

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN MALAYSIAN PSYCHOLOGY

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HISTORY OF PSYCHOLOGY IN MALAYSIA

WAN RAFAEI ABDUL RAHMAN

We begin by looking at how psychology was used informally in Malaysia. For instance, through observation of behaviour in society in the past, proverbs came into being, depicting the behaviour of the society. A theoretical framework on the relationship between effort and performance can be put together based on those proverbs. Informal psychology is also applied in the treatment of psychological problems by the 'bomohs' (traditional healers) such as the use of the concept 'semangat' in the cure for 'santau'. Islamization has also provided traditional healers with extra conceptual tools. The second part deals with formal psychology. It started with the establishment of psychology departments in the local universities. Among Asian countries, Malaysia was the fifth country to start formal psychology after Bangladesh, India, China and Taiwan. With the increasing number of departments and faculties, the number of courses at undergraduate and post graduate level has increased. Research in general has also increased and with IIUM spearheading research in psychology and Islam, more such research is taking place.