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Analysing the Local Communities' Perception on the Economic and Environmental Factors of Ecotourism in Tagang System Framework-The Case of Semedang Village, Sarawak, Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

Ecotourism is a natural product that plays a role in enhancing the economy of a country. Tagang system is a new tourism product that contributes to a more efficient environmental management, contributing to economic development, and social development of communities. The objective of this study was to identify the factors that influence the development of Tagang system in ecotourism framework at Semedang village. A total of 63 surveys were collected using random sampling method. Data were analysed using the reliability test and factor analysis. The results showed that there are four contributing factors of Tagang system in the Semedang village which are economic development, conservation of the natural area, awareness of Tagang advantages and biodiversity management.

Keywords: Tagang System, Economic Development, Conservation, Biodiversity Management

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a growing sector in the states in Malaysia, particularly Sarawak. In Sarawak, tourism is the second most important sector in contributing revenue to the state economy. In this past few decades, there is a trend towards tourism which exclusively focus on nature, natural areas, and centres around conservation (Cooper & Wanhill, 1996). This situation can be seen through the government's effort for the development which is carried out in the rural areas for tourism purposes. For that particular reason, the Tagang system is introduced as one of the nature based tourism activities in Sarawak. Tagang comes from Iban word which means regulation and conservation of river fish based on communities. In Malaysia, this system only introduced in Sarawak and Sabah (known as Tagal system or *bombom*) as other states still did not provide apparent or clear information about the essence of the system.

Wong et al. (2009) stated that this system was initially used to preserve the forest by the local community before being adapted to the conservation and management of rivers. This system

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