

**Place Image, Quality Services, and Event Attachment in Sarawak: Moderating  
Role of Community Support in Economic Development**

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We have no known conflict of interest to disclose.

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## **Abstract**

Malaysia's event industry, notably in culturally diverse Sarawak, has thrived in recent years, becoming a significant economic driver. However, the COVID-19 pandemic severely disrupted the sector, resulting in event cancellations, economic losses, and reduced community engagement. This study investigates the role of event attachment in fostering local economic development in Sarawak. The research gathered data from 1265 diverse event attendees and employed WarpPLS 8.0 to analyse the proposed model. Findings highlighted the substantial impact of place image, service quality, and community support on event attachment and, subsequently, economic development. Notable events like the Rainforest World Music Festival and Sarawak Regatta are analysed. The study offers practical insights for event planners and policymakers to boost event attachment, emphasizing place image, quality services, and community support to drive economic development in Sarawak. This research highlights the pivotal role of event attachment in sustaining the region's economic growth.

*Keywords:* place image, event attachment, service quality, local community support, economic development, PLS-SEM

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### 1. Introduction

In recent years, event industry has benefited from an unparalleled growth in Malaysia whether in the form of congresses, leisure or cultural events as strategic location of Malaysia is known for its rich cultural heritage, diverse ethnic communities, and vibrant festivals and event. Sarawak, a home to a diverse range of ethnic groups where the major ethnic groups in Sarawak include the Iban, Malay, Chinese, Bidayuh, Melanau, Orang Ulu, and various indigenous tribes such as Kayan, Kenyah, Kelabit, and Penan. Each group has its own unique culture, language, and traditions, contributing to the cultural richness and diversity of Sarawak and those multiculturalism characteristic in Sarawak is reflected in its vibrant and varied calendar of events and festivities. For instance, some of the notable events held in Sarawak include the Rainforest World Music Festival, Borneo Jazz Festival, Sarawak Regatta, and Kuching Festivals (as shown in Table 1). The Rainforest World Music Festival, often referred to as RWMF, is an annual event that spans three days, celebrating the rich tapestry of global music. This vibrant festival takes place in Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia, and encompasses a diverse array of activities, including daytime music workshops, cultural exhibitions, artisan showcases, delectable food stalls, and captivating main-stage evening concerts. In addition, the Borneo Jazz Festival is an annual music extravaganza held in Sarawak, Malaysia, showcasing the vibrant and diverse world of jazz music. This event typically takes place in the beautiful city of Miri, which is in the northern part of Sarawak, Borneo.