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## Entrepreneurial Intentions among Indigenous Dayak in Sarawak, Malaysia: An Assessment of Personality Traits and Social Learning

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### **Abstract**

*This study examines two aspects that have major influence to entrepreneurship as widely described in literature: the personality traits and social learning. The interest of study was on the indigenous Dayak in East Sarawak Malaysia. With the use of quantitative methods for data collection and analysis, the impacts of personality traits and social learning of the respondents on development of their entrepreneurial intentions were investigated. The correlation analysis indicated that the respondents' entrepreneurial intentions are positively correlated to their personality traits (risk taking propensity, innovativeness and tolerance of ambiguity), and social learning (knowledge and experience, family upbringing). This study therefore articulates the present view of Dayak in Sarawak about their entrepreneurial intention, and its implication to indigenous entrepreneurship development.*

Keywords: entrepreneurial intentions, personality traits, social learning, indigenous, Dayak.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Equivalent with the developing interest in entrepreneurship throughout the world, Malaysia has also witnessed an increasing interest in indigenous entrepreneurship fields. Since 1971, the Malaysian Government has made some major efforts by introducing various policies to improve the quality of life for the indigenous people known as Bumiputera. Through these policies, more Bumiputera SMEs are expected to be created and upgraded by accelerating their growth and positioning them to be more competitive in the open market on their own.

However, the programmes did not seem to really benefit other Bumiputera groups apart from the *Malay* community. In Sarawak, the biggest indigenous community belongs to the *Dayak* group which consists of majority ethnics in the state including Iban, Bidayuh and Orang Ulu. After the introduction of the National Economic Policy and National Development Policy in 1971 and 1991 respectively, the *Malay* community has managed to increase their living standard and quality of life with many of them are shifting jobs to professionals and bureaucrats (Fakrul & Wan, 2011). This situation is a stark contrast to the statistics that illustrated a high proportion of the *Dayak* community that being involved in elementary occupations with many of them are still poorly paid and living below the official urban poverty line in Malaysia (Sarawak, 2011).