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A TRANSITION OF *ANDU GAWAI NYAMA* TO *ANDU GAWAI DAYAK* IN BIDAYUH CUSTOMS IN
TIMURANG VILLAGE, SARAWAK



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DALVRIL JUANA ANAK EVON

SULTAN IDRIS EDUCATION UNIVERSITY

2025



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BIDAYUH CUSTOMS IN TIMURANG VILLAGE, SARAWAK

DALVRIL JUANA ANAK EVON

DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO QUALIFY FOR A MASTER OF
PERFORMANCE STUDIES
(RESEARCH AND COURSEWORK MODE)

FACULTY OF MUSIC AND PERFORMING ARTS
SULTAN IDRIS EDUCATION UNIVERSITY

2025



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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the evolution of *Andu Gawai Nyama*, a Bidayuh custom in the village of Timurang, Sarawak. Through this study, the researcher will describe the transition of customs using ethnographic methods. The problem of this study is the transition of ritual practices based on religious beliefs profound implications for the cultural identity of this community. The main objective of the study is to define the purpose of *Andu Gawai Nyama* in Timurang Village, Sarawak and analyze the transition of the *Andu Gawai Nyama* to *Andu Gawai Dayak*. In addition, the researcher will also synthesis the relevance of the customs with the community in Timurang Village, Sarawak. In this study, qualitative methods in the form of interviews and document analysis will be used throughout the analysis in addition to the use of cultural evolution theory will also be linked. This study will help understand the purpose of this festival and maintain Andu Gawai Nyama in the Bidayuh community in Timurang, Sarawak. In conclusion, this study will be able to preserved the customs within the community and expose more regarding Bidayuh customs.





PERALIHAN DARI *ANDU GAWAI NYAMA* KE *ANDU GAWAI DAYAK* DALAM ADAT BIDAYUH DI KAMPUNG TIMURANG, SARAWAK

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini memfokuskan kepada evolusi Andu Gawai Nyama, adat Bidayuh di kampung Timurang, Sarawak. Melalui kajian ini, pengkaji akan menghuraikan peralihan adat resam menggunakan kaedah etnografi. Permasalahan kajian ini ialah peralihan amalan ritual berdasarkan kepercayaan agama implikasi yang mendalam terhadap identiti budaya masyarakat ini. Objektif utama kajian adalah untuk mentakrifkan tujuan Andu Gawai Nyama di Kampung Timurang, Sarawak dan menganalisis peralihan Andu Gawai Nyama kepada Andu Gawai Dayak. Selain itu, pengkaji juga akan mensintesis perkaitan adat resam dengan masyarakat di Kampung Timurang, Sarawak. Dalam kajian ini, kaedah kualitatif berbentuk temu bual dan analisis dokumen akan digunakan sepanjang analisis di samping penggunaan teori evolusi budaya juga akan dikaitkan. Kajian ini akan membantu memahami tujuan perayaan ini dan mengekalkan Andu Gawai Nyama dalam masyarakat Bidayuh di Timurang, Sarawak. Kesimpulannya, kajian ini akan dapat memelihara adat resam dalam kalangan masyarakat dan mendedahkan lebih lanjut berkenaan adat Bidayuh.



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION



1.1 The Background of the Phenomenon



The paper entitled *A Case Study on the Transition of Andu Gawai Nyama in Bidayuh Customs Timurang Village, Sarawak* details a Bidayuh tribe holding a Gawai festival in Timurang village, Sarawak. Gawai is a celebration, Dayak people are indigenous to Sarawak, and *nyama* is the term for senior citizens (Weinlein, 2017). As a state that is home to nearly thirty distinct cultural groups, there are undoubtedly traditions and rituals that are still carried out in spite of the prevalence of modern technology. A Dayak ethical practise known as Gawai Dayak is done as an expression of appreciation for a bountiful crop. It is quite comparable to the Gawai ceremony (Herlan Herlan, 2020).



Figure 1.1

Mapping of Dayak Tribe in Malaysia



Mapping of Dayak Tribe in Malaysia by Tillotson (1994) mentioned in the study of "Who invented the Dayaks? historical case studies in art, material culture and ethnic identity from Borneo" that this scholarly work provides a comprehensive examination of the origins and evolution of the Dayak community within the geographical and cultural framework of Borneo. This research utilises an interdisciplinary framework, integrating perspectives from the fields of art history, material culture studies, and the intricate processes involved in the construction of ethnic identity.

The name Dayak denotes a heterogeneous collective of autochthonous individuals that reside on the island of Borneo, a landmass that is jointly occupied by



multiple nations such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei. Tillotson's research does not seek to identify a singular individual or collective accountable for the origin of the Dayak identity. Instead, it examines the complex historical, cultural, and aesthetic elements that played a role in its development.

Tillotson used the methodology of case studies to construct a comprehensive narrative elucidating the evolutionary trajectory of the Dayak identity throughout history. This encompasses an examination of the material culture exhibited by the Dayak community, encompassing several aspects such as their artistic expressions, craftsmanship, attire, and implements. The examination of these tangible artefacts encompasses not only their aesthetic worth, but also their significance as reflections of the Dayak way of life and their interactions with neighbouring civilizations. Moreover, the research examines the intricate relationship among art, culture, and ethnicity. Artistic manifestations, encompassing elaborate carvings and exquisite textiles, exert a pivotal influence on the formation and delineation of cultural identity.

The term Dayak refers to a heterogeneous collective of indigenous populations who inhabit the island of Borneo, a landmass that is divided by the nations of Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei. The term Dayak refers to a diverse range of ethnic groups that own unique languages, customs, and traditions, as stated in the Encyclopaedia Britannica article on Dayak. The Dayak ethnic group has traditionally resided in the jungles and river valleys of Borneo, exhibiting a notable cultural legacy. In further elaboration, it can be observed that the Dayak community has a rich historical background of engagement with their surrounding natural environment, hence giving rise to their own cultural practises and lifestyle. The local inhabitants have acquired





extensive understanding of the intricate dynamics of the rainforest ecosystem and have adjusted their means of subsistence to include practises such as agriculture, hunting, and fishing. The art, crafts, and rituals of these individuals frequently portray a strong connection with the natural environment.

The Dayak people have had several difficulties throughout their historical trajectory, primarily stemming from external factors like as colonisation and industrialization. The aforementioned influences have engendered alterations in the lifestyle of Dayak communities. However, it is noteworthy that numerous Dayak groups persist in upholding and safeguarding their cultural customs, encompassing traditional rituals, musical expressions, dance forms, and the oral legacy of storytelling. In essence, the name Dayak encompasses a heterogeneous assemblage of autochthonous populations residing on the island of Borneo. The individuals in question possess a culturally affluent history that is intricately interconnected with their surrounding surroundings. The article in Encyclopædia Britannica highlights the intricate nature of Dayak identity, which covers a diverse range of ethnic groups characterised by their unique languages and cultural practises. In spite of external influences, the Dayak communities persist in upholding and commemorating their cultural customs as an integral component of their collective identity.



Figure 1.3*Non Exhaustive List of Dayak Tribe in Indonesia*

Mapping above was the scholarly publication authored by J. B. Vé in 1972, entitled “Kalimantan Dayaks”, constitutes a valuable addition to the comprehensive anthology "Ethnic Groups of Insular Southeast Asia, Volume 1: Indonesia, Andaman Islands, and Madagascar”, which was expertly edited by Frank M. LeBar. The above passage provides insight into the Kalimantan Dayaks, a specific subset of the Dayak indigenous population who inhabit the Indonesian region of Borneo. This page offers an analysis of the cultural, social, and historical dimensions pertaining to the Kalimantan Dayaks. Building upon this point, it is noteworthy to mention that the Kalimantan Dayaks, who are an integral subset of the broader Dayak ethnic classification, possess a discernible identity that is distinguished by their exclusive



cultural customs and manner of existence. The Dayak communities residing in Kalimantan, which is the Indonesian segment of the island of Borneo, have gained recognition for their extensive repertoire of artistic manifestations, encompassing elaborate wood carvings, textiles, and pottery. Artistic traditions has a substantial influence in both religious ceremonies and daily existence, functioning as a medium for communication, narrative depiction, and the manifestation of personal and collective identities.

Vé's research presumably explores the social organisation of the Kalimantan Dayaks, providing a comprehensive analysis of their collective habitation patterns within longhouses, which hold significant cultural significance for this community. The longhouses frequently provide housing for numerous families or perhaps a full clan, illustrating the interdependence and collaborative nature of Dayak societies. The architectural design of these longhouses, as well as their strategic positioning within the surrounding environment, possess profound cultural and spiritual implications.



Figure 1.4*Mapping of Dayak Tribe in Brunei*

Above figure shows that the list of Dayak Tribe in Brunei Darussalam which refers to the Dayak to a large and varied population of native Borneans who live in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei. According to the Britannica article titled “Dayak”, the phrase refers to a group that includes people of many different ethnicities who speak different languages and practise different customs. The entry in the Encyclopædia Britannica emphasises the variety within the Dayak category, which includes several distinct peoples with their own languages and customs. Some examples of these communities are the Murut, Bisaya, Iban and Kedayan. The unusual longhouses that serve as shared living areas for large families or clans are a defining characteristic of Dayak cultures. The social organisation and structure of these societies are reflected in the design of their longhouses. The Dayak people have had a tough go of it throughout



history as a result of things like colonialism and progress. While many Dayak villages have adapted to new ways of life, others have maintained and even expanded upon their traditional rites, music, dance, and storytelling. In conclusion, the name Dayak is used to describe a wide variety of Bornean natives. These people's history and culture are inextricably connected with their natural surroundings. The diversity of Dayak culture which includes people of many different linguistic and cultural backgrounds is highlighted in the Encyclopdia Britannica page. The Dayak communities, despite external influences, hold fast to and cherish their cultural practises.

The people of Sarawak place a strong emphasis on their traditional heritage, and as a result, their rituals have become deeply engrained in their day-to-day life (Atikalla Atie, 2019). This study focuses exclusively on the community located in Kampung Timurang, Sarawak, which was once home to the Andu Gawai Dayak celebration. However, as a result of a number of problems, the festival is no longer carried out in accordance with the customs and traditions that have been passed down from generation to generation. The Bidayuh ethnic group consisted of just 198,473 persons in 2010, according to the statistics provided by the Sarawak State Statistics Department (2010). This is compared to the overall population of 205,900 people in Sarawak in 2014. This particular ethnic group can be broken down into four distinct sub-ethnic groups based on dialect and speech patterns. For instance, members of the Bidayuh Selako or Lara ethnic group call the Lundu region home, but members of the Bidayuh Jagoi or Singai ethnic group call the Bau region home. In the region of Padawan, people of the Bidayuh Biatah ethnicity are prevalent, although in the Serian neighbourhood of Kuching, people of the Bidayuh Bukar or Sadong ethnicity are more prevalent.





The Bidayuh people are the third largest of the approximately 40 different ethnic groups that live in Sarawak. They are known to have originated in West Kalimantan and have extensive landholdings in the regions of Bau, Padawan, Penrissen, and Serian. They were first recorded in 1621. "idayuh" literally translates to "land dwellers". They are differentiated from the Sea Dayak, who are often referred to as the Iban, and are commonly referred to as the Dayak of the Land in both scholarly and popular media (Jähnichen, 2013) The Bidayuh are fragmented into a number of subgroups and are dispersed throughout five distinct regions. They are known as Bau-Jagoi, Singghai, and Tringgus in Bau, Bisadung in Serian, and Biatah, Biperoh, Penyewa, Biannah, and Bisitang in Padawan. There are a lot of people who speak Lara and Jagoi in Lundu, while there are a lot of people who speak Selakau in Sematan (G Jähnichen, 2015)



According to the beliefs of the Bidayuh people, custom serves a vital purpose



in that it helps to sustain peaceful ties among members of the community as well as the physical and spiritual well-being of the *kupuo* (Majilis Adat Istiadat, 1994). The same can be said for the traditions that have been upheld in Kampung Timurang over the years. Andu Gawai Dayak is a term used in the Bidayuh language to refer to Sarawak's annual Gawai Day celebration, which has taken place on the first day of June since 1965 (John Postill, 2010). Gawai Dayak Nyama is a festival that is celebrated by the elderly on the 31st of May, and the head of the family in each household in the village is the only person allowed to participate.

This event is held towards the end of May or the beginning of June and its primary objective is to commemorate the conclusion of the rice harvest. Hari Gawai was originally a more religious festival for the Dayak tribe, which comprises of three





main tribes, namely Iban, Bidayuh, and Orang Ulu as a symbol of thanks to ‘Petara’ every time after the harvest and before commencing paddy cultivation for the next season. This occurred every time after the harvest and before starting paddy cultivation for the next season. In the interim, the goal of the celebration is to commemorate the beginning of the new year for the Dayaks. This signifies the conclusion of the harvest season, and it is followed shortly thereafter by a new rice growing season.

Andu Gawai Dayak is a ceremony that emphasizes unity and appreciates the harmonious relationship that exists among the community. Through the selection of evolution and culture theory, the rituals carried out in this festival can be explained by the researcher based on the characteristics of the theory that has been released in evolution and culture theory.



1.2 Problem Statement

Gawai Dayak Nyama has its own ritual and Timurang community has not practiced this ritual due to the transition of the way they celebrate the *Andu Gawai Dayak* event. However, for the community in Kampung Timurang, this ritual is no longer practiced due to the change of time and the entrance of Christianity in the 19th century had a considerable impact on the traditional beliefs and practises of the Bidayuh people (Campbell & Mikeng, 2021). In the article of the Christian sects in Sarawak (Salleh, 2015), the supplied information describes the spread of Christianity through the territory of Sarawak and its historical development whereby Francis McDougall set out on this mission in 1848 with the hope of spreading Christianity. After facing opposition





in his efforts to convert the Malay people to Christianity, McDougall turned his attention to the indigenous people.

Despite McDougall's initial Anglicanism, various Christian sects were able to establish themselves in Sarawak thanks to his openness. Anglicans, Roman Catholics, Methodists, Sidang Injil Borneo (SIB), Seventh-Day Adventists, and even the Salvation Army all emerged and flourished as a result. McDougall, at James Brooke's suggestion in 1848, introduced Anglicanism to the territory. He put forth many hours, founding schools, churches, and hospitals as part of the Borneo Church Mission to spread Christianity. Despite McDougall's best intentions, the spread of Christianity in the area was initially unsuccessful until Father Edward Dunn's efforts in 1881. By combining his religious authority and agricultural expertise, Father Dunn was able to forge strong ties with the Iban people. Despite their allegiance to Anglicanism, the Brooke family's funding was crucial to this growth.

The Murut (Lun Bawang) and Kelabit peoples were the initial targets of Sidang Injil Borneo (SIB), which had its beginnings in Melbourne in 1928. To that end, a Bible teaching school and translation centre were set up in Lawas to prepare locals for roles as church ministers and missionaries. Wong Nai Siong, a Chinese immigrant, brought Methodism to Sarawak in the year 1900. Sibu, with its predominantly Foochow Chinese population, was a particularly fertile ground for the growth of this sect. When Seventh-day Adventist missionaries first arrived in Malaysia in 1911, they found a hostile environment. A major player in the uprising, Abraham La Rues arrived in Sarawak the next year (1905). Although Islamic leaders initially opposed Christian missionary efforts, momentum grew once religious freedom was established in 1925. To add, the





chaos of World War II saw the establishment of a Salvation Army outpost in Sarawak. The group developed into a Christian organisation with both spiritual and practical goals throughout the chaos of the war. Although The Salvation Army is not widely renowned for its active evangelism, it has established a presence in Malaysia with the opening of about

10 churches that offer services to children, teenagers, women, and families. Numerous missionaries of various Christian denominations worked hard to promote the faith and create long-lasting religious institutions in Sarawak.

The decline in the practice of the *Gawai Dayak Nyama* ritual among the Timurang community in Kampung Timurang, Sarawak, poses a threat to the preservation of Bidayuh cultural heritage. This decline is attributed to factors such as the transition in celebrating the *Andu Gawai Dayak* event, the impact of Christianity introduced in the 19th century, and the lack of transmission of traditional knowledge to the younger generation. The diminishing frequency of the ritual reflects a broader erosion of Bidayuh cultural identity and traditions, jeopardizing the continuity of their cultural heritage. Without concerted efforts to revive and safeguard this ritual, there is a risk of irreparable loss to Bidayuh cultural identity and community cohesion. Therefore, there is an urgent need to address the factors contributing to the decline of the *Gawai Dayak Nyama* ritual and develop strategies to ensure its continued practice and transmission to future generations, thus preserving the rich cultural legacy of the Bidayuh community in Kampung Timurang. According to Liana Chua (2012), despite the fact that the Bidayuh community has the fourth highest population in Sarawak, there is still less research on the community. In terms of cultural forms and performances, it





remains identified with the Iban people. Based on the observation, the two community groups appear to be completely different; the only thing they have in common is that they both celebrate Gawai Dayak on June 1. The circumstance has eclipsed the Bidayuh community's history, performances, and culture in favour of the Iban community's performances. Given this condition, there are still too few reference materials and Mohamad Maulana Magiman & Norhuda Salleh publications that touch on the culture of the Bidayuh community. This is the significant issue that the researcher faced.

According to an interview with a community member in the village, she stated that there are mantras that are not memorized and if the mantras are not pronounced properly then the *Gawai Dayak Nyama* cannot be celebrated (Sather, 2016) explains that rituals play different roles according to the time of celebration. This will be determined according to the level of the main structure represented by the ritual and physical constitution of a place. Basically, the family room ceremony, small thanksgiving or reconciliation held is to expel evil spirits and bad omens while providing peace among them. As for this festival, this kind of ritual do explains as mentioned by (Sather, 2016) whereby the ritual helps the Timurang community to celebrate the Gawai festival harmoniously. However, since the younger generation is not exposed to this ritual, the researcher argue that the ritual performed during *Andu Gawai Nyama* should be preserved properly. Although not practiced, this ritual should be known by the younger generation so that the customs in this village do not disappear with time. This problem statement will certainly be supported by the evolution and culture theory.





The idea of evolution and culture posits that information can be observed to be conveyed from an individual to a community with no inherent connection. This phenomenon can be observed as a hypothesis being transmitted between individuals. Furthermore, it is plausible that transmission can occur intergenerationally via the mechanisms of education and even replication. This phenomenon is seen in the inclusivity of the *Gawai* festival, as individuals are able to participate and demonstrate reverence, irrespective of their interpersonal affiliations. This proposition can also be regarded as a theoretical framework that may be transmitted between successive generations or further refined over time, contingent upon the duration that has elapsed. This concept exhibits rapid progress, may be acquired within a brief duration, and does not necessitate intergenerational transmission of culture. The scholarly community engaged in the study and exploration of a particular culture possesses the capacity, contingent upon their observations and expertise, to either adopt or dismiss said culture.

1.3 Objectives

This study is based on the following three objectives: -

1. To define the purpose of *Andu Gawai Nyama* in Timurang Village, Sarawak
2. Analyze the transition of *Andu Gawai Nyama* to *Andu Gawai Dayak* in Timurang Village, Sarawak
3. To synthesis the relevance of the festival with the community in Timurang Village, Sarawak





1.4 Research Questions

Below is the questionnaire of this study: -

1. What is the purpose of *Andu Gawai Nyama* in Timurang Village, Sarawak?
2. What is the difference between *Andu Gawai Nyama* and *Andu Gawai Dayak*?
3. What is the relevance of the festival with the community in Timurang village, Sarawak?

1.5 The Importance of Study

This ethnographic research of the evolution of *Andu Gawai Nyama* in Bidayuh village, Sarawak, goes beyond basic documentation as it provides excellent insights on several fronts, making it an important contribution to many disciplines of research. First, this study serves as an important record of cultural heritage preservation. By methodically researching the development of *Andu Gawai Nyama* rituals under the influence of Christianity, this study preserves the spirit of this traditional Bidayuh holiday for future generations. This knowledge guarantees that customs and their meaning are not lost over time. Second, this study is into the complexity of cultural adaption as it presents a riveting case study of how indigenous cultures deal with the arrival of modern belief systems. It highlights the adaptability and resilience of cultural traditions by examining how Christian beliefs and practices influence the festival's change. Hence, this research also examining potential tensions or adjustments between Christian beliefs and *Andu Gawai Nyama* traditions can promote understanding and respect among Sarawak's





religious communities. This improved understanding has the potential to lead to a more peaceful future.

By examining how *Andu Gawai Nyama* practices contribute to social cohesion and cultural identity, the study enables the community to maintain a strong sense of self in a changing world. This knowledge enables individuals to continue celebrating their ancestry and customs while adapting to changing circumstances. Finally, the research makes a substantial contribution to indigenous studies. It contributes to the existing body of knowledge about how indigenous cultures around the world deal with the impact of Christianity on their traditional traditions. This comparative approach contributes to our knowledge of cultural dynamics and the ongoing process of cultural evolution. Last not least, this examination of *Andu Gawai Nyama*'s evolution goes beyond documentation as it provides important insights on cultural preservation, adaptability, interfaith dialogue, community empowerment, and the larger subject of indigenous studies. By delving into this specific case study, the study offers light on broader topics of cultural transformation and resilience.

1.6 Methodology

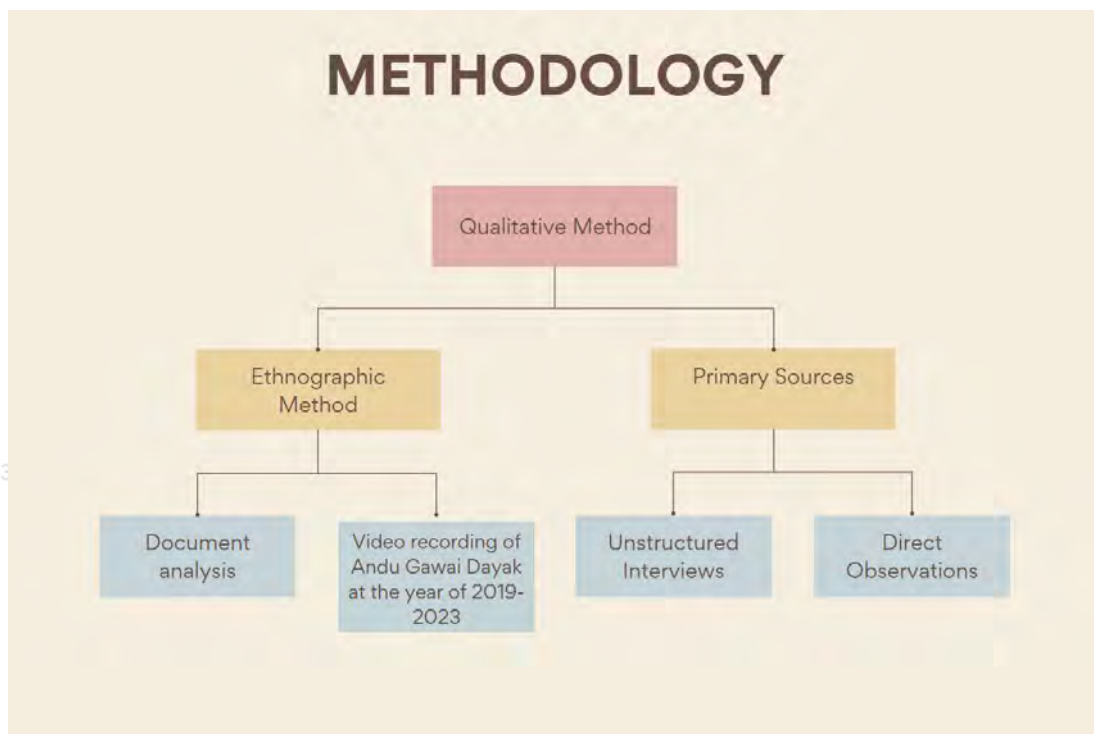
Hornby (1985) mentioned that methodology is an alternative used for a research subject. This section will discuss the method that will be used for the research, hence including the study design, study sample, study instrument and procedure or data analysis process to answer the research questions that have been presented earlier. As for this dissertation, the researcher will use qualitative method for this study. For this



study, researcher will focus on ethnographic method in order to elaborate more on the notes regarding this study. Below is the table shown for the methodology of the research.

Figure 1.5

Methodological Methods



Research Methodology is a process to complete a problem through planning, collecting, analyzing and interpreting data systematic (Mohamad Ibrahim, 1995). Researcher will using qualitative method in order to analyzing the research questions. Under the qualitative method, there will be two method which are ethnographic method and primary source. By using the ethnographic method, researcher will focus on the document analysis regarding the subject matter and also video recording of *Andu Gawai Dayak* at the year of 2019-2023. Under the primary source, researcher will do



the unstructured interviews with the old folks at Timurang Village and direct observations while conducting the interviews.

1.6.1 Document Analysis

The analysis document includes a portfolio of information on the subject of the study, namely Kampung Timurang. This alternative is used to help the researcher to obtain information reinforcement about the location of the study. Through the analysis document, the researcher can comprehensively see the history of the settlement of the village.



1.6.2 Video recording of *Andu Gawai Dayak* at the year of 2019-2023

Past video recording shows how the people in this village celebrate the Gawai festival from 2019 to 2023. This helps the researcher to assess the changes that occur over time during the festival season. Through the videos that have been recorded throughout the year, researchers can see the differences and even the activities carried out are also different. In the meantime, this video recording is also one of the researcher's alternatives to evaluate more deeply the progress that has changed in the community in this village.





1.6.3 Unstructured Interview

The unstructured interview method is used by the researcher to help the interviewer not to be bound by the questions given. The interviewer is free to ask questions based on the given topic and even help to provide clearer information related to the research topic. Unstructured interviews are more effective for the researcher to study the topic in more depth. This interview will be conducted together with 3 generations in the village which includes a total of 3 people namely Puan Karom, Mr Jerim and Mr. Rodza. All of these members are the community in the Timurang village.

1.6.4 Direct Observations



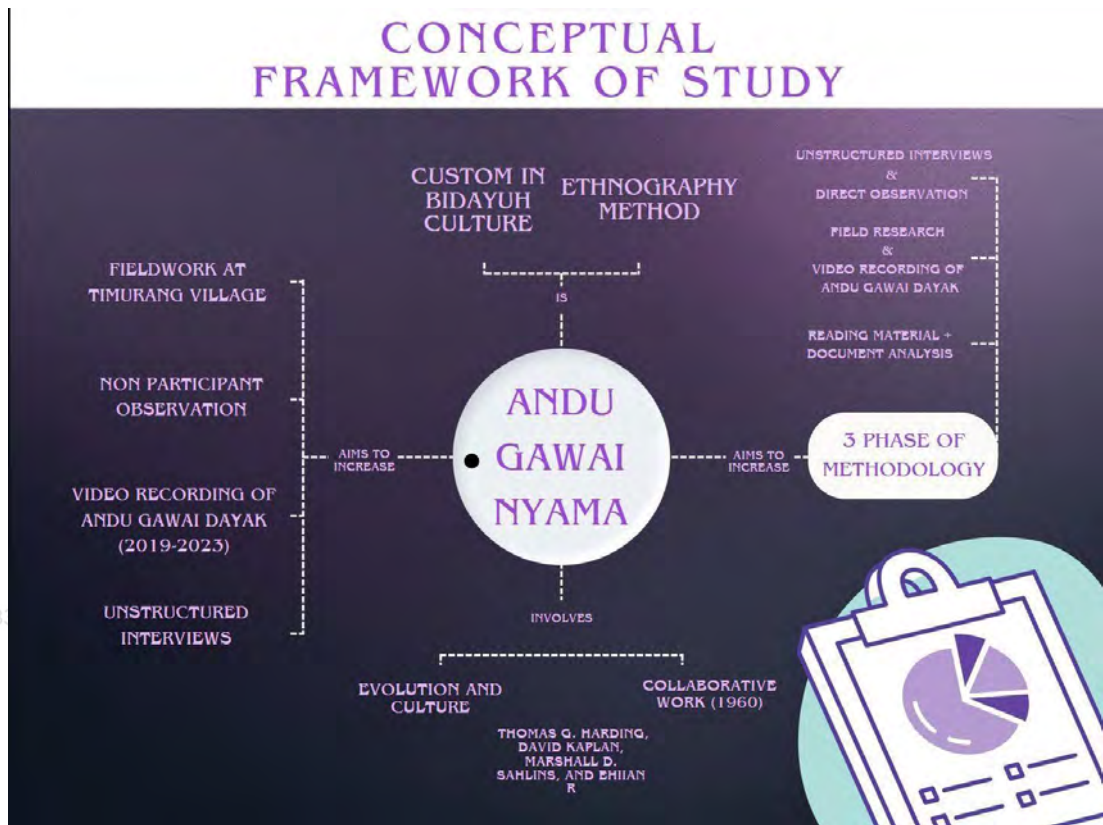
Direct observation is through the Gawai festival that will be conducted around June 1 and also observation during interviews. This method helps the interviewer to see a direct picture during the ritual because the constraints of the ritual are no longer carried out. This method helps the researcher to strengthen the argument based on the topic that will be covered in the study. This information can also help the researcher to see the sustainability between the study topics and also the theory that will be used in the study, which is Evolution and Culture theory (1960).



1.7 Conceptual Framework of Study

Figure 1.6

Conceptual Framework of Study



Theoretical foundation that will be use in this research is Evolution and Culture collaboration Theory (1960) by Thomas G.Harding, David Kaplan, Marshall D. Sahlins, and Ehiian R. Service. Researcher choose this theory as their concept because the main point carried in this study related to the subject matter. The collaborative work focused on five main points that can helps the researcher to relates it with the steps in *Gawai Dayak Nyama*. Above is the conceptual framework of study that will be use by the researcher in this study. By using the mindmap above, it is easier for the researcher to conclude their own study regarding the ritual that has been done at the research



location. Information will be gathered through every possible methods such as ethnographic and primary sources whereby the researcher will also focus on the document analysis that has been written in the history of the Timurang village.

1.8 Research Limitations

This study will be limited to:

- i. *Gawai Dayak Nyama* that will be held during 1st of June, every year.
- ii. The location will be at Timurang Village, Sarawak
- iii. The main focus will be more on the customs that affect the shifts within the community in the Timurang Village, Sarawak.



1.9 Research Location

Figure 1.7

Timurang Village Entrance



This field study will take place specifically in Timurang Village in Sarawak. The distance from Kuching town to Timurang Village, which is located along Borneo Height Road, is about an hour (52 km). In order to observe their *Gawai Dayak Nyama* ceremonies, the researcher will conduct their study in this location in June. The location's geography is described below. The Braang Bidayuh, who lived in Bung Pedah, Bung Segambang, and Bung Sebagang, three communities atop Braang Mountain, thought they were the mountain's first occupants. It was Panglima Sewo's responsibility to keep them safe from outsiders. They also thought that the narrative of



the Tribe at that time called Bai Pini suggested to move to a new area. Then, Mr. Jerim was given the task of finding a strategic and safe area so that this disease does not spread and threaten the villagers. Discussions were held for the decision to move to a new area, however, the tribal leader at that time tried to go down to the city of Kuching to see a dermatologist. The trip to Kuching at that time took 5 days from the village area. When the Head of the Tribe arrived at the specialist clinic, the doctor confirmed that there was no medicine to cure the disease but the head of the tribe had to go to Singapore for treatment.

Based on the information given about the type of skin disease, it is described as attacking the whole body where the skin seems to burn, fester and emit an unpleasant smell. If you look at the history of the world, this disease can be classified as smallpox where this disease has attacked around 56 million of the world's population. Smallpox has been declared eradicated worldwide by the World Health Organization (WHO) due to vaccinations. Vaccination against smallpox has ended. Smallpox was considered one of the deadliest infectious diseases prior to the development of the smallpox vaccine.



Figure 1.9

History Profile of Timurang Village



Figure 1.10

Image of Smallpox





1.10 Expected Finding

The expected findings of this study involve identifying the purpose of the *Gawai Nyama* festival in Timurang, Sarawak. Additionally, the study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis on the transition of the *Andu Gawai Nyama* to *Andu Gawai Dayak* that's happening in the Timurang Village. By employing the evolution and culture theory, the researcher aims to synthesis the relevance of the festival with the community in Timurang Village, Sarawak. Furthermore, the study aims to highlight the importance of preserving customs and culture, even if they are no longer actively practiced. Hence, preserving the cultural heritage means a lot to the community as well as emphasizing the significance of ensuring that younger generations have knowledge and understanding of their own customs and cultural heritage, thereby preventing their loss



1.11 Conclusion

This research endeavor aims to delve into the intricate customs prevalent in the Timurang village located in Sarawak. To enhance the comprehension of these customs, the researcher will incorporate evolution and culture theory, hereby consolidating the understanding of these customs. Moreover, this study endeavors to illuminate the underlying purpose of the festival and contribute to the preservation of Andu Gawai Dayak within the Bidayuh community in Timurang, Sarawak. For the people of Sarawak, customs represent a rich heritage ingrained in their daily lives, signifying their profound significance and weight (Atikalla Atie, 2014).





As a result of this study, it becomes evident that the community of Kampung Timurang prioritizes harmony and unity, irrespective of age differences. This community actively engages in the Andu Gawai Dayak ritual, not only to strengthen bonds but also to fulfill the true purpose of this ceremonial practice. This festival spans a duration of 30 days, culminating in the grand event known as Merun Kasah, or "closing the curtain" in the Bidayuh language. During this festivity, the villagers allocate a dedicated and expansive area adorned with a symbolic structure called Ranyai, representing the celebration of the Gawai festival. The community members decorate the Sanggar with carefully selected "gifts" that reflect the preferences of each family's leader. The rhythmic resonance of gongs and traditional Bidayuh music envelops the ceremonial proceedings (Atikalla Atie, 2014)



traditional beliefs known as Pengarap Lama are still upheld and practiced by those adhering to other religions (Linda A. Dagang, 2007) Upon the conclusion of the festivities, the participants gather around the Sanggar in the evening, engaging in lively dances accompanied by melodious tunes. In a symbolic gesture, each individual who halts in front of the Sanggar places a banknote in the provided basket. According to Rodza, the head of Timurang Village, the funds accumulated from this activity are utilized to enhance the village's facilities. To foster community bonds, external guests are cordially invited to partake in the festivities (Atikalla Atie, 2014)

The *Andu Gawai Nyama* ceremony serves as a profound testament to the community's unity and the cherished value placed on harmonious relationships within the village. By drawing upon evolution and culture collaboration theory, the researcher





can expound upon the rituals observed during this festival, aligning them with the theoretical elements postulated by Thomas G. Harding, David Kaplan, Marshall D. Sahlins, and Ehiian R.

