107-111

Lane, R., & Fosher, K. (2020). *Insights from the Marine Corps Organizational Culture*

*Research Project: Empathy in Leadership*. Translational Research Group Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning Marine Corps Univ Quantico.

Lisak A., & Harush R. (2021) Global and local identities on the balance scale: Predicting

transformational leadership and effectiveness in multicultural teams. *PLoS ONE* 16(7). <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0254656>

Liu, J., Gill, E., & Li, S. (2021). Revisiting cultural competence. *The clinical teacher*, *18*(2), 191-197.

Lubardić, B. (2019). Missiological Dimensions of Philosophy: St Paul, the Greek Philosophers and contact-point making (Acts 17: 16-34). *Philotheos*, *19*(1), 22-75.

[Madden-Dent, T.](https://www.emerald.com/insight/search?q=Tara%20Madden-Dent) (2021). Advancing equity through culturally responsive social- emotional education: Addressing international student integration. *Motivating the SEL Field Forward Through Equity*. Emerald Publishing Limited, Bingley,21, 159-176. <https://doi.org/10.1108/S0749-742320210000021012>

Maryati, E., Fitria, H., & Rohana, R. (2020). The influence of principal's leadership style and organizational culture on teacher's performance. *Journal of Social Work and Science Education*, *1*(2), 127-139. <https://doi.org/10.52690/jswse.v1i2.38>

[Mehng, S.A.](https://www.emerald.com/insight/search?q=Si%20Ahn%20Mehng), [Sung, S.H.](https://www.emerald.com/insight/search?q=Sang%20Hyeon%20Sung) & [Leslie, L.M.](https://www.emerald.com/insight/search?q=Lisa%20M.%20Leslie) (2019), "Does diversity management matter in

a traditionally homogeneous culture?", [*Equality, Diversity and Inclusion*](https://www.emerald.com/insight/publication/issn/2040-7149), 38(7), 743-762. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EDI-10-2017-0227>

Mitchell, B., & Reese, J. (2022). *Marine Corps Mentorship Program: The Effects of*

*Mentorship on Career Progression and Talent Management* (Doctoral dissertation, Acquisition Research Program).

Ng, E. S., & Sears, G.J. (2020) Walking the talk on diversity: CEO beliefs, moral values,

and the implementation of workplace diversity practices. *J Bus Ethics* 164**,**437–450. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-018-4051-7>

Nyland, A. L. (2021). *Kenotic Leadership: A Model for Clergy* (Doctoral dissertation,

Duke University).

Pollman, A. (2018). Framing Marine Corps culture. *Proceedings Magazine*, 2018-06.

Raewf, M., & Mahmood, Y. (2021). The cultural diversity in the workplace. *Cihan*

*University-Erbil Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, *5*(1), 1-6. <https://doi.org/10.24086/cuejhss.v5n1y2021.pp1-6>

Schaser, N. J. (2018). Unlawful for a Jew? Acts 10: 28 and the Lukan View of Jewish-

Gentile Relations. *Biblical Theology Bulletin*, *48*(4), 188-201

Sprouse, K. S. (2021), How generation Z influences multi-generational project team

dynamics and engagement Doctoral Dissertations and Projects. 3042. https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/doctoral/3042

Suprapti, S., Asbari, M., Cahyono, Y., & Mufid, A. (2020). Leadership

style, organizational culture, and innovative behavior on public health center performance during COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Industrial Engineering & Management Research*, *1*(2), 76-88. <https://doi.org/10.7777/jiemar.v1i2.42>

Swartz, T., Palermo, A., Masur, S., & Aberg, J. (2019). The science and value of

diversity: Closing the gaps in our understanding of inclusion and diversity. *The Journal of Infectious Diseases*, 220(2), S33–S41. <https://doi.org/10.1093/infdis/jiz174>

Taaffe, S. R. (2021). *Commanding the Pacific: Marine Corps Generals in World War II*.

Naval Institute Press.

Tashev, B., & Fosher, K. (2020). *Insights from the Marine Corps organizational culture*

*research project: Generational differences in the Marine Corps-exploring issues and frictions between older and younger marines*. Translational Research Group, Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning, Marine Corps Univ Quantico.

Tamunomiebi, M. D., & John-Eke, E. C. (2020). Workplace diversity: emerging issues

in contemporary reviews. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences,* 10(2), 255–265. doi:10.6007/IJARBSS/v10-i2/6926

[Vito, R.](https://www.emerald.com/insight/search?q=Rosemary%20Vito) & [Sethi, B.](https://www.emerald.com/insight/search?q=Bharati%20Sethi) (2020), Managing change: role of leadership and diversity

management. [*Journal of Organizational Change Management*](file:///C:\Users\mikerelucio\Documents\Journal%20of%20Organizational%20Change%20Management), 33(7), 1471-1483. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JOCM-04-2019-0116>

[Yadav, S.](https://www.emerald.com/insight/search?q=Shatrughan%20Yadav) & [Lenka, U.](https://www.emerald.com/insight/search?q=Usha%20Lenka" \o "Usha Lenka) (2020) Workforce diversity: from a literature review to future

research agenda. [*Journal of Indian Business Research*](file:///C:\Users\mikerelucio\Documents\Journal%20of%20Indian%20Business%20Research), 12(4), 577-603. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIBR-08-2019-0243>

Wieczorek-Szymańska, A. (2017). Organizational maturity in diversity

Management. *Journal of Corporate Responsibility and Leadership*, *4*(1), 79–91. <https://doi.org/10.12775/JCRL.2017.005>

CURRICULUM VITAE

Michael Relucio, MA, HHP, CSCS

9209 Midbury Court, San Diego CA 92126  
Cell: (858) 231-8723

Office: (858) 307-9143

Front Desk: (858) 307-6042  
Email: [reluciom@usmc-mccs.org](mailto:reluciom@usmc-mccs.org); mikerelucio@gmail.com

**Qualifications Summary**

• Provides assistance to the Fitness Director and Semperfit Director in all facets of daily operations.  
• Maintains and expands patronage of the Fitness Facility by assisting in the prompt handling of members and guests’ concerns and issues; fosters open communication with members and guests by remaining highly visible.   
• Assists Fitness Director in budget and expense management by utilizing labor scheduling tools to follow demand patterns; reviewing Accounts Payable, and general ledger. Assists with daily, weekly or monthly financial reports as requested; monitor inventory levels for merchandise, food and beverage.   
• Assists with performance development by conducting staff meetings; acting as a role model for all employees by demonstrating behavior and work ethic expected; ensuring standards by implementing all human resource policies and procedures.   
• Manages facility by working closely with Fitness Director, Semperfit Director, Base Commander and all other department heads to ensure compliance with Regulations.  
• Protects the integrity of the organization and the safety of members, guests and employees by following safety guidelines, conducting regular safety meetings, monitoring cash handling procedures and thoroughly investigating all security concerns.

**Education**

**Vision International University**, Master of Arts in Leadership (2014)

**Kingdom College of Natural Medicine**, Bachelor of Science in Holistic Health (2012)

**United States Sports Academy**, Certification in Sports Medicine (2010)

**National Strength and Conditioning Association**, Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist (2003)

**Mueller College of Holistic Health**, Holistic Health Practitioner (2002)

**San Diego Sheriff’s Academy**, Police Officer Standard Training (2001)

**Southwestern College**, General Education (1997)

**Employment History:**

**Supervisory Recreation Fitness Specialist,** Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, San Diego, CA 92145 (June 1999-Present)