

Euro-centric landscape must be changed - UMS

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KOTA KINABALU: The Euro-centric landscape, which has long been associated with and filled the lives of the people in this region, must be changed.

The onus is on academics to develop a corpus of knowledge in order for local communities to be defined by their own standards, said Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) Vice-chancellor Professor Datuk Dr Taufiq Yap Yun Hin at the opening of the national seminar for Social Science and Humanities postgraduates, themed 'Social Science and Humanities Research Preservation.'

In his speech, Taufiq said with the seminar as a platform, discussions and written work on social science and humanities should highlight points of interest to the community in this region. Despite differences in methodology, approach or sources, any work or research should still be documented so that it could be discussed, remembered and learned from.

"As the African proverb goes, 'until the lion learns how to write, every story will glorify the hunter.' This

reflects the mentality and situation in this part of the world, where most of our history was written by outsiders. Freeing our minds from the epistemic trap by colonisers, who wrote our history from their 'victorious' viewpoint, is not an easy task.

"With this seminar, we have the opportunity to voice what had not been raised previously and focus on studies from the perspective of a community which was previously the subject of research," said Taufiq.

His speech was delivered by UMS Borneo Institute for Indigenous Studies director, Professor Dr Rosazman Hussin.

The seminar was organised by the UMS Faculty of Humanities, Art and Heritage as well as Yayasan Kemajuan Sosial. It received participation from 128 postgraduates who presented working papers which discussed the theme of the seminar with a multi-disciplinary approach.

Taufiq also expressed hope that the seminar would pave the way for continuous academic collaboration between UMS and various higher learning institutions.