

Prof. Hasan Langgulong: A Great Psychologist of the Malay World



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By Mohd Abbas Abdul Razak (PhD)

Department of Fundamental & Inter-Disciplinary Studies, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM)

In our personality development and the way we perceive the world, besides our parents, good teachers have a significant impact on us. Throughout childhood, we may have been taught by many teachers and mentors, but only a few leave an indelible impression on our hearts and minds that we carry throughout our lives. Through this brief essay, I would like to share the greatness of a remarkable psychologist who taught and inspired me in many ways. The teacher who inspired me and fostered my love for philosophy and psychology was none other than the late Prof. Dr. Hassan Langgulong.

Short Profile of Prof. Hasan

Prof. Hasan was born in South Sulawesi, Indonesia, in 1934. He pursued his primary education at a community school from 1943 to 1949. Between 1949 and 1952, he attended an Islamic Secondary School and later enrolled in an Islamic Teacher

Training School in Makassar. During this time, he also took the opportunity to learn English. For his tertiary education, Prof. Hasan went abroad. In 1962, he obtained his Bachelor's Degree in Islamic Philosophy and Arabic Literature from the Faculty of Darul Ulum at Cairo University. He completed his Diploma of Education in 1964 at Ain Shams University, Egypt. In 1967, he earned his M.A. in Psychology and Mental Health from the same university.

After completing his studies in the Arab world, Prof. Hasan moved to the United States to join the University of Georgia, where he pursued a doctorate in Psychology and successfully earned his Ph.D. in 1971. While studying in Georgia, he gained valuable experience working as a Research and Teaching Assistant, particularly at the Georgia Studies of Creative Behavior from 1970 to 1971.

His vast experience in the pursuit of knowledge cultivated many great talents in him. As an active student among Indonesians studying in Egypt, Prof. Hasan was elected Chairman of the Indonesian Students' Association of Cairo in 1957. Later, the exceptional leadership skills demonstrated by Prof. Hasan led to his election as Vice Chairman of the Indonesian Students' Association in the Middle East (1966–1967).

His Academic Career

His formal teaching career began at the University of Malaya, the first university established in Malaysia in 1905. Initially created to address the shortage of doctors in the country, it later expanded into many other faculties, much like other institutes of higher learning around the world. Currently, UM is ranked as the third-best university in Southeast Asia and 60th in the world. In Malaysia, it holds the top position. Prof. Hasan worked at UM from 1971 to 1972.

In 1972, he moved to Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) (National University of Malaysia), where he gained significant experience in both teaching and research. It was here that he reached the pinnacle of his academic career. Starting as an Assistant Professor, he eventually attained the status of Associate Professor in 1976 and later became a full Professor in 1986. While teaching at UKM, Prof. Hasan was invited to be a Visiting Professor at Riyadh University, Saudi Arabia (1977-1978). Additionally, he had the privilege of being a Visiting Professor at Cambridge and a consultant psychologist at the Stanford Research Institute, Menlo Park, California, USA.

After dedicating 19 years of his life to UKM, Prof. Hasan decided to move to a fully international institution, the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). At that time, IIUM was perhaps the only international university in Malaysia. Being

passionate about sharing his research, Prof. Hasan actively participated in many international forums, seminars, and conferences around the world. Countries such as Japan, the USA, Australia, the Middle East, and Fiji invited him as a guest speaker.

His Writings

All in all, Prof. Hasan wrote twenty-four (24) academic books and more than sixty articles in reputed journals such as the Journal of Social Psychology, Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, Islamic Quarterly, Muslim Education Quarterly, and Dewan Masyarakat. The majority of his writings were done in Malay and Indonesian to cater to the people in the Malay world. Teaching at IIUM required him to teach and write in English and Arabic. In addition to publishing articles in English and Arabic, Prof. Hasan has also authored several books in Arabic.

His many decades of teaching at several institutions of higher learning have enabled Prof. Hasan to educate thousands of students, particularly those pursuing their Diploma of Education, Islamic Studies, Psychology, and Philosophy at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

As a well-trained scholar in both Western and Islamic psychology, Prof. Hasan was competent in explaining the differences between the two by performing a comparative analysis. After highlighting these differences, he always encouraged his students not to outright reject all ideas presented by Western psychologists. According to him, the agreeable aspects of Western psychological theories should be integrated into the framework of Islamic psychology. He believed that this approach could be beneficial for the enrichment of knowledge within the Muslim Ummah.

My Affiliation with Prof. Hasan

Prof. Hasan joined IIUM in 1989 and began his teaching career in the Department of Education, which later became the Kulliyah/Faculty of Education at IIUM. In 1993, I had the opportunity to enroll in his class for Islamic Psychology. As a postgraduate student at IIUM, I took several courses under him for both my Master's and PhD. Being a serious student dedicated to my research, my commitment to my studies caught Prof. Hasan's attention. Beyond our interactions in the lecture hall, I learned many things from him during my visits to his office and while enjoying coffee at the cafeteria. He was the first lecturer who was able to explain to me clearly the works of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) and his psychoanalytic movement, going beyond the textbooks. In addition to Freud, he also introduced me to the ideas of J.B. Watson(1878-19580), B.F. Skinner (1904-1990), Abraham Maslow(1908-1970) Carl Rogers (1902-1987), and other prominent Western psychologists.

In contrast to Western psychology, Professor Hasan also introduced me to the field of Islamic psychology by familiarizing me with the works of Imam Al-Ghazali(1043-1111), Malik Badri (1932-2021), Osman Najati(1914-2000), Naquib al-Attas (1931-), and others. Overwhelmed by the wealth of knowledge in psychology, I wrote my Master's thesis titled 'Human Nature: A Comparative Study Between Western and Islamic Psychology' under Professor Hasan's supervision. In this humble work, I discussed the topic of human nature related to five areas of psychology: personality, mental health, creativity, psychotherapy, and motivation. Gaining experience through research work, I managed to publish several articles based on the five areas of psychology I explored in my thesis.

For my PhD dissertation, Professor Hasan became my supervisor once again. This time, I wanted to explore the personality theories proposed by Freud and Iqbal. However, while I was writing the second chapter of my dissertation, Professor Hasan began experiencing some health issues and sadly passed away on August 2, 2008. Determined to complete my research and studies at the Kulliyah of Education, I sought the assistance of Prof. Nik Ahmad Hisham to serve as my replacement supervisor in Prof. Hasan's absence. By the grace of God, with the motivation and guidance of Prof. Nik, I was able to complete my research and pass the viva with excellent results. The research I conducted for my PhD was later published under the title 'Iqbal's Personality Theory: A Contrastive Analysis with Freud' by Lambert Academic Publishing in Germany (2013).

Concluding Remarks:

Prof. Hasan was a great scholar and psychologist. From a young age, he positioned himself to achieve great things, not for personal glory, but for Islam and the Muslim Ummah. His humility as a seeker of knowledge and a researcher earned him a large number of friends, students, and followers, primarily in the Malay world—Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei. Though he came from humble beginnings in Indonesia, his scientific work and other academic achievements mainly took place elsewhere, particularly in the West, the Middle East, and Malaysia. For his remarkable contributions and dedication to education, philosophy, and psychology, he was selected in 2002 by the academic community in Kuala Lumpur to receive the title of 'Profesor Diraya' (Royal Professor). As a celebrated scholar, his ideas are still being researched by many at the postgraduate level. While he is no longer physically with us, his name and ideas continue to resonate in the corridors of lecture halls.

