

Military Influence Tactics: Lessons Learned in Iraq and Afghanistan

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When deployed U.S. soldiers attempt to influence the attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors of civilians, success can save lives and failure can be deadly. Survey data from 228 military personnel with deployment experience to Iraq and Afghanistan revealed that in a challenging wartime environment, empathy, respect, prior relationships, and familiarity with influence targets predicted success in cross-cultural influence attempts. Influence techniques involving resources and positive feelings were used more commonly in relatively successful influence attempts; negative tactics were used more commonly in unsuccessful attempts.

Keywords: cross-cultural influence, Military Information Support Operations (MISO), influence techniques

For U.S. soldiers deployed in Iraq or Afghanistan, successful attempts to influence civilians to alter anti-American beliefs, change attitudes toward occupying U.S. forces, and share information about planned attacks or improvised explosive device (IED) placement can save lives. When such influence attempts—defined as any acts aimed at changing the attitudes, beliefs, and/or behaviors of an individual or group—fail, the results can be deadly. In addition to the very high stakes involved, the influence attempts of U.S. soldiers abroad differ in many ways from the types of influence attempts studied most often in the research literature (e.g., Branzei, 2002; Higgins, Judge, & Ferris, 2003; Leong, Bond, & Fu,

2006). Typical field studies look at employees attempting to influence supervisors to get a pay raise; typical laboratory studies look at attempts to make a favorable impression in a job interview (Higgins et al., 2003). Deployed soldiers must negotiate differences in language, culture, beliefs, and agendas while wearing uniforms and carrying weapons. Cross-cultural studies of influence attempts typically study whether the effectiveness of particular approaches within organizations are comparable in the United States and other countries (see, e.g., Botero, Foste, & Pace, 2012; Leong et al., 2006). Deployed soldiers, in contrast, attempt to influence people from a different cultural background without being part of a shared institution that defines the relationship between them.

The current study contributes to existing influence literature by looking at cross-cultural influence attempts of deployed U.S. soldiers and offering practical recommendations to military members operating in these environments. Based on online surveys completed by soldiers who had interacted with local populations while deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, the study assesses what features of influence attempts aimed at local individuals or groups (the influence targets) predict perceived failure or success across a variety of objectives and situations.

Influence Techniques

Influence techniques (also called tactics) are specific methods employed during an attempt to change the attitudes, beliefs, and/or behaviors

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of a target audience. For example, using data and information to make a logical argument is a rational tactic; offering to return a favor in the future is an exchange tactic. Scholars have proposed a wide range of classifications ranging from the simple distinction between more positive and negative approaches to more than 160 different types (Rhoads, 2007). No consensus has emerged on which of the many influence taxonomies is the most useful (Toon, 2002). Hence, studies of the relative effectiveness of different techniques often draw upon different category systems.

Attempting to consolidate research on influence attempts, a recent meta-analysis by Higgins et al. (2003) assessed the effectiveness of six influence tactics in the workplace—assertiveness, exchange, ingratiation, rationality, upward appeal, and self-promotion—across 23 studies. Work outcomes included both extrinsic results such as salary and promotion, and also performance assessments from supervisors and researchers in laboratory and field environments. Ingratiation and rationality had a strongly positive influence on both performance assessments and extrinsic success, with weaker positive effects of self-promotion. Assertiveness had a negative effect on performance assessments, but a positive effect on extrinsic success. The positive effects of ingratiation and self-promotion on performance assessments were notably stronger in the laboratory environment.

Comparing across cultures, Leong and colleagues (2006) found that rational tactics, such as consultation, inspiration, and written appeals, were more effective in the U.S. workplace than in China, whereas a cluster of contingent control techniques such as exchange, gift-giving, and socializing were effective with no cultural differences. In the military context, Military Information Support Operations (MISO), formerly known as Psychological Operations (PSYOP), are planned activities directed at foreign target audiences used by the U.S. government to secure national objectives (U.S. Army Special Operations Command, n.d.). Predicting, recognizing, and measuring the effects of MISO is a major challenge (Perry, 2008). Assessing the effectiveness of such operations requires both reliable assessment of any changes in behavior or attitudes and evidence that these changes are actually attributable to MISO. Un-

derstanding what types of influence attempts work, and which ones do not, is essential to duplicate positive results and avoid unsuccessful ones (Perry, 2008).

The survey for the current study used an adapted version of Marwell and Schmitt's (1967) 16-category system. It includes tactics found to be cross-culturally valid, such as gift-giving (Leong et al., 2006); was developed using four different influence scenarios (rather than focusing on a single situation such as an employee trying to get a raise); and offered a balance between a good range of tactics without being too elaborate to implement in an online survey. It has also been extensively used and cited in the research literature. More detail on our implementation of the Marwell and Schmitt categories is given in the Measures section.

Military and Culture

The Role of Culture in Military Operations

Culture can be conceptualized as a shared way of life with common goals, beliefs, attitudes, language, and modes of action (Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen, 1992). In cross-cultural influence attempts, culture may play a role in differences in language, perceptions, expectations, trust, and, ultimately, success. Hajjar (2010) defines cross-culturally competent soldiers as having the "knowledge, attitudes, and behavioral repertoire and skill sets that military members require to accomplish all given tasks and missions involving cultural diversity" (p. 249).

Although the U.S. military operates in many culturally different regions, the importance of culturally competent soldiers is a relatively new concept. When U.S. troops invaded Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003, there was limited emphasis on cultural training (Komarow, 2004), and flawed cultural assumptions at both the strategic and tactical levels led to problems for military operations. Cultural mishaps such as male soldiers patting down women for weapons, soldiers pointing with their index fingers, and the failure to recognize sacred sites caused tension between soldiers and the local population (Watkins, 2007). Repeated individual cultural faux pas can add up to a perception of institutionalized insensitivity that creates con-

flict and challenges for individual tactical missions and strategic military goals (Lewis, 2006).

Cultural Training

Despite the military's statements about the importance of cultural competence, the use of cultural training to increase soldiers' ability to live and perform in culturally diverse environments varies throughout the military both between career fields and between war and peacetime. Prior to operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the military focused on lethal capabilities and neglected to develop knowledge, skills, and trained personnel who could shape the operational environment with nonlethal means (Rogers, 2005). Developing and integrating nonlethal means, supported by cultural training, is an ongoing process.

Some specific career fields, such as Special Forces, Foreign Area Officers, Civil Affairs, Military Information Support, and attachés, do emphasize cultural competence (Hajjar, 2010; Lewis, 2006). The training other soldiers receive varies by deployment location, emphasis by commanders, and time restraints prior to deployment. Some soldiers receive as little as two to four hours, and most training only results in a tourist level of cultural competence (Lewis, 2006).

One Department of Defense funded study on cultural competence attempted to identify general psychological variables relevant to military cross-cultural influence (Ross, 2008). Interview data from nine army officer and enlisted males revealed that empathy (understanding other people's feelings), interpersonal skills (attitude and communication skills), mental models (perspective taking), and willingness to engage/openness to experience were important for mission success in cross-cultural, deployed interactions.

The Current Study

The goal of the current study was to investigate the perceived effectiveness of cross-cultural influence attempts by soldiers interacting with culturally different populations while deployed. We explored whether cultural training and the choice of influence techniques contributed to the relative success of influence attempts in Iraq and Afghanistan. We also

examined whether the more general psychological factors identified in Ross's (2008) interviews replicated for a larger sample of both men and women from multiple services.

Research Questions

To understand military influence attempts compared to existing cross-cultural influence research, three initial questions were asked:

1. Does the choice of influence technique predict the perceived success of influence attempts?
2. Does cultural training predict ratings of influence success?
3. Do other general psychology variables predict the perceived success of influence attempts?

Method

Participants

Criterion for participation in the survey included U.S. military service, deployment experience to Iraq and/or Afghanistan, and multiple face-to-face interactions with host country civilians. Participants were recruited through postings on social networking Web sites, e-mails to known military member contacts, write-ups in military journals, and flyers. Additionally, National Guard members in Oregon and Colorado were offered a \$100 donation to each of their Emergency Relief Funds if 25 qualified National Guard members from their respective states completed the survey. A total of 253 individuals started the survey, 228 of which qualified for participation by having face-to-face interactions with civilians while deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan. Of qualified participants, 119 completed the survey, and 109 completed part of the survey and were included in some analyses.

The total qualified participants included 187 males and 32 females, of which 169 had served in the Army, 39 in the Air Force, 13 in the Marines, and 7 in the Navy. Ninety-five were National Guard members, 92 Active Duty, and 29 Reservists. Deployment experience included 136 members deployed to Iraq, 53 deployed to Afghanistan, and 39 with experience in both Iraq and Afghanistan. The timing of the 337

influence attempts reported included 356 made during or after 2001, 6 during 2000 or earlier, and 13 responses of “I don’t know/classified.”

To increase participation, Army National Guard units in Colorado and Oregon were contacted to offer a \$100 donation to their Emergency Relief Fund from the Groups and War Lab at the University of Oregon for each 25 qualified National Guard members from their respective states completed the survey (up to \$200).

Design

Data were collected using an anonymous online survey that included two sets of questions, demographic questions, and questions related to two separate influence attempts. Participants were instructed not to provide classified information, and an “I don’t know/classified” response was included for each content question.

At the beginning of each influence section, participants were told that we were interested in

situations in which you tried to influence the attitudes, behaviors, or beliefs of [Iraqi or Afghani] civilians. For example, you may have tried to increase reporting of suspicious behavior to local authorities, promote positive attitudes toward U.S. soldiers, or decrease the frequency of children throwing stones at soldiers. Think of the time you were most successful in influencing one or more [Iraqi or Afghani] civilians.

They were asked to think of two influence attempts—their most successful attempt and one that was generally less successful for Iraq, Afghanistan, or both, depending on deployment experience. For individuals deployed to both Iraq and Afghanistan, the order of country questions, Iraq and Afghanistan, was counterbalanced. Hence, those deployed to one country were asked to report on two influence attempts; those deployed to both Iraq and Afghanistan reported two influence attempts for each country, for a total of four.

No existing instrument for measuring cross-cultural influence attempts of deployed soldiers was available. For the initial data collection, we relied on open-ended questions to gather information without predetermining the possible responses. Responses were used to modify the survey to create multiple choice questions. We hoped that the shift to multiple-choice questions would improve the survey completion rate by decreasing the amount of time required. For example, the initial open-ended question “What ev-

idence made you think your influence attempt was not very successful?” was revised to offer six responses to the question “What evidence helped you evaluate how successful your influence attempt was?” including (a) directly observed a change/no change in behavior; (b) person/people involved directly expressed different/unchanged beliefs/attitudes; and (c) official data/news reports, including statistics about voting, survey data, school enrollment, and so forth.

Shortening the survey length by eliminating open-ended questions and providing National Guard incentives increased completion rates from 38% (41 of the first 107 participants) to 65% (78 of the 121 who took the survey after the changes were implemented).

Measures

Participants answered questions about language skills, cultural training, and time spent in country. In line with the cross-cultural competence factors found in Ross’s (2008) interview data from deployed soldiers, they rated themselves on empathy, language ability and cultural knowledge, respect toward cultural differences (openness), and prior relationships (experience).

Influence techniques adapted from Marwell and Schmitt’s (1967) study were used to assess the nature of soldiers’ attempts to influence attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of civilians. In their study, 608 college students indicated their likelihood of using each of the 16 techniques for each of four scenarios. Marwell and Schmitt categorized these 16 techniques into five factors: rewarding activity, punishing activity, expertise, activation of impersonal commitments, and activation of personal commitments, using a factor analysis with oblique varimax rotation (see Table 1). For the current study, the wording of the original 16 influence techniques was modified for easier comprehension, and each was followed by a description (see Table 1). For example, the original technique of “pregiving,” defined as rewarding a target before requesting compliance, was renamed as gift and defined as giving a gift, then making a request.

Participants identified which techniques were used *for each influence attempt* and which techniques they had *ever used* in each country, Iraq or Afghanistan. To assess the relative successfulness of influence attempts and techniques,

Table 1
16 Influence Techniques and Original Factor Clusters

Factor	Technique	Description	
1	Reward	If you comply, I will reward you	
	Gift	Give gift, then make request	
	Liking	Be nice so target will want to comply with your request	
2	Punishment	If you don't comply, I will punish you	
	Aversive stimulation	Punish until they comply with your request	
3	Positive expertise	If you comply, good things will happen to you	
	Negative expertise	If you don't comply, bad things will happen to you	
4	Moral appeal	You are immoral if you do not comply	
	Positive self-feeling	You will feel better about yourself if you comply	
	Negative self-feeling	You will feel worse about yourself if you do not comply	
	Positive traits	A good person would comply	
	Negative traits ^a	A bad person would not comply	
	Positive esteem	People you care about will think better of you if you comply	
	Negative esteem ^a	People you care about will think worse of you if you do not comply	
	5	Debt	You owe me compliance because of past favors
		Pleading	I need your compliance very badly, so please do it for me
Negative traits ^a		A bad person would not comply	
Negative esteem ^a		People you care about will think worse of you if you do not comply	

Note. Techniques and factors from Marwell & Schmitt (1967); descriptions have been modified for easier comprehension.
^a Indicates techniques loaded at .3 level or higher in two different factors.

participants rated each influence attempt on a scale from 1 (*not at all successful*) to 10 (*extremely successful*). Participants deployed to one country had two success ratings, one for the relatively successful attempt and one for the relatively unsuccessful attempt, whereas participants deployed to both countries had four ratings.

Results

Four sets of analyses examined both the characteristics of the data and the pattern of results relevant to our research questions. First, we completed a manipulation check to verify that the two influence attempts reported did, in fact, differ in perceived effectiveness. Second, we completed a factor analysis to determine the groupings of the 16 influence techniques in our data. We then compared the relative frequency of use for the different factor clusters between successful and unsuccessful attempts, using repeated measures ANOVA. Finally, we ran a set of regression analyses to determine whether characteristics of the soldiers (such as demographics, and cultural training) and characteristics of the targets (such as friendliness and familiarity to the soldiers) predicted perceived effectiveness of the influence attempts. For sol-

dier characteristics, separate multiple regression analyses were run for the unsuccessful and the successful attempts to avoid violating assumptions of independence. For target characteristics (which, unlike soldier characteristics, might vary across attempts), we used conditional logistic regression, which matches attempts by the same person and evaluates the difference scores between targets in the relatively unsuccessful and successful attempts.

Manipulation Check

A paired samples *t* test confirmed that success ratings for successful influence attempts were higher ($M = 6.47$, $SD = 1.99$) than ratings for unsuccessful attempts ($M = 3.99$, $SD = 2.01$), $t(131) = 11.51$, $p < .001$.

Influence Technique Clusters

A principal component factor analysis of the 16 influence techniques ever used in Iraq and Afghanistan with oblique promax rotation resulted in five factors that explained 61.62% of the variance. The five clusters were (a) negative techniques (negative traits, moral appeal, negative esteem, negative expertise); (b) power differential techniques (aversive stimulation, pleading, punishment, negative self-feeling); (c) positive traits

(positive expertise, positive traits); (d) resource techniques (gift, reward, liking, debt); and (e) positive feeling (positive esteem, positive self-feeling). Techniques for all five factors loaded at .40 or above (see Table 2).

Three of the 16 items loaded on a secondary factor with less than .10 difference from its main factor. Negative expertise in the negative factor also moderately loads on positive traits; negative self-feeling in the power differential factor also moderately loads on the negative factor, and debt in the resources factor also moderately loads on the negative factor. Table 3 shows the correlations among the factors.

Techniques Used for Successful and Unsuccessful Attempts

The clusters identified through factor analysis for techniques *ever used* were used to group techniques specifically used in *successful* and *unsuccessful* influence attempts. An average factor score was computed for each of the five factors based on the number of items endorsed divided by the total possible number of techniques for each factor. This calculation was completed for both successful and unsuccessful influence attempts, resulting in five cluster scores for each influence type. These factor cluster scores were used to investigate whether

the choice of technique was associated with the relative perceived success of influence attempts.

A set of five repeated measures ANOVAs assessed differences in frequency of use between successful and unsuccessful influence attempts for each factor cluster. Using Holm-Bonferroni adjusted alpha levels (Abdi, 2010), the first cluster of negative techniques, $F(1, 86) = 19.43, p = .005$, and the second cluster of power differential techniques, $F(1, 86) = 16.34, p = .004$, were used significantly more in unsuccessful influence attempts than in successful attempts (see Figure 1). Resources, $F(1, 86) = 6.46, p = .02$ and positive feelings, $F(1, 86) = 13.89, p < .003$ (Clusters 4 and 5), were used significantly more in successful attempts. Positive traits, $F(1, 86) = 3.56, p = .06$, were also more common in successful attempts, but did not meet the conventional .05 cutoff for statistical significance.

Predicting Success and Failure Based on Demographics, Training, and Cultural Variables

To examine which variables contributed to the relative success or failure of soldier influence attempts, multiple regressions using 14 predictors for the perceived success of influence attempts (10-point Likert-scale) were run. Pre-

Table 2
Factor Loadings for Promax Rotation for 16 Influence Techniques Ever Used

	Factors				
	Negative	Power differential	Positive traits	Resources	Positive feeling
Negative traits	.915				
Moral appeal	.678				
Negative esteem	.473		.325		
Negative expertise	.434	.391			
Adverse stimulation		.797			
Pleading		.670			
Punishment		.621	.342		-.426
Negative self-feeling	.352	.435			
Positive expertise			.903		
Positive traits	.366		.634		
Gift				.867	
Reward			.314	.567	
Liking				.545	
Debt	.344			.379	
Positive esteem					.843
Positive self-feeling			.303		.687

Note. Following Gorsuch's (1983) guidelines, scores below .30 were excluded.

Table 3
Correlation Matrix for Technique Clusters Ever Used in Iraq and Afghanistan

Factor	Negative	Power differential	Positive trait	Resource	Positive feeling
Negative	—	.350	.326	.249	.356
Pwr diff		—	.269	.265	.207
Pos trait			—	.357	.036
Resource				—	.032
Pos feeling					—

Note. Repeated correlation values excluded.

dictors included soldier demographics (gender, age at deployment), training types (cultural, Civil Affairs, MISO, and Special Forces), influence target (friendliness toward troops, individual or group, familiarity, and prior relationships), general cultural variables (empathy, respect, understanding local culture), and total time in country.

The number of participants for each analysis varied. For some analyses, a smaller number of participants' responses were examined because of missing data, and some analyses only looked at multiple choice data from the revised survey. Country of deployment—Iraq, Afghanistan, or both—did not significantly predict ratings of success for successful or unsuccessful attempts ($F_s < 1$), and influence attempts for both countries were combined. Hence for some analyses, data from more than one influence attempt was used from soldiers deployed to both Iraq and Afghanistan. For example, participants deployed to both Iraq and Afghanistan provided

data on influence techniques ever used in country separately for the two countries.

Two regressions were run to determine if deployment experience was correlated with ratings of success for either successful or unsuccessful influence attempts. Because two influence attempts were discussed, the characteristics of these situations (e.g., target of influence, familiarity, and time in country) could vary between the attempts. Empathy and respect were strongly correlated with success ratings for both sets of influence attempts—the relatively successful ($r = .61, p < .001$) and relatively unsuccessful ($r = .71, p < .001$) attempts.

To resolve issues of multicollinearity, empathy and respect were averaged to create a new variable. A reduced model that included the average between reported empathy and respect ($\beta = .39, p < .001$), and familiarity ($\beta = .24, p = .01$) significantly predicted influence attempt success ratings for the relatively successful attempts, $F(2, 106) = 14.21, p < .001$. As

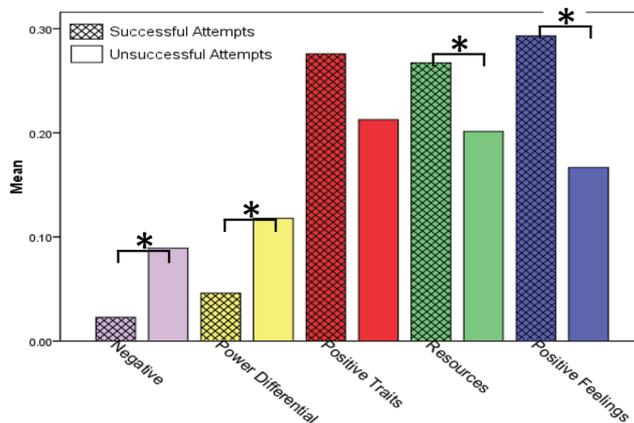


Figure 1. Influence technique cluster use for successful and unsuccessful influence attempts.
Note. * Significant differences at the $p < .05$ level.

empathy, respect, and familiarity increase, successfulness of influence attempt ratings also increase. Inclusion of the other variables failed to explain a significantly greater amount of variance beyond the reduced model ($\Delta R^2 = .07$, $p = .66$).

A regression for the relatively unsuccessful influence attempt ratings produced a reduced model of empathy/respect ($\beta = .26$, $p = .02$) and prior relationships ($\beta = .25$, $p = .19$), which significantly predicted unsuccessful influence attempt success ratings, $F(2, 79) = 5.89$, $p = .004$. As the average of empathy and respect and ratings of prior relationships increase, ratings of relative success increased.

As with the first regression, adding the remaining variables failed to improve on the reduced model ($\Delta R^2 = .07$, $p = .89$). Because the combined empathy and respect variable was substantially correlated with prior relationships ($r = .53$, $p < .001$) and understanding local culture ($r = .70$, $p < .001$), residuals were used for the variables of prior relationships and understanding local culture in order to simplify the final interpretation of the factors and resolve issues of multicollinearity.

A conditional logistic regression compared soldier responses for target characteristics for their successful and unsuccessful influence attempts. No significant differences were detected for familiarity or prior relationships, but the difference in friendliness ratings of targets for relatively successful ($M = 2.25$, $SD = .998$) and unsuccessful ($M = 2.92$, $SD = 1.19$) influence attempts was significant ($B = -1.57$, $p = .002$). Friendliness ratings of the influence target ranged from 1 = *very friendly toward U.S. soldiers* to 5 = *very hostile toward U.S. soldiers*, with these means falling between 2 = *somewhat friendly* and 3 = *mixed or neutral*.

Discussion

Predictors of Success and Failure

The greater use of negative and power differential techniques with relatively less successful influence attempts, and the reliance on positive feelings (and, less reliably, positive traits) for the most successful attempts, fits prior research findings that “soft” techniques are generally more effective than “hard” techniques (Falbe & Yukl, 1992). Our finding that the resource tech-

nique cluster was associated with successful influence attempts is also in line with the cross-cultural endorsement of a gift-giving/exchange cluster as effective by both U.S. and Chinese managers (Leong et al., 2006).

Among the measured variables, empathy/respect, familiarity, prior relationships, and target friendliness significantly predicted the rated success of influence attempts, although only the averaged empathy/respect variable significantly predicted success ratings in both relatively successful and relatively unsuccessful attempts. These results are consistent with Ross’s (2008) findings from military member interviews describing cross-cultural situations. Ross (2008) found interpersonal skills, including rapport building, empathy, perspective taking, and openness to experience, were critical elements of cross-cultural competence, with perspective taking being the most important factor.

Ross’s elements can be combined into two variables, relationship building (interpersonal skills and openness to experience) and general personality traits (empathy and perspective taking), and compared with combined significant factors of relationship building (prior relationship and familiarity) and general personality traits (empathy and respect). Using these combined variables, general personality traits emerge in both studies as the most vital element of cross-cultural interactions, significant for both successful and unsuccessful influence attempts, and most commonly mentioned in interviews (Ross, 2008). Additionally, elements of relationship building were found to be the second most important aspect in cross-cultural competence (Ross, 2008), and the only additional factors significantly correlated to success ratings.

Connecting this back to the techniques clusters, the resource cluster includes tactics such as gift and liking that fit well with the relationship-building factors from the Ross (2008) findings. Reliance on positive feeling also fits with the effectiveness of empathy and perspective taking in predicting success.

Factor Structure of Techniques

The five influence technique clusters that emerged—negative techniques (negative traits, moral appeal, negative esteem, negative expertise), power differential techniques (aversive stimulation, pleading, punishment, negative

self-feeling), positive traits (positive expertise, positive traits), resource techniques (gift, reward, liking, debt), and positive feeling (positive esteem, positive self-feeling)—**fit into conceptually logical categories**. These categories, however, differ from the factors found in Marwell and Schmitt's (1967) study (see Table 1).

These differences in technique clustering **may be linked to how technique use was assessed**. Marwell and Schmitt (1967) ask participants about their likelihood of technique use in future interactions, whereas the current study focused on techniques already used. Prediction of future behavior can be interpreted using the theory of planned behavior, which postulates that certain motivational factors lead to intention which in turn leads to behavior choice (Ajzen, 1991). Although this theory has merit, past behavior is a better predictor of future behavior (Wong & Mullan, 2009). Two of the Marwell and Schmitt factors combine negative and positive techniques—for example, positive and negative expertise hang together as a factor. This abstract similarity may be compelling when contemplating hypothetical actions for scenarios supplied by an experimenter. For actual outcomes determined by the response of the influence target, however, the general negativity or positivity of the approach may be a more compelling similarity. Thus, the factor structure found in the current study likely represents a more predictive clustering of which techniques are more likely to be actually used together.

Limitations and Future Research

Although past behavior is a more reliable predictor of future behavior than intentions, a retrospective study of events, some of which happened 10 years ago, has its own problems. **Information on influence attempts should ideally be collected shortly after they are made, during debriefing sessions when troops return to base after a mission, for the most reliable reporting.**

Another limitation of this study is the use of single-item measures for some of the variables potentially contributing to influence attempt success. Participants were asked, for example, "What cultural factors played an important role in your influence attempt? Check all that apply," and presented with 12 responses, such as respecting, acknowledging, and being open to cultural differences, basic differences between U.S. and Iraqi

culture, and the importance of saving face, maintaining, honor, and national pride.

Because there are numerous situational aspects that may impact influence effectiveness, but so little literature on **the influence attempts of deployed soldiers, we chose to cast a broad net and assess a wide range of variables at a superficial level**. This framework can shape future research questions about military influence attempts. However, null findings should not be taken as evidence that a variable had no effect, as measurement unreliability is a plausible alternative explanation.

Military Application of Results

The two primary military applications for this study's findings are to inform policy discussions about cultural training and also to inform the choice of tactics for MISO operations. In predicting ratings of influence success, of notable importance is the lack of impact of cultural, Civil Affairs, MISO, and Special Forces training. The focus of cultural, Civil Affairs, and Special Forces training is not influence and is most likely not tailored to teaching cross-cultural communication and influence skills. However, if this training is expected to produce culturally competent soldiers skilled at influencing civilians, aspects of training may need to be modified to address or improve these skills. Soldiers face dynamic situations while deployed, and they must understand how and when to use both lethal and nonlethal tools (Daniel, 2010). Developing nonlethal military capabilities (Rogers, 2005) involves not only training but also ensuring that training is effective.

The second application is for MISO. This study provides a comprehensive analysis of influence operations and is focused on friendly reports. In a resource-constrained environment, reports of soldiers on the ground may augment sparse measures of effectiveness and help better assess and ultimately shape military influence operations. It may also provide a new perspective of the types of questions to ask in order to assess MISO effectiveness. Instead of assessing the effectiveness of a single influence attempt, this study assesses numerous influence attempts across Iraq and Afghanistan to identify potential keys to success or failure.

Knowing that negative techniques and power differential factors were used significantly more in unsuccessful influence attempts than in successful attempts **provide a base for future re-**

search. What types of challenges evoked the choice of these tactics? What situational factors are similar when these techniques are selected? These questions can be asked for the resources and positive feelings factors, which were used significantly more often in successful attempts. **Understanding the conditions surrounding influence technique use will be helpful in dissecting the complex military influence environment and ultimately make future technique selection more deliberate and, one hopes, more successful in achieving the desired objectives.**

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