

Establishment of Military Observer's Culture through Malaysian Military Observers

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To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v8-i10/5301>

DOI:10.6007/IJARBSS/v8-i10/5301

Published Date: 03 November 2018

Abstract

The identity creation of a military observer begins with culture. Each person grows up with his or her own distinctive culture and indirectly establishes the identity of their individual self. For a military observer, their identity formation begins with multifactorial affiliations such as gender, ethnicity and race, socio-economic, language, mental and physical difference and religious beliefs at individual level. There are four stages of development that a military observer must go through before becoming a full-fledged military observer. First stage: early childhood to men, second stage: men to army officer, third stage: army officer to military observer and fourth stage as military observer with his or her own world-view. The objective of this paper is to identify how military observer's culture is established through Malaysian military observers.

Keywords: Military Observer, Culture, Peacekeeping, World-view

Introduction

Culture, which is viewed as stable and dynamic, deals with the themes of shared values, beliefs and behaviours that are transmitted through generations (Green, 2015). What they mean by 'culture' is inherited knowledge from previous generations (Imai, Kanero, & Masuda, 2016). Culture refers to some of the ways in which people live their daily lives. Indirectly, the culture implies the identity of an individual. Culture includes beliefs, values, behaviour, manners, rules and regulations and it is shared by a group of people referred to as society (Doda, 2005). Society is made up of a group of people who interact with one another within their surroundings. Therefore, the military observer's society has its own distinctive cultural identity. This paper is basically a continuation of research's project - Development of Knowledge-Based Software with Enhanced Situational Awareness Analysis for Infantry

Personnel. The discussion of this project can be found in (Alkhred et al., 2018; Marzukhi et al., 2018; Nohuddin and Zainol, 2014; Yusof et al., 2016, 2018a, 2018b, 2018c, 2018d; Zainol et al., 2018a; Zainol et al., 2018b; Zainol et al., 2017a; Zainol et al., 2017b; Zainol et al., 2018c).

Culture

Culture is also something learned from others. As an example, a child will follow the behaviors and actions of the parents and the people around it. The culture of an individual can also change equally in a positive or negative form. Change of culture in other words an individual can adjust themselves to the surroundings. In addition, culture is also something inherited from parents. Among them, parents who love dressing up to small children according to their parents' taste. Some are dressing in their hijab, dressed in fancy and others. Culture and decision-making addresses variations in how and why people from different cultures sometimes tend to decide differently (Yates & de Oliveira, 2016).

Culture is divided into two parts, namely material and non-material. Material culture means the tangible products of human society. For example, when we see a person wearing a hijab, we indirectly know that she is a Muslim. This means something that we see and that there are certain rules involved.

Non-material culture is the intangible creations of human society such as ideas and beliefs, attitude, ethnic, self-value. It refers to a way of thinking and is more a behavioral thing. For example, if someone takes off the shoes first before entering a house, we know that it is a Malay.

Culture can shape our personality that can then highlight who we are as a whole. This character can be understood by others as a whole in terms of way of life, knowledge, religion, belief and what we commonly describe as "human nature". Explicit culture is when every action is done, and has its own explanation. But for implicit culture, every action we do is right but we cannot explain it well enough although we know our action is the right thing to do (Doda, 2005).

In that case, Malaysian military observer (MILOB) come from various religions, such as Islam, Hinduism, Christianity, Buddhism and other beliefs in Malaysia. MILOB also comes from various races and ethnicities in Malaysia such as Malay, Chinese, Indian, and indigenous communities of Sabah and Sarawak. MILOB also comes from various states in Malaysia. This difference is actually what constitutes their identity and way of thinking or what is known as multicultural. Multicultural has unique characteristics that distinguish between one another. The next section will discuss what multicultural is.

Multicultural

Individualistic cultures tend to value personal goal pursuits as opposed to accommodation of each other's goals. Uniqueness and self-expression are also generally valued in military observers (Yates & de Oliveira, 2016). Every human being born on earth is different from each other. Each of these distinctions is called multicultural. Multicultural has unique features among each other. There are six (6) multicultural features, the first is gender that is male or female. The second feature is ethnicity and race. The third characteristic is socioeconomic. The fourth feature is language. The fifth feature is mental and physical differences while the sixth feature is religion and belief. Figure 1 shows the multicultural features.

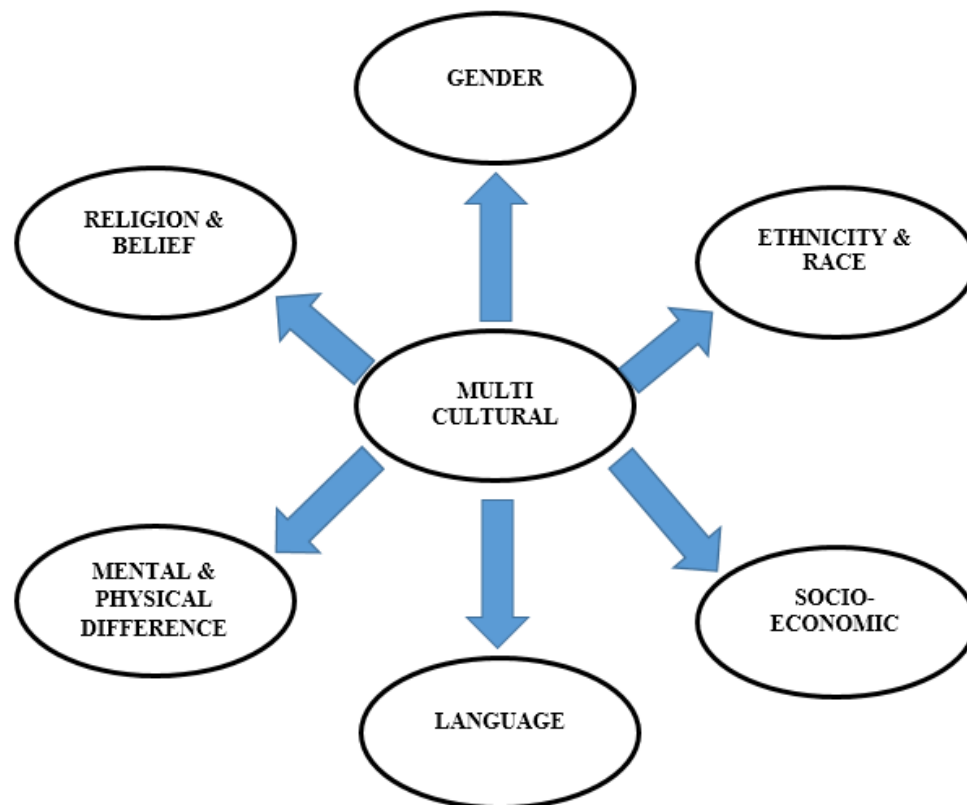


Figure 1: Multicultural features

There is a generally accepted difference between men and women. This gender difference affects individuals, especially in terms of cognitive style. According to (Xiyang & Gang, 2010), this cognitive style refers to the information processing way which is the preference of the learner. It has distinctive individual characteristics. The male and female learners' different physiological and psychological characteristics have caused the following differences in foreign language cognitive styles. As such, military observers of either men or women have different cognitive styles.

For ethnicity and race groups based on Malaysia's tourism website, Malaysia has a colourful heritage of diverse cultures. Malaysians are Malays, Chinese, Indians and many other ethnic groups who live together in Malaysia for generations. All these cultures have influenced each other so as to create a true Malaysian culture.

The largest ethnic groups in Malaysia are Malays, Chinese and Indians. In Sabah and Sarawak, there are many indigenous ethnic minority groups with their unique culture and heritage. The following info is quoted from <http://www.malaysia.travel/en/my/about-malaysia/culture-heritage/people>.

- Malay

In Malaysia, the term Malay refers to a person who practices Islam and Malay traditions, speaks the Malay language and whose ancestors are Malays. The Malays are known for their gentle mannerisms and rich arts heritage.

- Chinese

The second largest ethnic group, is the Malaysian Chinese. The Chinese are known for their diligence and keen business sense. The three sub-groups who speak a different dialect

of the Chinese language are the Hokkien who live predominantly on the northern island of Penang; the Cantonese who live predominantly in the capital city Kuala Lumpur; and the Mandarin-speaking group who live predominantly in the southern state of Johor.

- **Indian**

The smallest of three main ethnic groups, is the Malaysian Indians. Most are descendants of Tamil-speaking South Indian immigrants who came to the country during the British colonial rule. Lured by the prospect of breaking out of the Indian caste system, they came to Malaysia to build a better life. Predominantly Hindus, they brought with them their colourful culture such as ornate temples, spicy cuisine and exquisite sarees.

Indigenous Ethnic Groups

Peninsula Malaysia

The general term used for any of the indigenous groups that are found in Peninsular Malaysia is 'Orang Asli', which literally translates as the 'original people'. They are divided into three main tribal groups: Negrito, Senoi and Proto-Malay. The Negrito usually lives in the north, the Senoi in the middle and the Proto-Malay in the south. Each group or sub-group has its own language and culture. Some are fishermen, some are farmers and some are semi-nomadic.

Sabah

The largest indigenous ethnic groups of Sabah's population are the Kadazan Dusun, the Bajau and the Murut.

- **Kadazan Dusun**

The largest ethnic group of Sabah, the Kadazan Dusuns form about 30% of the state's population. Actually consisting of two tribes; the Kadazan and the Dusun, they were grouped together as they both share the same language and culture. However, the Kadazan are mainly inhabitants of flat valley deltas, which are conducive for paddy field farming, while the Dusun traditionally live in the hilly and mountainous regions of interior Sabah.

- **Bajau**

The second largest ethnic group in Sabah, the Bajaus make up about 15% of the state's population. Historically a nomadic sea-faring people that worshipped the Omboh Dilaut or God of the Sea, they are sometimes referred to as the Sea Gypsies. Those who chose to leave their sea-faring ways became farmers and cattle-breeders. These land Bajaus are nicknamed 'Cowboys of the East' in tribute to their impressive equestrian skills, which are publicly displayed in the annual Tamu Besar festival at Kota Belud.

- **Murut**

The third largest ethnic group in Sabah, the Muruts make up about 3% of the state's population. Traditionally inhabiting the northern inland regions of Borneo, they were the last of Sabah's ethnic groups to renounce headhunting. Now, they are mostly shifting cultivators of hill paddy and tapioca, supplementing their diet with blowpipe hunting and fishing. Like most indigenous tribes in Sabah, their traditional clothing is decorated with distinctive beadwork.

Sarawak

Collectively known as Dayaks, the Iban, Bidayuh and Orang Ulu are the major ethnic groups in the state of Sarawak. Typically, they live in longhouses, traditional community homes that can house 20 to 100 families.

- **Iban**

The largest of Sarawak's ethnic groups, the Ibans form 30% of the State's population of 2.5 million. Sometimes erroneously referred to as the Sea Dayaks because of their skills with boats, they are actually an upriver tribe from the heart of Kalimantan. In the past, they were a fearsome warrior race renowned for headhunting and piracy. Traditionally, they worship a triumvirate of gods under the authority of Singalang Burung, the bird-god of war. Although, now mostly Christians, many traditional customs are still practised.

- **Bidayuh**

Peace-loving and easy-going, the gentle Bidayuh are famous for their hospitality and tuak or rice wine. Making their homes in Sarawak's southern regions, they are mostly farmers and hunters. In their past headhunting days their prized skulls were stored in a 'baruk', a roundhouse that rises about 1.5 metres above the ground. Originally animists, now most of the 200,000 strong populations have converted to Christianity.

- **Melanau**

Some 130,000 or 6% of the population of Sarawak are Melanau, believed to be among the original people to settle in Sarawak. Their language has different origins to the other ethnic groups of the state and today they are found mainly along the rivers and coastal plains of central Sarawak. Originally animists, most have converted to Islam although some of the inland communities are Christian.

- **Orang Ulu**

27 of the inland tribal groups of Sarawak are collectively called Orang Ulu or upriver people. A total estimated population of around 100,000 people belong to tribes that varied in size from 300 to 25,000 individuals.

Arguably Borneo's most artistic people, their large longhouses are ornately decorated with murals and superb woodcarvings; their utensils are embellished with intricate beadwork. Traditional tattoos is a very important part of their culture; aristocratic Orang Ulu ladies also cover their arms and legs with finely detailed tattoos.

The aboriginal Penan people are also included as Orang Ulu by government census but the Penan are traditionally nomadic people living in small family groups constantly moving from place to place within the rainforest. Today, most of the estimated 16,000 Penan people have settled in longhouse communities where their children have the chance to go to school. Like the Iban and Bidayuh, most of the Orang Ulu have converted from animism to Christianity or Islam.

Therefore, a Malaysian military observer comes from different ethnic and race backgrounds. This difference forms a distinctive culture within each one of them. This diversity is highly

respected by the entire population of Malaysia. In addition, different ethnicities also carry different languages. This language diversity gives wealth to the existing culture in Malaysia.

Apart from having different languages, ethnicity and race bring different religions and beliefs. Malays are all Muslims, while Chinese are mostly Buddhists and Indian mostly Hindus. However, China, India, Sabah and Sarawak and indigenous people have followed religious diversity. Some are Muslims, Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, Animists, or non-Muslims. Although Malaysians have different religions, they have the same moral foundation. This is because every religion teaches that we need to have good moral values as the foundation of life to live.

Socio-economic status deeply affects the way children and adults behave and develop throughout their lifespan (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002). Financial capital is well judged by household income, but is more often indexed by job status. Most children who grow up in different economic statuses between high and low incomes indirectly form different personalities. Although there are debates on the most sophisticated and high socioeconomic aspects connect to cognitive development, these military observers have a high level of education in accordance with their qualifications as a member of the military. Here, there is no high income or low income issue affecting the cognitive of a military observer because to qualify as a military officer, they have to pass the prescribed qualification requirements. Imai et al. (2016) stated that how language modulates perception, reasoning, learning, and other cognitive functions as well as conceptual representations instead of asking.

In terms of physical differences, the body shape between the male observer and the female observer is certainly different. However, this distinction is not an obstacle for them to become a military observer for the UN mission. This can be proven by the two (2) respondents of the study, which consists of female observers (Yusof, Zakaria, & Zainol, 2018b). In terms of mental resilience, it is more focused on how an observer's mental resilience is in facing a situation. From the findings, there were two (2) respondents who went through a situation beyond their expectations. The fourteenth respondents have been detained for 21 days in Sierra Leone, while the sixteenth respondents have been detained for 2 weeks during a mission in Liberia (Yusof et al., 2017). From the interviews with them, there were various anxious moments that they went through so they managed to go through all the difficulties that had been encountered. Therefore, almost all the advice given by the respondents state that they need to be mentally and physically prepared (Yusof et al., 2018a). The entire data obtained, is part of the framework guidelines proposed by (Yusof et al., 2016).

Chosen Appropriate Military Observer

A United Nations Military Observer (UNMO), also shortened as MILOB is an unarmed officer deployed with a UN peace operation to monitor and supervise any military arrangements the parties to a conflict may have agreed to, such as (1) the ceasefire or armistice (2) a removal of forces and (3) giving protection of a demilitarized (Yaakub, 2015). Various countries that are members of the UN will send their troops to serve as MILOB in missions around the world. MILOB acts as an intermediary between the warring parties, and the fairness, integrity, and professionalism of the military is very important to fulfil their role.

Based on UN military handbooks (United Nations, 1995), a MILOB should be prepared to accept numerous organisational and representative tasks and responsibilities in the performance of their duties. Other than that, MILOB must have personal qualities as a MILOB must realise that he or she will be performing duties in an environment foreign to that of his or her home nation, usually encumbered by difficult living conditions, in high stress situations, and often in a language not necessarily his or her “mother tongue”. The individual nominated as a military observer must be carefully selected to ensure that he or she is capable of performing the tasks required of him or her. Needed to be reminded is that his or her actions and overall presentation will reflect favourably upon the UN and his or her home nation.

Methods of Choosing Appropriate Military Observer

Accordingly, the officer selected must be physically fit because MILOB must operate at peak efficiency for prolonged periods. Officers selected for MILOB duties are to be in health and physical conditions that are as good as possible. Therefore, it is imperative that the officer selected:

- a) Is in excellent health and physical condition.
- b) Is free from cardiac and foot problems.
- c) Has a high level of physical endurance and stamina.
- d) Has a healthy and tolerant digestive system.
- e) Does not suffer from any allergies or other medical conditions which may be difficult to treat in areas with limited medical facilities.

Besides that, mental fitness is equally important as physical fitness. The officer selected to be a military observer must possess a strong character, a well-balanced personality and be of good mental health. He must be free of neurotic or other psychological problems and it is imperative that he or she is able to operate in conditions of extreme stress and physical danger. The effective MILOB will display the following personality traits such as:

- a) Good judgement, supported by a common-sense approach to problem solving.
- b) An objective attitude, displaying tact and impartiality.
- c) A polite demeanour, combined with a firm, but flexible, and honest approach.
- d) Considerable self-discipline and patience.
- e) A friendly, open approach to other nationalities and a ready sense of humour.
- f) An ability to influence others, engendered in imaginativeness and persuasiveness.
- g) Demonstrated credibility in leadership.

Maturity is also important as a part of demand as a MILOB. The officer selected for MILOB duties should be well-trained and experienced and accordingly be of the highest military professional calibre. He or she would preferably be of Lieutenant Colonel, Captain or Major (equivalent) rank and would satisfy the following selection criteria:

- a) Be representative of his national background.
- b) Be competent in the mission language (usually English, although French and Spanish are common).
- c) Be comfortable in operational and social environments both of the contributing countries' officers and the armies of the parties in conflicts.
- d) Have the appropriate operational and tactical staff skills necessary to perform the duties of the appointment for which he or she is selected.

- e) Have the mental capability to enable him or her to understand the organisation and functional arrangements of the armies in conflict.
- f) Be capable of conducting analytical investigations into alleged incidents, and of compiling and submitting factual and impartial recommendations.

A MILOB must have a nationality character. Whilst serving with the UN, the officer must bear in mind that he may be the only representative of his home country in the mission area, and accordingly must project a good image of himself or herself and their country. MILOB must not become involved in any activity which could bring his country into disrepute. The MILOB must be able to differentiate between idealistic and realistic attitudes and approaches to problems. Analysis of problems and clear and factual reporting to superior officers must not be understated. The officer's ability to determine courses of action that are achievable rather than desirable is a quality that is not to be overlooked. For that reason, all the situations encountered indicate that the respondent is capable of making the best action based on the personality traits of a MILOB desired by the UN.

MILOB are organised in multinational teams to ensure impartiality and liberation. They work in pairs in the field and are normally combined with a colleague from another country.

The primary tasks of MILOB are:

- a) Patrolling on foot by vehicle and using helicopters to gather information based on their schedule of duties.
- b) Observing, monitoring and supervising mutual agreements between rebels.
- c) Providing effective accurate and timely verbal and written reports using appropriate communications (radio, telephone, e-mail, written reports and presentations).
- d) Negotiating and mediating in difficult or tense situations, via a translator if necessary.
- e) Conducting other tasks as directed by those with appropriate delegated authority.

MILOB are also responsible for structuring and maintaining affairs with people living in the mission and elements of the host government. MILOB also advises support agencies on security in their area of operations and helps to defuse potential conflicts between aggressive factions (Yaakub, 2015).

Military observer world-view

World-view can be considered knowledge based on beliefs about various things in the daily life of community members (Wan Yusof, 2007). World-view is not only inherited and experienced, but it is also derived from intensive training that is applied to them. For example, individuals who have entered military service will undergo training related to the military field. We all know that the Malaysian Armed Forces comprises three (3) different services, namely Army, Navy and Air Force.

When an individual enters military service, each of them is required to undergo the prescribed basic training. Each military member received training that have different doctrines for army, navy and air forces. Every doctrine has a specific motion for movement on land, at sea and in the air. Indirectly, this doctrine builds a new world-view for military personnel.

However, although each armed forces have different doctrines, they will eventually form the same world-view before they become a military observer (MILOB). This is because, every member of the army is either from the army, navy or air force, where each of them is obliged

to follow basic training to become a MILOB. The basic Milob's training is conducted by the Malaysian Peacekeeping Centre (MPC). In the course, MILOB will undergo various training as early preparation before they are sent to implement the UN mission.

Framework for The Establishment of a Military Observer's Culture

As a result of a combination of culture, military's culture, and military observer's culture, it has become a military observer's world-view. The framework shown in Figure 2 shows the four stages passed by a military observer.

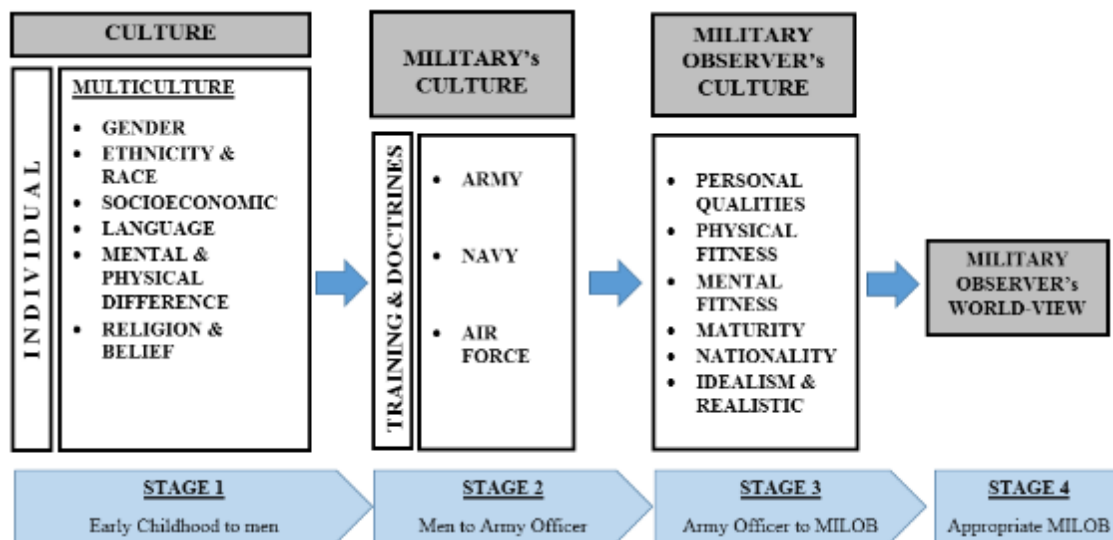


Figure 2: Framework for the establishment of a military observer's culture

The first stage is the early childhood to men stage where there are multicultural features such as gender, ethnicity & race, socioeconomic, language, mental & physical difference and religion & belief.

For the second stage is the stage of men to army officer. For this stage, the individual is trained in military culture which includes three types of military, namely army, navy and air force. Each of these military forces has its own training and doctrines.

For the third stage is the rank of army officer to MILOB. To qualify as a MILOB candidate, each applicant must meet qualification requirements such as personal qualities, physical fitness, mental fitness, maturity, nationality, idealism and being realistic. Having successfully qualified MILOB candidates, the army officer has successfully entered the fourth stage as an appropriate MILOB with military observer's world-view.

However, the contribution to the individual's self-development is to have moral values through the payment and the pure values of the Malaysian society in the various religions, traditions and customs of the various races in the country. Indirectly, it can build a fundamental guide that allows an individual to become a moral person. In that case, it enables them to be morally responsible individuals for all decisions and actions taken.

Future Research

Culture creates a personal identity for an individual. However, moral values are also very important in each individual. Therefore the result of the data obtained will be evaluating from

the point of moral values. It aims to produce a high quality MILOB with moral values to ensure they are able to provide good service throughout the United Nations (UN) mission.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this clearly shows that the formation of a MILOB started from stage 1 beginning with a multicultural culture. Next for stage 2 is the level of military culture in which an individual formed according to three military doctrines, namely Army, Navy and Air Force. Then for stage 3, for eligible officers to become MILOB, they will have given training and basic courses how to become for a MILOB. After completing the course, the MILOB's world-view is forming which entitles the employee to a UN peacekeeping mission.

Acknowledgement

The authors would like to thank the Ministry of Higher Education for providing us grant: NRGs/2013/UPNM/PK/P3 in order to undertake this research at the National Defence University of Malaysia.

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