

## 2010 ITSEC Paper No. 10022 Abstract

As the dramatic shift to a highly diverse workforce continues, military organizations must help all service members understand, accept, and capitalize on differences. Military leaders understand that the cultural backgrounds and experiences of diverse service members enrich the organization and lead to combat readiness. The problem addressed in this paper is whether or not the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) Equal Opportunity Advisor (EOA) blended training intervention can significantly influence the EOA's knowledge, feelings, and understanding of workforce diversity. The DEOMI training program was developed to educate service members (Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Navy, and Marine Corps) on diversity issues with a goal of increasing their understanding about workforce diversity, changing their attitudes toward diversity, and a broader goal of improving combat readiness. This paper reports on study results where emotional intelligence theory is used as a theoretical framework to examine EOA trainees' knowledge, feelings, and understanding of workforce diversity. Emotional intelligence theory is based on emotional learning that results in increased self-awareness and improved behaviors, and is the single most influencing variable in personal achievement, career success, leadership, and life satisfaction (Nelson & Low, 2003). This study is quasi-experimental, using a two-phased sequential explanatory mixed-methods design with both quantitative and qualitative data collection procedures. Quantitative data is collected using test scores from the Advanced Distributed Learning (ADL) training at the completion of ADL training. Quantitative data is also collected prior to ADL training and after Core Performance and Practical Skills Application training from one class of EOA trainees using scores from the Diversity Profile. The Diversity Profile is a questionnaire that captures emotional intelligence information on workforce diversity in four key areas: Knowledge (stereotypes and knowledge about differences), Understanding (awareness and empathy), Acceptance (receptiveness and respect), and Behavior (self-awareness and interpersonal skills). In Phase 1 of the study, the researcher identifies statistically significant differences and anomalous results from ADL test scores and data from the Diversity Profile; the researcher follows up results from Phase 1 with an in-depth qualitative study to explain why these results occurred. In the qualitative study, the researcher identifies specific quantitative findings that need additional explanation, such as statistical differences among learners, learners with extreme scores, or unexpected results. The researcher then collects qualitative data from learners who can best help explain these findings. This study is important to effectively assess the impact of diversity training on EOAs at DEOMI because equal opportunity and cultural understanding are linked to military readiness issues. This research is also of significance to the domain of emotional intelligence as it extends the knowledge base that currently exists in that field of study.

### Reference

Nelson, D. B., & Low, G. R. (2003). *Emotional intelligence: Achieving academic and career excellence*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.