

**THE ROLE OF MUHAMMAD YUSOF BIN
AHMAD IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF
MALAY EDUCATION,
1920 - 1950**

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1920 - 1950**

by

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**Thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

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STUDENT DECLARATION

“I, the undersigned, hereby declare that this submission is my own work and contains no materials previously written or published except where due acknowledgment is made in the thesis.”



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Date: 1 April, 2024

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADC	Assistant District Commissioner
ADOE	Assistant Director of Education
ADO	Assistant District Officer
DBP	Dewan Bahasa Pustaka
DO	District Officer
DOE	Director of Education
EC	English College
EIC	East India Company
FLC	Federal Legislative Council
FMS	Federated Malay States
GLU	General Labour Union
FMSVF	Federation of Malay States Voluntary Service
HH	His Highness
HRH	His Royal Highness
IOS	Inspector of Schools
JMS	Jempol Malay School
KMM	Kesatuan Melayu Muda
KPGMPTM	Kesatuan Persatuan Guru-Guru Melayu Persekutuan Tanah Melayu
KPGMS	Kesatuan Penulis Guru-Guru Melayu Semenanjung
LMS	Linggi Malay School
PEDC	Pahang Exploration and Development Company
MAIS	Malay Assistant Inspector of Schools
MAS	Malay Administrative Service

MAP	Malay Assistant Principal
MCM	Malay College Melaka
MCKK	Malay College Kuala Kangsar
MCP	Malayan Communist Party
MCS	Malayan Civil Service
MES	Malay Educational Service
MG	<i>Majallah Guru</i>
PGM	Persatuan Guru-Guru Melayu
RI	Raffles Institution
SGDC	Straits and General Development Company
SITC	Sultan Idris Training College
SMC	Special Malay Class
SMSTA	Selangor Malay Schools Teachers Association
SR	Secretary to the Resident
SS	Straits Settlements
SOAS	School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London
SSC	Sultan Suleiman Club
TAR	Tuanku Abdul Rahman
UMNO	United Malay National Organisation
UMS	Unfederated Malay States
UNSW	University of New South Wales
WW1	World War One
WW2	World War Two
Za'ba	Zainal Abidin bin Ahmad
3R	Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic

PERANAN MUHAMMAD YUSOF BIN AHMAD DALAM PEMBANGUNAN PENDIDIKAN ORANG MELAYU, 1920 - 1950

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini meneliti peranan Muhammad Yusof bin Ahmad pada waktu di mana pergerakan mobiliti sosial petani Melayu amat bergantung kepada pendidikan Melayu dan akses kepada peluang-peluang pendidikan. Oleh yang demikian, objektif kajian ini adalah untuk: menganalisis perkembangan pendidikan vernakular Melayu di Negeri-Negeri Melayu Bersekutu dari awal pengenalannya hingga ke tahun 1950; membincangkan kemunculan Malay Educational Service (MES) yang terdiri daripada sekumpulan pentadbir Melayu yang diberi kuasa untuk memainkan peranan utama; menggunakan pendekatan biografi kepada kajian tentang Muhammad Yusof dalam membentuk satu biografi sejarah dengan tumpuan utama terhadap atribut-atribut kepimpinan beliau dan hubungan dinamik dengan kumpulan pembuat keputusan British; dan menilai sumbangan Muhammad Yusof terhadap pembangunan pendidikan di Selangor dan Negeri-Negeri Melayu Bersekutu. Bagi mencapai objektif tersebut, Muhammad Yusof dianggap sebagai tumpuan utama, dengan maklumat sokongan dikumpul daripada rekod-rekod pentadbiran kolonial, kurikulum, laporan dari Jabatan Pendidikan, dan penerbitan-penerbitan termasuk bahan-bahan yang tidak diterbitkan daripada koleksi simpanan Muhammad Yusof. Ini adalah penting untuk memahami apakah sebenarnya perkembangan pendidikan Melayu pada waktu pentadbiran British; siapakah pegawai-pegawai MES yang terlibat dari 1920 sehingga 1950, dan peranan, tanggungjawab, dan sumbangan mereka kepada pendidikan Melayu, siapakah Muhammad Yusof, dan apakah peranan dan sumbangan beliau terhadap pendidikan Melayu. Akhir sekali, penyelidikan ini adalah tertumpu kepada hasil kerja beliau, pengaruh, dan impak sebagai seorang aktivis pendidikan. Dari segi metodologi kajian, satu gabungan kaedah kualitatif dengan pendekatan biografi digunakan untuk membincangkan aspek-aspek sejarah yang telah dipinggirkan bagi mencapai satu kesimpulan bahawa terdapat dua jenis pentadbir British yang mana tindakan atau tiada tindakan oleh mereka mempunyai kesan yang besar terhadap sesuatu keadaan. Tidak kurang penting adalah peranan MES, pegawai-pegawai Melayu secara umum, dan Muhammad Yusof secara

khusus, untuk memenuhi jurang-jurang pengetahuan sejarah dan membuka jalan untuk memikirkan semula tentang zaman pentadbiran kolonial British. Implikasi yang lebih luas daripada penyelidikan ini adalah sungguhpun terdapat dominasi British, Muhammad Yusof telah berjaya untuk mempengaruhi pemikiran konstruktif para pendidik British dan menjadi agen perubahan untuk memajukan pendidikan Melayu dan seterusnya.

THE ROLE OF MUHAMMAD YUSOF BIN AHMAD IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF MALAY EDUCATION, 1920 - 1950

ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of Muhammad Yusof bin Ahmad during a time when the social upward mobility of the Malay peasantry was dependent on Malay education and access to educational opportunities. Therefore, the objectives are; to analyze the development of Malay vernacular-education in British Malaya from its inception to 1950; to discuss the emergence of the Malay Educational Service (MES) comprising a group of Malay administrators empowered to play a leading role; to employ a biographical approach to the study of Muhammad Yusof in constructing a historical biography with a special focus on his leadership attributes and dynamic relationship with British decision-makers; to evaluate Muhammad Yusof's contribution to education development in Selangor, and British Malaya. To meet these objectives, Muhammad Yusof is weighed in as a focal point, with supporting data extracted from colonial records, curricula, Department of Education reports, and publications including surviving evidence from Muhammad Yusof's archives. This is essential to consider what the Malay education development in British Malaya was all about; who the MES officials from 1920 to 1950 were, and their roles, responsibilities, and contributions to Malay education; who was Muhammad Yusof, and what was his role and contribution to Malay education. Lastly, it is on his work, influence, and impact as an education activist. For a methodology, a combination of qualitative method and a biographical approach is employed to discuss neglected areas in history and to reach a conclusion whereby there are two types of British officials whose action or inaction had a huge bearing on a given outcome. Equally important is the role of the MES, its Malay officials in general, and Muhammad Yusof in particular, to fill a gap in historical knowledge and to open the way to rethinking the colonial period. The broader implication of this study is that despite the inevitability of British domination, Muhammad Yusof had leveraged the constructive nature of British educationalists and navigated as an agent of change to advance the cause for Malay education and beyond.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION



Figure 1.1: Muhammad Yusof bin Ahmad, 1940. Source: Muhammad Yusof's Private Collection

1.1 Background of Study

This thesis is written with respect to the work, life, and thoughts of Muhammad Yusof bin Ahmad (Figure 1.1) during a period of great change in British Malaya. The study is made in the context of his role to educate and reform the Malays, and in the seminal development of intelligentsia when they were grappling to make a sense of where they stood as a race and where they were heading. For the period between 1920 and 1950, Muhammad Yusof was a Malay Educational Service (MES) officer and as a senior Malay Assistant Inspector of Schools (MAIS), Selangor had dedicated 20 years of his life to take them out of their social backwardness and poverty-stricken life. His role as the Head of the Malay Section in the Department of Education, Kuala Lumpur (1933-1941) and Malay Assistant Principal (MAP: 1940-1942; 1946-1950) at Sultan Idris Training College (SITC) will also be made to amplify his struggles as an agent of change. Other than being a senior officer, particular focus will be made on Muhammad Yusof's role as an education activist whose voice was less politically strident than those who agitated for the nationalist agenda, and if writers of Malaysian history have overlooked his

contributions, this thesis will hopefully find its way to inverse his lack of recognition.¹ The period during the Japanese occupation of Malaya (1942-1945) is outside the scope of this thesis but will be discussed briefly. Apart from Muhammad Yusof, one chapter will be devoted to the MES and its Malay officers who played a significant role during the same period. They were trained and supervised so they could contribute to the development of Malay education. Their voices too must be heard.

1.2 Literature Review

Many studies have been conducted on education in British Malaya, with a focus on the efforts made by British visionaries, enablers, administrators, and educationalists. However, little attention has been given to the impact the indigenous government administrators had on Malay education. Had R.O. Winstedt not operationalized the MES, the state of Malay education could have been vastly different in its outcome. H.R. Cheeseman (1954), for instance, conducted a study on education development for the period between 1900 and 1941.² He acknowledged the significant role Winstedt played in the direction of educational reforms so Malay education could grow on an incremental basis. However, Cheeseman did not touch on the products of the MES that Winstedt painstakingly inculcated and groomed. As such, scholars now have an excellent opportunity to examine the roles, attitudes, and responses of these MES officers as well as the Malay community towards education in general and Malay education development in particular.

¹ Mark Emmanuel, "A Life Unrecognised: Muhammad Yusuf Ahmad and Majalah Guru", in Jan van der Putten and Mary Kilcline Cody (eds.), *Lost Times and Untold Tales from the Malay World*, Singapore: NUS Press, 2011. It is also due to the life he led in the shadows of his extraordinary older brother Zainal Abidin bin Ahmad (Za'ba), the Eminent Scholar (*Pendeta*).

² H.R. Cheeseman, "Education in Malaya, 1900-1941", Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia, *Journal of the Malaysian Historical Society*, Vol. 18, No. 2, 1970, pp. 126-137. Cheeseman was in Malaya from 1907 to 1948. "A Teacher and Educator for 41 years", *The New Straits Times*, 10 December 1948, p. 6.

Another important study is by D.D. Chelliah (1940)³ who did an in-depth analysis of the British educational policy in the Straits Settlements and a new system based on vernaculars. In his study, Chelliah discussed the origins of Malay education under Stamford Raffles in 1819 to when R.O. Winstedt revolutionized along industrial lines in 1916 while the sound grounding on the 3Rs (Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic) was made to foster an interest in agriculture and the business of the villages.⁴ In 1919, MAIS was appointed under the newly established MES to ensure further development, growth, and effective supervision of Malay schools. Here the role of MAIS was not discussed in detail but clearly, Malay education from this point onwards was on the rise and fast gaining momentum. Thus, a phenomenon this thesis will attempt to explicate. Meanwhile, the study by Kevin Blackburn and ZongLun Wu (2019),⁵ is not meant to discuss the role of Malay administrators and educationalists but the scholars' views resonate well with the biography-historical analysis of Muhammad Yusof. Especially in his formative years where he benefited from learning Imperial and Malayan history that was distinctly different from the sons of nobility who did not go to Malay schools.⁶ How the latter were not suited to the role and functions of overseeing Malay vernacular education is implied as such.⁷ Incidentally, MAIS were recruited from the Malay peasantry. Except for a few, they were in the main Malay and English-educated.

³ D. D. Chelliah, *A History of the Educational Policy of the Straits Settlements with Recommendations for a New System based on Vernaculars*, PhD Thesis, University of London, 1940.

⁴ Ibid, p. 71.

⁵ Kevin Blackburn and ZongLun Wu, *Decolonizing the History Curriculum in Malaysia and Singapore*, Oxon, New York: Routledge, 2019.

⁶ There are exceptions. Malaysia's first king Tuanku Abdul Rahman ibni Almarhum Tuanku Muhammad, for instance, had gone to a Malay vernacular school in Jempol, Negeri Sembilan. See Abdullah Hussain and Khalid M. Hussain, *Pendeta Za'ba dalam Kenangan*, Kuala Lumpur: DBP, 2000, p. 17.

⁷ In 1898, Vernacular Education was defined as the teaching of Malay boys to read and write Malay, arithmetic, geography, and Romanized Malay. The definition of 'vernacular' as defined then will be used repeatedly in this thesis. See Awang Had Salleh. *Malay Secular Education and Teacher Training in British Malaya (with special reference to the Sultan Idris Training College)*, Kuala Lumpur: DBP, 1979, p. 12.

In the early 19th century, the British policy on education was to segregate a plural society and the polyglot population of British Malaya. From the perspective of the Chinese community, Tan Liok Ee (1997)⁸ has given us an account of the origins of Chinese schools, their resilience in post-colonial Malaya, the Chinese education movement, inconclusiveness in the compromises for national integration, conflicts arising from a pluralistic approach to nation building, and confrontations that have left the future of Chinese education in a state of uncertainty.⁹ Notwithstanding the increasing popularity of Chinese schools, the same conflicts that took place many years ago remain unabated and it does not look like it will be resolved any time soon. Lee Ting Hui (2011)¹⁰ has looked at the evolution of Chinese Schools in West Malaysia and how they have managed to survive during the British, Japanese, and post-independence Malaysian government era. Although he focuses more on the use of Malay as the language of instruction in all schools, and how the Chinese community has responded, it remains a valuable study on the history of Chinese education. The study covers a wide range of issues with many positive takes but where the Malaysian government's objective is to streamline the use of Malay for national integration, this matter remains unresolved. In fact, the failure to reach an agreement on the type of nation Malaysians want to build has led to conflicts in the past, and a united Malaysian nation in a not-too-distant future continues to hang in the balance. Still, on Chinese education, the study by Tan Yao Sua (2021)¹¹ gives us a nuanced historical perspective. Tan's account articulates how Chinese education

⁸ Tan Liok Ee, *The Politics of Chinese Education in Malaya, 1945-1961*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1997.

⁹ Ibid. pp. 96-97. Here education activists such as Lim Lian Geok have articulated a political vision that emphasizes multi-ethnic, multilingual, and multicultural characteristics as essentials to interracial integration and a source of the nation's strength.

¹⁰ Lee Ting Hui, *Chinese Schools in Peninsular Malaysia: The Struggle for Survival*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2011

¹¹ Tan Yao Sua, *The Development of Chinese Education in Malaysian*, Petaling Jaya: Strategic Information and Research Development (SIRD) Centre, 2021.

has evolved from the time Chinese immigrants came as transients to what it is today. The Chinese system of education continued to face many challenges in the 1980s but stayed resilient. In 1992, the London-based Minority Rights Group Report on the Chinese in South East Asia noted that “Malaysia has South East Asia’s most comprehensive Chinese-language system of education”, comparatively more impressive than any other country. Whilst the metamorphosis of Chinese education provides for an interesting read, it has no direct bearing whatsoever on this thesis except to validate the impact and serious consequences of education segregated along ethnic lines, and that this remains a matter of great concern for all Malaysians. Likewise, the study of Indian education where Kernial Singh Sandhu (1969)¹² acquaints us with the general characteristics of the Indians and the salient tendencies within their community. Here Sandhu tells us how the Indians have identified their interest with the future of the country and assumed a greater role in its politico-economic development. The evolution of the Indian community up to 1957 has contributed significantly to Malaya’s position as one of the best and richest independent nations in Asia. As for Tamil education, more can be found in the study by Sinnappah Arasaratnam (1970)¹³ who described how the Indian language schools of the early 19th century were in urban settings run by Christian missionaries. When schools in plantations were opened, there was no policy or proper control by the government. The state of affairs was poor and the Tamil education system, as Arasaratnam has described, was nothing but a sham, a mockery, and the Cinderella of the whole education system. However, conditions improved after the war when a national education policy was formulated, but where Indian vernacular schools

¹² Kernial Singh Sandhu, *Indians in Malaya: Some aspects of their Immigration and Settlement (1786-1957)*, London: Syndics of the Cambridge University Press, 1969.

¹³ Sinnappah Arasaratnam, *Indians in Malaysia and Singapore*, London: Oxford University Press, 1980.

prevailed, questions on national integration and unity remained unanswered. In recent times, T. Marimuthu has identified the problems faced by Tamil schools from the colonial period to the present day.¹⁴ He then discussed the impact of various educational policy changes since 1957, analysed the future of Tamil education, and explained how students have been driven away from government schools either to the Chinese or Tamil vernacular schools as a way to better protect the Chinese and Indian language and culture. Again, useful only as a backdrop to the study of Malay education.

As we have seen briefly, a failed British policy to create an integrated multi-racial education system has led to a broad communal division in a plural society. Many studies have amplified its egregious consequences. The study by Awang Had Salleh (1979),¹⁵ for instance, has shown how British dominance in particular the paternalistic role they played in confining Malay education to primary-level schooling could delay the Malay community's awareness of and their desire for independence.¹⁶ But not so by the time they were in SITC, a secondary-level Malay institution. However, Rex Stevenson (1975) has taken a step back to look at how and why the educational policy for the Malays was formulated in the first place.¹⁷ Therein, he examines the fundamental division in traditional Malay society between rulers and the ruled. This study also looks at the character and background of British administrators who were responsible for framing educational policies and shaping Victorian social and class attitudes in the Malays. Unfortunately, the expressed

¹⁴ T. Marimuthu, "Tamil Education: Problems and Prospect", in Ibrahim Ahmad Bajunid (ed.), *Malaysia: From Traditional to Smart Schools, The Malaysian Educational Odyssey*, Shah Alam: Oxford Fajar Sdn. Bhd., 2008.

¹⁵ Awang Had Salleh. *Malay Secular Education and Teacher Training in British Malaya (with special reference to the Sultan Idris Training College)*, Kuala Lumpur: DBP, 1979, pp. 132-133.

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 147.

¹⁷ Rex Stevenson, *Cultivators and Administrators: British Educational Policy Towards the Malays 1875-1906*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1975p. IX-XI (Preface).

views, reactions, and attitudes of the Malays could not be reviewed in their entirety due to a dearth of Malay records, but when they became available, their stories must be told. In the same vein too is the study by Philip Loh Fook Seng (1975) who traced the origins of the four school systems based on colonial records.¹⁸ He referred to newspapers such as *Majallah Guru*, *Majlis*, and *Utusan Zaman* to consider the position of the Malays and ethnic components of society, mainly the Chinese and Indians. But of the four school systems, only in English schools was there an acquisition of competence in English that reduced ethnic division and separateness in a segmented society, and for the individuals, it was an economic asset as well.¹⁹ To reinforce his study, Loh brings to light the roles played by British enablers and reviews aspects of British administration that could have been more effective had it not been constricted by politicking, prejudices, and bureaucracy found in the government machinery and the Malayan Civil Service. The role played by MAIS is just as relevant but only discussed in passing. Therefore, a gap in history that needs to be filled. Meanwhile, Khoo Kay Kim (1991),²⁰ has awakened us to another perspective on Malay society after the fall of the Malacca Sultanate to what had emerged subsequently. An example is a perspective of Islam that energized the call for unity by the Malays during a period of rapid modernization which has been given little attention by scholars. Thus, a need to relook at the delicate question of why Malay society had self-strengthened and reformed within Islam. In doing so, Malays developed deep-rooted prejudices towards circular education and to break down this barrier was a great challenge for any MAIS.

¹⁸ Philip Loh Fook Seng, *Seeds of Separatism: Educational Policy in Malaya, 1874-1940*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1975.

¹⁹ Ibid. p. 123.

²⁰ Khoo Kay Kim, *Malaya Society, Transformation and Democratisation*, Petaling Jaya: Pelanduk Publications (M) Sdn. Bhd., 1991.

In another study, Khoo Kay Kim and Mohd. Fadhil Othman (1980)²¹ provides examples of how complex and diverse education was before and after Malaya's independence in 1957. One is by Abd. Rahim bin Abdullah²² who tells us how Malay circular education began in Penang, but it was the state of Melaka that the British regarded as the most successful in the mid-19th century. This was despite a lengthy period of neglect before the British imperial government took action to educate the Malays with an enactment of the School Attendance Ordinance, 1902 to force Malays to go to schools, and to then see a gradual acceptance by the Malays themselves. Still, Malay education before the war was rudimentary and English education was made available only to the very few as the policy then was to not overeducate the Malays for fear of unsettling their socio-political existence. As for the state of Johor, M.A. Fawzi Basri²³ has stressed the role played by able rulers who took considerable interest in educating their subjects. From the times of Temenggong Ibrahim to Ungku Abu Bakar, there was continuity in Johor to instill Malay education first before English and to not disregard the traditional schools for Quran reading and Islamic studies as well as education for Malay girls. In Singapore, Christian missionaries played an important role where educational growth in Johor ran parallel to the educational development of the island state. These three types of schools were inter-connected and produced Malay intellectuals and administrators of the 19th and 20th centuries. In fact, many Malay administrators were by-products of the state's education system that encouraged further education in England. The need

²¹ Khoo Kay Kim and Mohd Fadhil Othman (eds.), *Pendidikan di Malaysia Dahulu dan Sekarang*, Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia, 1980.

²² Abd. Rahim bin Abdullah, "Melaka: Orang Melayu dan Pendidikan Sekular", in Khoo Kay Kim and Mohd. Fadhil Othman (eds.), *Pendidikan di Malaysia Dahulu dan Sekarang*, Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia, 1980, pp. 1-26.

²³ Fawzi Basri, "Perkembangan Pendidikan di Negeri Johor, 1856-1939", in Khoo Kay Kim and Mohd Fadhil Othman (eds.), *Pendidikan di Malaysia Dahulu dan Sekarang*, Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia, 1980, pp. 27-58.

for teachers' training too was not neglected. Johor also benefited from having a British advisor and a superintendent to help develop a 10-year education plan to infuse English into the state's education system. From these two studies, it is evident that Malay education was more developed in Penang, Melaka, and Johor as they were the earlier states the British had direct interests in after the Straits Settlements were established. Thus, a head start over the rest of the Malay states, and is the basis for further analysis of Malay education.

Notwithstanding a variety of compelling factors that contributed to the development of Malay education, the role played by Malay teachers could not be understated. In Buyong bin Adil's article, he wrote on teachers who gave SITC "its soul" during the 18 years he was there from 1924 to 1941.²⁴ There is no doubt SITC was key to producing more qualified teachers since 1922 but because Buyong Adil was mostly reminiscing and paying tribute to the staff that he knew, it is unclear as to how teachers from the perspective of a MAIS had become agents of change. The role of MAP too was not characterized as this was not the focus of his writing. Nor was the function of the college magazine *Cenderamata*. In fact, Buyong said nothing of Muhammad Yusof who was MAP (1940-1941) or talked about Ibrahim bin Muhammad Peral as an editor except for the latter's role as a teacher. Another view is found in the article written by Abdul Aziz Mat Ton²⁵ who talks about a new pride of the Malays in their schools not widely seen before World War 2. From 1945 to 1948, a period of revival had seen more Malay children returning to schools. Invigorated by the Spirit of 1946, Malays stood up to the Malayan Union

²⁴ Buyong bin Adil, "Kenangan kepada Sultan Idris Training College", in Khoo Kay Kim and Mohd Fadhil Othman (eds.), *Pendidikan di Malaysia Dahulu dan Sekarang*, Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia, 1980, pp. 127-139.

²⁵ Abdul Aziz Mat Ton, "Persekolahan Melayu, 1945-1948: Satu Manifestasi Semangat Perjuangan Melayu", in Khoo Kay Kim, Mohd Fadzil Othman (eds.), *Pendidikan di Malaysia Dahulu dan Sekarang*, Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia, 1980, pp. 140-164

government, shed their prejudices, and were uncritical of where their children could go including agricultural and trade schools. Even girls who went to boys' schools were considered acceptable. However, Malay education policies remained unchanged. The reason a structural change required a great deal of resources and therefore could not be implemented was not enough to hold Malay education back to pre-war standards. Evidently, during this time, the SITC had reopened and students who returned to the college were older. Having gone through hardships during the war, they found fit in 1949 to rebel against the college administration over class assignments they felt did not benefit them. There had been a great deal of dissatisfaction in the past, and this incident was the outcome of a British experiment that had outlived its useful life. The abject dullness and apathy in the students the government had long ignored was finally exposed.²⁶ Before long, Malays began to intensify their efforts. Malay rulers came forward with grants while the intellectuals reinvented themselves. Funds were raised and students were given the opportunity to pursue English education in Malaya and further education abroad. As for the Malayan Union, this British plan was rejected and the agreement subsequently repealed. Change in Malaya, as it were, was inevitable.

The article by Abdul Malek bin Mohamed, *ad interim*, talks about the origins of Trade Schools in British Malaya and how they had evolved.²⁷ The main reason for having these schools from 1926 onwards, according to Abdul Malek, was to train Malays in towns so they could do more than work as peons and messengers. The intention and indeed the outcome was to produce a low-level workforce for operational efficiency in government departments. These schools were mostly

²⁶ Final Report of the Commission Appointed to Enquire into Certain Matters Connected with the Sultan Idris Training College, Tanjong Malim, 1950, p. 6.

²⁷ Abdul Malek bin Mohamed, "Perkembangan Pelajaran Teknik dan Vokesyenal, 1957-1974", in Khoo Kay Kim and Mohd Fadhil Othman (eds.), *Pendidikan di Malaysia Dahulu dan Sekarang*, Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia, 1980, pp. 248-288.

located in the Straits Settlements, and in the western states where British economic interests were more prevalent. Another form of training was in a Farm School for the agricultural sector. In the absence of Malay secondary education, these vocational schools were built to produce qualified, skilled, and semi-skilled workforce to meet the growing demands of various sectors such as engineering, agriculture, and commerce, and were seen as a continuum since not all Malays could proceed to English schools. We shall see how Trade and Farm Schools are intertwined with Malay vernacular education and have found their place under a “divide and rule” education policy that Tan Yao Sua and Santhiram R. Raman (2009)²⁸ described as a cause for disequilibrium in British Malaya. The consequence of the dualistic system of education, in the wake of rapid encroachment by immigrant communities, according to the authors, was radicalism and anti-British stance by Malay peasants who became destitute by the lack of social mobility. Although the two sections of Malay communities were on diverging paths, they shared a common goal to free themselves from colonial rule. After the war, they focalized in unison so the pro-British traditional elites could negotiate terms with the British. Yet at the time when the latter was able to exercise great influence, the dualistic education system was seen as a way forward. The onus must therefore be with MES officers to innovate so Malays could go further. Indeed, notwithstanding the thrust made by British administrators to bring about change that Ibrahim Saad (1986) said was to strengthen their influence over the indigenous.²⁹ In this regard, Ibrahim’s analysis was to illustrate how Malay education was used as a means to civilize a race the British regarded as inferior. In the process, they denigrated the Malays to justify their cause

²⁸ Tan Yao Sua and Santhiram R. Raman, “The British Educational Policy for the Indigenous Community in Malaya: Dualistic Structure, Colonial Interests, and Malay Radical Nationalism”, Penang: *Universiti Sains Malaysia, Centre for Policy Research and International Studies*, Paper No., 109/09, 2009, pp. 1-13.

²⁹ Ibrahim Saad, *Pendidikan dan Politik di Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur: DBP, 1986, pp. 1-10.

and bolstered colonial powers to rule. One of the ways was through the work of British Orientalists where Malay civilization and culture have been construed as archaic and primitive so they could be used as a political tool to regenerate the Malays with the 3Rs and in English schools to produce low-level clerks. However, despite being Malay-centric, missing in Ibrahim's study is a biographical and oral history of the Malays who saw changes that took place from a different light where the metamorphosis of Malay education was not framed in isolation by the British but improved upon and made intelligible by the Malays.

In the same context, historian Adnan Hj. Nawang³⁰ talks about the role played by Khwaja Kamaluddin (1870-1932) in relation to Za'ba who saw himself amongst an invigorated generation of youths (*Kaum Muda*), and how the forward-looking ways of Khwaja had inspired him. At first glance, the study of Khwaja, a progressive thinker and an influential Muslim missionary, appears to not have any relevance to Malay education whatsoever but a closer look tells us otherwise. How so stems from the influence Khwaja had on Za'ba. This and the useful tools Za'ba found in Khwaja's publications to promote Islamic values that made use of one's intellect, knowledge, reason, and common sense. Unlike the old ways (*Cara Tua*) that propagate fanaticism, sectarianism, and bigotry that Za'ba said did not exist in the Malay language.³¹ Useful too were societies and associations that unified Khwaja's followers, and the best methods to disseminate knowledge that did not originate from the British but was transmitted from an individual of Khwaja's calibre. As for the indigenization of knowledge, it was Za'ba's diligence that paved the way for many others to emulate. Here Adnan Nawang's take is drawn parallel to

³⁰ Adnan Hj. Mohd. Nawang, "Za'ba dan Ajaran Khwaja Kamaluddin", in Khoo Kay Kim and Mohd Fadhil Othman (eds.), *Pendidikan di Malaysia Dahulu dan Sekarang*, Kuala Lumpur: Historical Society of Malaysia, 1980, pp. 70-102.

³¹ Ibid, 1980, p.91.

Soda Naoki's (2001) indigenization of British colonial knowledge.³² In his study, Naoki looks at how the transmission of colonial knowledge from British scholars to a Malay teacher was made through a discourse analysis of Malay textbooks. These textbooks have made a transition on history (and geography) initially written by R.J. Wilkinson for British readers to R.O. Winstedt who then took a scientific approach to write history for Malay readers before Abdul Hadi bin Hassan wrote history for Malay students. This, according to Naoki, was achieved through a diffusion of the modern system of knowledge from British to Malay writers rather than through the selective appropriation of novel ideas by the latter. Indeed, a two-way appropriation and transformation rather than passive acceptance by the Malays. Here Naoki has echoed Shamsul A.B. who said that not only the colonialists were appropriating what the locals had to offer but the locals too were selecting, appropriating, and internalizing what the colonialists offered them.³³ From this study, it can be deduced that the same can be said of Muhammad Yusof who gained much from the British. Whether it was about leadership skills that he had acquired or the way British Inspector of Schools (IOS) operates based on a proven British idea that they could perform more efficiently as "parts of the engine of the fire carriage that revolve smoothly, never ceasing, without haste, without rest, following always a path laid down."³⁴ Unlike how the Malays once ruled the land, like "the ship of the state, where the raja is the captain, the Vizier steersman, one Penglima chief of the larboard and one of the starboard deck."³⁵ In like manner, the British may not have

³² Soda Naoki, "The Malay World in Textbooks: The Transmission of Colonial Knowledge in British Malaya", *South East Asian Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 2, September 2001, pp. 188-234.

³³ Shamsul A.B., "Debating about Identity in Malaysia: A Discourse Analysis. In Mediating Identities in a Changing Malaysia", Zawawi Ibrahim (ed.), Special Issue of *South East Asian Studies*, 34 (3), 1996a, p. 14.

³⁴ R.O. Winstedt, "GULA: A Portrait", in H.R. Cheeseman, and Eric Gillett, (Compilers), *Nelson's Malayan Readers, Book VI*, London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., 1931, p. 119.

³⁵ Ibid.

intended for Muhammad Yusof to indigenize colonial knowledge, transform and change the Malay mindset, and awaken them to the realities of their own race. Perhaps they did but this was what Muhammad Yusof had set out to accomplish, regardless, as did his colleagues in the MES, and many other Malay activists such as Onn Jaafar, Za'ba, Syed Sheikh Al-Hadi or even the radically inclined Ibrahim Yaacob. Soda Naoki (2020) then explores further in his book the interrelations between the indigenization of colonial knowledge and the quest for pan-Malay identity in Malaya.³⁶ It involves the transplanting of colonial knowledge to Malays in the first phase and the reorganization of acquired knowledge to make use for their own sake in the second. A prerequisite for these two phases is his assessment of Malay vernacular education in British Malaya, the Malay world in textbooks, and the SITC before a student of Abdul Hadi by the name of Ibrahim Yaacob is taken up as a case study. The aim here is to show that while the colonizers brought new concepts of Malayness to Malaya, the indigenization of colonial knowledge would require significant reinterpretation, transformation, and appropriation. As it turned out, Ibrahim Yaacob went on to become a Malay activist and a radical who led the Kesatuan Melayu Muda (KMM), a pan-Malay national party. Being someone from the Malay medium both at the primary and secondary level at SITC, he was considered an archetypal in popular Malay nationalism as he had used imported knowledge to legitimize his cause. He would then reorganize for the sake of his argument, his reinterpretation of progressive views of Malay history. Thereafter, he anticipated the coming of a new era of independence, an age of rebirth, and renewal seen as a transformation of imported knowledge. This in a nutshell explains why the formation of Malay identity in colonial Malaya was the result of interaction between

³⁶ Soda Naoki, "Indigenizing Colonial Knowledge: The Formation of Malay Identity in British Malaya", *IIAS Newsletter*, No. 29, November 2003, p. 28

external and internal powers of knowledge. After the publication of this book, Soda Naoki's next step would be to compare not only Ibrahim Yaacob and Malay intellectuals but also between Malay-medium education and others, namely English-medium and Islamic (Arab-medium) education.

Winstedt in History by Wang Gungwu (1967)³⁷ is pertinent to the discussions on the development of Malay education in British Malaya. In his article, Gungwu has brought to light Winstedt's vast contribution to Malay scholarship, his role in British colonial history, and the kind of place he had in Malaysian history. Notwithstanding Winstedt's dedication and single-minded pursuit of knowledge of the Malay people, he had attracted criticisms from both Malaysians and the British for the dualistic education policy. Firstly, Winstedt had supported the creation of a small English-educated Malay elite initiated by his predecessors. Secondly, a Malay vernacular education to equip Malay peasants that did not go beyond the elementary Gungwu said had impeded the growth of the Malay intellect. Yet Winstedt had lived to see this policy produce Malay elites who became leaders in the process of Malaya's modernisation. Amongst them were the politicians and administrators who had a moderating influence on the Malay community, molding the new Malayan nation, and stamped the pattern of political awakening and fulfillment one generation later.³⁸ By Gungwu's inference, Malay administrators were few in number but influential. They were capable and came with the ability to persuade Malays to accept circular education, raise their political consciousness, and awaken them to the need for reform. Forward steps and strides in education, in fact, could not have been possible without the efforts of these Malay administrators. Neither could the British implement policies had they not provided direction, guidance, and support. Given the

³⁷ Wang Gungwu, *Winstedt in History*, Singapore: The Straits Times Annual, 1967, pp. 91-96.

³⁸ Ibid.

MAIS was in the position to command a large following of school teachers whose influence in their community was growing each day, more Malay parents could be persuaded to send their children to Malay schools and pursue English education to progress further. There was therefore an all-round collective effort. As for the second criticism, Gungwu has touched on areas in need of further research and re-evaluate the roles played by Malay administrators in re-generating the Malays and instilling in them the values of education that many believed did not advance the true interests of Malay peasants. This was because Malay vernacular-education was kept in its elementary although opportunities for Malays to transition from Malay to English were available. Evidently, after Winstedt left for Johor in 1931, Malays were afforded English education on the same terms as other nationalities.³⁹ Thus Gungwu's validation of "Malays learning in English three generations later" is explicit and could not have come to fruition without the combined efforts of British and Malay administrators. Finally, Gungwu has examined the restraints that Winstedt exercised towards the growth of English education in general, and Raffles College in particular which probably delayed the first stage of political awareness and anti-colonial agitation. Here Winstedt has played an important part in the makings of British Malaya, but may have allowed the seeds of Malay nationalism to grow and the decolonisation of British Malaya to succeed. Elsewhere, the unpublished article of Muhammad Yusof (1951) gives us his vivid recollection of the Selangor Malay Schools Teachers' Association (SMSTA).⁴⁰ He describes the origin of the SMSTA, the rationale behind its formation in 1921, and his motivation to play a leading role

³⁹ "Malay boys and English Education", *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, 23 January 1932, p. 3. The same age limit applied to all boys irrespective of race viz., a boy must not have passed his 8th birthday on the 1st of January in the year in which he sought admission to an English school

⁴⁰ Muhammad Yusof bin Ahmad, *Riwayat Menubuhkan Persekutuan Guru-Guru Melayu Selangor*, Linggi, 1951,

until 1940. The contents of this article have shed light on the trials and tribulations of a young MAIS who was entrusted to lead teachers in Selangor. It captures the imagination, grit, and determination of Muhammad Yusof to take teachers under his supervision whom he regarded as “agents of change” from a position of obscurity to new heights. Despite many challenges, he was able to win them over, not only with a viable plan but his successful implementation of it. However, there is no clear evidence of his leadership style in his writings and we are therefore unable to gauge the extent of his influence from this article alone. He made no mention of his administrative ability as a well-trained MAIS except for his prudent management of finances. He also did not speak of his vision for SMSTA to merge with other associations, an important milestone for the association to go further. As it turned out, teachers’ associations in the state of Negeri Sembilan and Melaka had combined their resources with SMSTA to launch in 1924 the publication of a teachers’ magazine called *Majallah Guru*. The merger did not stop there but quickly spread to include Penang, Pahang, and Kelantan for *Majallah Guru* to arguably become the most successful Malay newspaper during its era.⁴¹ The SMSTA was no doubt one of Muhammad Yusof’s several methods to help regenerate the Malays. Hence, the significance of Muhammad Yusof’s article in the history of Malay education.

The PhD thesis of Ali bin Ahmad (1975) is an in-depth study of the teachers’ magazine *Majallah Guru* (MG) and the role played by Muhammad Yusof during the burgeoning period of Malay newspaper publishing from 1920 to 1940.⁴² Ali Ahmad has identified Muhammad Yusof as the main protagonist behind MG’s successes and his immense contribution of articles to create awareness, raise political

⁴¹ Ali bin Ahmad, *Majallah Guru* - The Magazine of the Malay Teachers (with particular reference to the 1924-1932 period and the role played by Muhammad Yusof Ahmad), PhD Thesis, Monash University, 1975. Penang joined in 1925, pp. 68-70. Kelantan joined in 1930, and Pahang in 1931, p. 85.

⁴² Ibid.

consciousness, and to communicate his vision. Written under a number of pseudonyms, Muhammad Yusof found a way to disseminate knowledge, change mindsets and attitudes, shape the way Malays think, and develop their intellect. The study of MG is one of many important studies that have emerged from William Roff's authoritative account of the origins of Malay nationalism. It has given Ali Ahmad the impetus to relook at neglected areas in the history of Malay newspaper publishing and the key role Muhammad Yusof played in MG that Roff incidentally overlooked. In fact, Chapters 1 to 10 have shed light on the highs and lows of MG's life cycle, and how Muhammad Yusof's actions in the course of performing his duties as a MAIS had been misunderstood. Here, Ali Ahmad's one-dimensional criticisms of Muhammad Yusof are the drawbacks of the qualitative approach he adopted despite the many advantages of using this methodology. Ali Ahmad, nonetheless, has gone to great lengths to describe how MG became a symbol of endurance and organisational solidarity admired by many in the Malay world of newspaper publishing. As for Muhammad Yusof's role as a writer, Ali Ahmad has compared him to Syed Sheikh Al-Hadi and Za'ba and described the man as a writer of equal standing in the development of public opinion.⁴³

Last but not least is the study by Dr. Haris Md. Jadi (1990)⁴⁴ for the period between 1955 and 1970. Although the time frame is outside the scope of this thesis, the study provides an interesting read on the development of education after the war and Malaya's independence in 1957. Therein, the scholar has written on the historical background, and the ramifications of British colonialism that shaped the demographic landscape of a polyglot population which continues to influence the

⁴³ Muhammad Yusof bin Ahmad, *Mencari Isteri*, Kuala Lumpur: DBP, 1975, p. 9. Forward written by Ali bin Ahmad. At his home in Sungai Petani, Kedah, Ali Ahmad spoke highly of Muhammad Yusof's role in Malaysia's history and personally expressed this view to Ahmad Husni when the latter visited him on 23 September 2018.

⁴⁴ Haris Md. Jadi, *Etnik, Politik dan Pendidikan*, Kuala Lumpur: DBP, 1990.

political and social systems of Malaysia until today. The outcome was and still is an orientation of politics along ethnic lines, language, and culture; not helped by an educational system left behind by the British to segregate a plural society. Despite the steps taken by the government to integrate its people, the political and economic structure has led to a breakdown in Dr. Haris Md. Jadi's opinion was not because education policies, structure, and curriculum were unfit for its purpose. In fact, the philosophy and rationale for the Razak Report of 1956 was agreed by all on the eve of independence but a conflict arose from the use of Malay as the language of instruction in schools that many regarded as the root cause for controversy and politics of communalism. The stalemate as a result became a national crisis that triggered the racial riots in 1969. By inference, Malaysians share a common view that a resolution must be found and communalism should not stand in the way of nation-building. The onus must be to embrace the spirit behind education policies formulated from 1970 onwards, and not based on short-term compromises and accommodation but by coming to terms with the politics of ethnicity as a "permanent feature" of a plural society. For the sake of Malaysia's future well-being, Dr. Haris explicates the need for corrective measures, pragmatism, respect for the majority, finding ways to best implement policies, legislation, and a new realism where Malaysians must strive to unite behind a common cause. Failure to overcome the same conflict that has persisted since independence, will not steer Malaysia any closer to fulfilling its vision for nationhood.

The wide range of literature reviewed above represents the historical accounts of Malay education development up to 1950. Gaps identified during this literature review process will be examined to arrive at a more balanced and representative conclusion before this study is complete.

1.3 Problem Statement

Many researchers have expounded on how and why British education policies have restrained Malays from progressing or marginalized them, but no one has so far written on the role played by MES officers. Abdul Majid bin Zainuddin, for example, was the first MAIS who led the line in 1918 and then became the Acting Principal of Malay Teachers Training College at Matang Perak in 1919.⁴⁵ Being an English-educated Malay officer, he was given the responsibility to provide intellectual leadership and help others by example and precept.⁴⁶ However, the latitude in which he was able to progress in a leadership position is not made explicit by historians. The same goes for his MES colleagues and Muhammad Yusof as a protagonist this study aims to examine.

Progress in Malay education in British Malaya was uneven, moving at different speeds, at different times, and in different states. Penang, Melaka, Perak, and to some extent Johor and Kedah showed rapid progress at some point in time. Selangor was slow in the beginning but improved dramatically with time. Other Malay states were frustratingly slow. The rationale would be due to good leadership manning or in charge of, and directing the education sector or otherwise. Therefore, the rapid progress of Malay education or snail-pace trajectory in various states in British Malaya was an explanatory variable. If there were good leaders such as Muhammad Yusof but Malay education hobbled very slowly, then the problem must lie in various exogenous factors such as the clash of key personalities or colonial bureaucracy affecting their progress. There could also be other intervening factors

⁴⁵ William R. Roff, *The Wandering Thoughts of a Dying Man. The Life and Times of Haji Abdul Majid bin Zainuddin*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1978, p. x. He to the college again in 1920 until 1922 before he was assigned to a new role.

⁴⁶ Ibid, p. xi. The post of Principal was usually meant for Europeans. Abdul Majid in the new era was the first Malay to have held this post.

such as economic depression or the priorities under British rule to develop the more important pillars of the colonial economy.

Studies on Malay education focus more on colonial administrators, their role, and their contribution to Malay scholarship. British administrators were seen as protagonists in the advancement of education in Malaya (including Malay education). More often than not, the role played by Malay administrators and intelligentsia has gone unnoticed. From what we have seen, these studies stressed on British visionaries, enablers, and the role the IOS played but no studies have been undertaken whatsoever on MAIS who took ownership of Malay education and led in its development. As such, the impact of the MES in general and Muhammad Yusof in particular has not been acknowledged nor recognized.

Where the role and contribution of the Malay intelligentsia have been highlighted, it was misunderstood, claiming them to not be in favour of Malay peasants going to English schools. The perception was that only those with ability and diligence could pursue education beyond the Malay vernacular. No doubt Muhammad Yusof was one such Malay, but with the backing and support of Winstedt, he encouraged more Malays to enroll in English schools with the advent of the Special Malay Classes, the award of scholarships, inducements, and incentives, all of which Muhammad Yusof was instrumental.

The criticism of Malay intelligentsia advocacy of Malay schools was a mere reflection of colonial vernacular education policy which lacked concern for Malay intellectual development. This is a misconception. The role and contribution of Muhammad Yusof in bringing the Malays out of their social backwardness and poverty, for instance, is not known. As MAIS, Muhammad Yusof's goals and efforts have not only been to help raise the Malay intellectual capacity but to break down

social, political, and economic barriers that impeded the development of Malay education.⁴⁷ Here, scholars concentrate mostly on British education policies that restrain Malays from progressing. The research on Muhammad Yusof, however, will provide an opportunity to examine not only the role played by an MAIS but also his efforts beyond the call of duty to help solve or work around issues so his proper place in the history of Malay education will be told, referred and relived.

The general impression of the British marginalizing the Malays cannot be refuted. Evidence has shown that British administrators were driven by their motives to rule, and in the process, had denigrated the Malays as a means to an end. However, Muhammad Yusof found a way to cooperate with British educators particularly the British IOS who provided him with direction and supervision. These educators were approachable and empathetic towards the plight of Malay peasants and offered leadership, guidance, and support to enable the MAIS to perform his duties.⁴⁸ Despite this, Muhammad Yusof was criticized for associating with the British and his admiration of their civilization. His motives and intentions have often been questioned by the Malays when in fact it was a way to indigenize colonial knowledge so he could take them further.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Such barriers include the lack of awareness of the values and benefits of education, Malay prejudices towards secular education, poor physical conditions of Malay schools, short supply of well-trained teachers, poor public perception of teachers, hygiene, health, and safety concerns, the lack of opportunity to go beyond Malay schools, challenges during the transition from Malay to English, Malay rejection of English schools and their resistance to change, social mobility, and Malay poverty.

⁴⁸ Sel/Sec. 338/1923. This file contains a letter of recommendation from IOS C.G. Coleman of Muhammad Yusof's promotion to Grade I officer of the Malay Educational Service from 1 February 1923. Coleman believed Muhammad Yusof thoroughly deserved the promotion and was supported by Winstedt who was of the opinion that efficient officers of Muhammad Yusof's type should be encouraged.

⁴⁹ Sel/Sec.G.142/36. This refers to the recommendation made by IOS C.G. Sollis to send Muhammad Yusof to Gilwell Park, England for intensive Scout training as "it is considered that this course will make Che Yusof a more valuable officer and better qualified not only in scout activities but also in educational administration generally." The recommendation was approved by British Resident T.S. Adams and the cost of his stay in England was borne by the Scout Association of Malaya.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What was Malay education development in British Malaya all about?
2. Who were the MES officials from 1920 to 1950 and what were their roles, responsibilities, and contribution to Malay education?
3. Who was Muhammad Yusof, and what was his role and contribution to Malay education?
4. What was Muhammad Yusof's work, influence, and impact as an education activist?

1.5 Research Objectives

1. To analyze the development of Malay vernacular–education in British Malaya from its inception to 1950.
2. To discuss the emergence of the MES comprising a group of Malay administrators empowered to play a leading role.
3. To employ a biographical approach to the study of Muhammad Yusof in the construction of a historical biography; with a special focus on his leadership attributes and dynamic relationship with British decision-makers,
4. To evaluate Muhammad Yusof's contribution to education development in Selangor, and British Malaya.

1.6 Thesis Statement

Muhammad Yusof was an agent of change who played a significant role as a catalyst, facilitator, and motivator in the development of Malay education, the education of Malays, and the seminal development of intelligentsia.

1.7 Research Methodology

A biographical approach will be adopted to discuss neglected areas of Malayan history. The idea is to synthesize the historical biography of Muhammad Yusof with history drawn from studies on education, the British Empire, and colonial life to sift events of the past in order to reconstruct testable hypotheses about decisive moments, and those who shaped them.⁵⁰ Given the biographical treatment of Muhammad Yusof is not divorced from the temporal and spatial context of Malay education, a biographical turn to history will embed his role during British colonial times when swirling forces were at play, and demonstrate how he mastered those forces or was rendered ineffective by them. Invariably, this approach is meant to explain why influential people did what they did, and with what exact aims in mind, thus enriching history in the process.

This study will concurrently focus on the premise that Muhammad Yusof was trained to develop Malay Education in a leading role. Firstly, as MAIS in Selangor when he was appointed by RO Winstedt, then groomed to be Head of Malay Section in the Department of Education, and finally as MAP at SITC. To deliver the research objectives stated earlier, a qualitative approach to analyse data from a variety of sources will be used. Content analysis of Malay schools and teachers, their associations, publications, and accomplishments will then be carried out to examine the opinions, thoughts, and feelings of the Malays. From here, it is possible to determine the kind of role Muhammad Yusof played, and if he had a significant impact on Malaya wide. Henceforth, a nuanced and more balanced view on the history of Malay education development from 1800 to 1950.

⁵⁰ R.I. Rotberg, "Biography and Historiography: Mutual Evidentiary and Interdisciplinary Considerations", *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 11, No. 3, Winter 2010, pp. 305-324.