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### Vol 20, No 4 (2021): Public Policy and Administration

### **Table of Contents**

#### **Civil Service**

PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF ORGANIZING REMOTE WORK IN CIVIL SERVICE: A PDF STUDY 357-370

Natalia Aliushyna, Tetyana Fedorenko, Aušra Šukvietienė

**Experience of Public Administration Reforms** 

EUROPEAN PARTICIPATORY APPROACH IN TERRITORIAL MANAGEMENT: PDF EXPERIENCE FOR UKRAINE 371–383

Iryna L. Lytvynchuk, Oleh V. Skydan, Valentyna A. Dovzhenko, Oksana A. Prokopchuk, Nataliia V. Bondarchuk

Globalization and Public Administration

GLOBALISATION OF THE ECONOMY AND ITS IMPACT ON THE FINANCIAL PDF POLICY OF KAZAKHSTAN 384–397 Kanshaim G. Sholpanbaeva, Asel A. Apysheva, Nurgul K. Shaikhanova, Usen S. Alimbetov, Saule K. Egenberdieva

Human Resource Management

ETHICAL WORK CLIMATE AND MORAL AWARENESS DURING COVID-19 PDF Sri Langgeng Ratnasari, Widodo Ismanto, Rahmawati Rahmawati, Ramadania Ramadania, Dio Caisar Darma, Gandhi Sutjahjo

Implementation of Economic and Social Policy

ANTI-CORRUPTION MONITORING IN THE PUBLIC PROCUREMENT PDF MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IN THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN 410–424

Gulsara Junusbekova, Zhaslan Khamitov

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP AND ITS IMPACT ON THE REGIONAL PDF ECONOMY: THE EXPERIENCE OF THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN AND TURKEY 425–438

Nurgul Zhalelkanova, Elvira S. Madiyarova, Madina U. Rakhimberdinova, Gulnara I. Islyam, Ekrem Karayılmazlar

Implementation of Innovation Policy

MODERNISINGTHEMECHANISMOFSTATEREGULATIONOFWOMEN'S PDFEMPLOYMENT IN THE INNOVATION SPHERE OF KAZAKHSTAN439-451Aigerim Kussaiynkyzy, Gulashar Zh. Doskeyeva

PUBLIC SECTOR INNOVATION IN A DEVELOPING COUNTRY: PROGRESS AND PDF CHALLENGES OF PUBLIC SERVICE INNOVATION COMPETITION IN 452–465 INDONESIAN GOVERNMENT

Mujibur Rahman Khairul Muluk, Muhammad Rizki Pratama

Non-Governmental Sector

THE EXPERIENCE OF NGOS THAT REPRESENT THE INTERESTS OF THE PDF DISABLED IN COOPERATING WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS 466–479

Irmina Beneš

Practice of Public Policy and Administration

corruption decentralization efficiency governance innovations leadership local government local selfgovernment management municipality new public management privatization public administra public policy public sector

public sector public service strategic planning sustainable development

Popular Articles

Public Policy and Public Administration: Development, Structure and Reciprocity 99852 views since:

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 Components and
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 17465 views

21, 2:49 PM Public Polic	y and Administration	
LOCAL GOVERNMENT CRISIS MANAGEMENT IN RESPONSE TO CASE STUDY OF SOUTH SULAWESI, INDONESIA	COVID-19: PDF 480-500	since:
Nuryanti Mustari, Junaedi Junaedi, Rudi Hardi, Achmad Nurma Hamrun, Nursaleh Hartaman	ndi, Hamrun	»Definition of Tax Avoidance, its
Public Management		Features and Relationship with Tax Evasion
TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT IN POLAND FROM A EUROPEAN PER: <b>_Robert Gawlowski, Krzysztof Makowski</b>	SPECTIVE PDF 501-513	15290 views since:
Self-Governance		»GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT
VILLAGE AUTONOMY AND PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY IN INDO PROBLEM OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN POST-VILLAGE AU THE SOUTHEAST SULAWESI PROVINCE		INDEX AS INDICATOR OF GLOBAL GOVERNANCE:
Abdul Kadir, La Husen Zuada, Idris Idris		INTEGRATED
Theory of Public Policy and Administration		ASSESSMENT OF OECD MEMBER
CORRUPTION PREVENTION BASED ON THE PRINCIPAL-AGENT APP GAME THEORY USING ICT: THE CASE STUDY OF KAZAKHSTAN	PROACH AND PDF 530-542	COUNTRIES DEVELOPMENT 11502 views
Aisulu Nurkey, Aigul Kosherbayeva, Didar Yedilkhan, Nurzhan Ku	landykov	since: 2020-01 06
TOWARD ISLAMIC-IRANIAN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION T COMPARATIVE HISTORICAL STUDY <b>Roohallah Noori, Hamidreza-Ramak Mohamadhossein</b>	THEORY: A PDF 543-558	<ul> <li>»Efficiency of</li> <li>Public</li> <li>Administration:</li> <li>Problems and</li> <li>Solutions</li> <li>7329 views</li> </ul>
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### ETHICAL WORK CLIMATE IN MOTIVATION AND MORAL AWARENESS PERSPECTIVE: THE DILEMMA BY THE COVID-19 CRISIS?\*

#### Sri Langgeng Ratnasari

Universitas Riau Kepulauan Batam City 29424, Indonesia

#### Rahmawati Rahmawati

Universitas Mulawarman Samarinda City 75117, Indonesia

#### Ramadania Ramadania

Universitas Tanjungpura Pontianak City 78124, Indonesia

#### Dio Caisar Darma

Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Ekonomi Samarinda Samarinda City 75242, Indonesia

#### Gandhi Sutjahjo

Universitas Batam Batam City 29464, Indonesia

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**Abstract.** Covid-19 is a shocking tragedy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The transmission of this scary virus drains workers of energy, such as stress, conflict, and other problems. This study analyzes several factors that influence moral awareness, including team play, corporate interests, personal morality, rules and procedures, friendship, and motivation. The interview data capacity applied to 205 informants, of which they were public employees at the Department of Public Works and Public Housing–East Kutai Regency. The MRA method calculates two effects (direct effect and indirect effect). Our findings confirm that team play, corporate interests, personal morality, rules and procedures, and friendship significantly affect moral awareness. They have shown motivation to significantly strengthen the influ-

ence of team play, corporate interests, personal morality, rules and procedures, and friendship on moral awareness. Study outcomes enrich the academic climate through the expansion of theoretical and practical contributions.

**Keywords:** public employees, government services, ethical work climate, moral awareness, motivation, MRA, interviews.

**Reikšminiai** žodžiai: viešieji darbuotojai, vyriausybės tarnybos, etiškas darbo klimatas, moralinis sąmoningumas, motyvacija, MRA, interviu.

#### Introduction

The consequence of Covid-19 is the existence of social restrictions, where not all essential sectors can implement it and instead present additional problems, such as reducing employees. Although there are positive sides such as distance learning, virtual meetings, economic degradation, pollution reduction resulting in a decrease in human activity, and other dimensions, the emergence of Covid-19 also brings negative effects that are dominant. They have interpreted the interaction of the expansion of technology and human civilization for those who work from home or 'WFH' (working from home). Public employees in developing countries (such as Indonesia), do not all have the knowledge and skills in using the internet or online systems that can actually make it easier for users and public services (Djalante et al. 2021). Most of the civilian population does not follow alignment towards digitization, so the feedback process is still face-to-face or some public employees continue to apply 'WFO' (working from the office).

We have learned many lessons during the spike in this pandemic. The social instinct of public employees is certainly greater to restore the work climate according to the expectations and values of good governance. By considering traditional aspects, this study aims to examine the perspective of human resource management (HRM) from the dimensions of work ethics climate on employee motivation and moral awareness. It organized the outline of the paper into five stages. Introduction in the first stage. Theoretical considerations and hypotheses strengthen the second stage. In the third stage, simulate the research method. Results and discussion in the fourth stage. The fifth stage includes conclusions.

#### Theoretical Considerations and Hypotheses

A team can grow big if morals support it that shape awareness through a specific scope (Paramonova 2015). In its implementation, there is indeed a kind of test or direct interview to employees, including eight items covering life and work values, understanding of freedom, forms of ownership, fairness, determining motivation for the company, motives for helping others, preferred system morals, and attitudes towards the cultural life of the community.

In deciding, it takes determination of personal morality and moral awareness. There are codes of ethics and norms that indirectly become complementary items that are charged to every employee in the company (Apriliani, Anggraini, and Anwar 2014). Moral principles, in fact, have built through traditional models and rational models for decision making. Moral judgment and moral awareness will encourage moral action, if balanced with personal character (Baker 2014). Social problems in the corporate environment do not produce tactics, but ethically, they can influence the actions of individuals or groups of people. Ideally, managerial moral awareness formally concerned with preferences for characteristics (Reynolds 2006).

For example, Sekerka (2009) reviewed the living aspects of organizational culture and climate as ethical actions towards sustainability for those who will take risks and take responsibility. In the USA, specifically in the Valley of Silicon, they have studied it about the practices applied to eight organizations in ethics training. When an employee hired for the first time, the company's values and rules immediately bind them. There is learning reform available through special functions, there is a social interaction between employees and senior level managers or vice versa. Over time, the emphasis through the compliance approach will form by itself, and this is an indicator to measure ethical competence.

Moral growth contributes to relationships, which depend on social networks and relationships. Philosophically, the experience of friendship develops justification, caring, ethics, and morals. Closer dimensions such as community, religion, and personal relationships are related to ethical values (Lawrence and Monisha 2018).

Zhu et al. (2011) have studied transactional leadership behavior on moral identity through the role of employee motivation. The experimental results show that there is a positive influence between leadership factors in teamwork on the moral identity of followers, so that it indirectly has implications for leadership styles that prioritize motivational reviews (Ratnasari et al., 2019a). In increasing the quantity and quality of performance, special programs such as motivation needed. Motivation solves three components of problems in the workplace, such as assigning new tasks to employees within a certain period, investing confidence so that they dare to take risks and mental strengthening, refusal to change, and focusing on the major task or new task (Clark 2003). Those who motivated, of course, oriented towards success and effective work. The new challenge is finding the great diversity of individuals to support different cultures.

#### **Research Methods**

We collected data based on interview techniques involving the entire population in one work unit. The object of this study is the Department of Public Works and Public Housing–East Kutai Regency which is a regional apparatus organization at level three (Kabupaten/City) which is one level below the Department of Public Works and Public Housing–Province of East Kalimantan and the highest at the top level is Ministry of Public Works and Public Housing–Republic of Indonesia. From the institutional and regulatory perspective, the main tasks of the Department of Public Works and Public Housing–East Kutai Regency are policy formulation, policy implementation, evaluation, and administration in the fields of spatial planning, water resources, community development, creation of works, landscaping, funerals, and public street lighting (Maria, Darma, and Setyawan et al. 2020).

The sample applied to 205 units of informants based on active employees in nine sections of the organizational structure. The nine sections include the head of the office, the secretariat, the spatial planning sector, the water resources sector, the clan development sector, the creative sector, the gardening, funeral, and public street lighting sector, the technical service unit sector, and the sector in functional groups. Sample treatment is fair and expressed openly. The rating scale for each item is the same, where the unit of calculation.

It limited the dimensions to seven variables with their respective roles based on the ten hypotheses development. For more details on the operational range of the variables, we detail it in Table 1. The seven variables emphasize on forty-one dimensions, where the most elements are rules and procedures reaching eight items and the least for moral awareness with four items. We adopted these dimensions from various relevant literature reviews based on the largest scale (10-very important) to the smallest scale (1-very unimportant).

Measurement and item	Source	Units
<i>Team play</i> (Logical concept of work, Responsibility, Com- plementary qualifications and skills, Products and services produced, Full understanding of purpose)	González-Rodenas et al. (2020), Gonçalves et al. (2019), da Motta et al. (2020)	5
<i>Company interest</i> (Productivity, Disclosure, Financial interests, Non-financial interests, Anomalies in employee behavior, Financial contract)	Romain (2015), Lecheva (2015)	6
<i>Personal morality</i> (Moral identity, Organizational achieve- ments and competencies, Ethical behavior, Individual reflection, Pride)	Jordan, Leliveld and Tenbrunsel (2015), Vauclair (2009), van Prooijen and Ellemers (2014)	5
Rules and procedures (HRM Practice, Policy evaluation, Manager instrument, Work environment, Job procedure, Employee recruitment, Administration system, Organiza- tional management)	Demo et al. (2012), Robin- son (2017), Stankevičiūtė and Savanevičienė (2018)	8
<i>Friendhip</i> (Private network, Relationship quality, Life sat- isfaction, Social trust, Characteristics of friendship, Help and benefits, Quantity of social interaction)	Demir and Weitekamp (2007), Amati et al. (2018), van der Horst and Coffé (2012), Wilson, Harris, and Vazire (2015)	7
<i>Motivation</i> (Employee interests and needs, Support for employees, Security, Material incentives, Loyalty, Expres- sion of emotions)	Hitka et al. (2015), Urošević et al. (2016), Ratnasari et al. (2019b), Berhenke et al. (2011)	7
<i>Moral awareness</i> (Decision-making, Civilization norms, Moral values, Attention and sensitivity)	Reynolds and Miller (2015), Naydenova and Shaposhnikova (2016), Jordan (2009)	4

Table 1. Conceptual dimension
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Moderated regression analysis (MRA supports the data processing method). This took aims to measure the effect of moderating variables (in this case motivation) in the two-way interaction of team play, corporate interests, personal morality, rules and procedures, and friendship on moral awareness. In this study, MRA work not only concentrated on the direct effect but also calculates the indirect effect (moderation). Then, MRA supported through IBM SPSS 25 software, which covers four primary jobs.

#### **Result and Discussion**

Table 2 displays the characteristics of 205 informants from different backgrounds. As known, that men are the dominant gender than women with the most ages being 29-39 years. Those who work in the Department of Public Works and Public Housing–East Kutai Regency, have a minimum education at the high school level and the highest is a doctoral graduate of the University. With dominant work experience for the last 11-16 years, classified as permanent employees and the rest as contract employees. Specifically, executive staff are those who occupy technical service units and functional positions.

Demographics	Frequency	%
Gender		
Male	124	60.49
Female	81	39.51
Age (years)		
18 - 28	57	27.80
29 - 39	72	35.12
40 - 50	40	19.51
51 - 60	27	13.17
+61	9	4.39
Education certificate		
High school	8	3.90
Diploma	69	33.65
Bachelor	92	44.88
Master	33	16.10
Doctor	3	1.46
Position		
Head of office	1	0.49
Secretary	2	0.97
Head of sector	5	2.44
Head of section	15	7.32
Executive staff	47	22.92
Permanent employee	86	41.95
Contract employee	49	23.90
Work experience (years)		
5 - 10	43	20.98
11 – 16	71	34.63
17 – 22	65	31.71
+23	26	12.68

Table 2.	Profile of inf	formant
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Table 3 summarizes the results of descriptive statistics with four distinct elements (maximum value, minimum value, standard error value, and mean value). Of the seven variables, the results of each of the four elements are very diverse. The highest minimum score is for friendship, while the highest maximum value is in company interest and personal morality. In standard error, rules and procedures are the highest compared with others. Motivation is the variable with the largest mean value.

Measurements	Min.	Max.	Std. error	Mean
Team play	4.00	8.00	0.109	8.17
Company interest	3.00	9.00	0.093	7.97
Personal morality	4.00	9.00	0.102	7.98
Rules and procedures	2.00	7.00	0.139	7.81
Friendship	5.00	8.00	0.116	8.05
Motivation	3.00	6.00	0.107	8.22
Moral awareness	4.00	8.00	0.096	7.23

Table 3. Summary of descriptive statistics

Source: calculations using SPSS

Measurements	CA (0.70)	a (0.05)	Sign
Team play	0.929> 0.70	0.018 < 0.05	Accepted
Company interest	0.924> 0.70	0.047 < 0.05	Accepted
Personal morality	0.928> 0.70	0.012 < 0.05	Accepted
Rules and procedures	0.926> 0.70	0.033 < 0.05	Accepted
Friendship	0.925> 0.70	0.007 < 0.05	Accepted
Motivation	0.921> 0.70	0.026 < 0.05	Accepted
Moral awareness	0.923> 0.70	0.039 < 0.05	Accepted

#### Table 4. Decision on reliability

Source: calculations using SPSS

Decision validity for all indicators results below 5% ( $\alpha < 0.05$ ) or in other terms has met the criteria. Table 4 compiles that there are no problems narrated by the informants in responding to all questions from the questionnaire. Comparison of the seven indicators to the highest validity gains each looks different. Intensity in the assumption of reliability across all variables appeared to meet the criteria (CA > 0.70). Table 4 also confirms that the variable that has the largest CA achievement is team play and, in comparison, for the lowest, CA is motivation. This shows that there is a consistency of a series of measurements on the selected component.

Proportion (hypothesis)	Coef. Beta	Т	Prob. (0.05)	Remark
TP à MA (H1.a)	0.098	1.093	0.017 < 0.05	Accepted
CI à MA (H1.b)	0.079	1.846	0.004 < 0.05	Accepted
PM à MA (H1.c)	0.165	1.585	0.019 < 0.05	Accepted
R & P à MA (H1.d)	0.367	2.787	0.006 < 0.05	Accepted
F à MA (H1.e)	0.015	1.774	0.039 < 0.05	Accepted
TP à M à MA (H2.a)	0.018	1.057	0.039 < 0.05	Accepted
CI à M à MA (H2.b)	0.014	1.118	0.028 < 0.05	Accepted
PM à M à MA (H2.c)	0.030	1.431	0.015 < 0.05	Accepted
R & P à M à MA (H2.d)	0.067	1.662	0.046 < 0.05	Accepted
F à M à MA (H2.e)	0.002	2.188	0.039 < 0.05	Accepted

Table 5. Structure - 1 and 2







Source: author's tabulation. Information: direct causality (\*), indirect causality (\*\*)

It reflected attention in Table 5 that the five hypotheses on a direct relationship have accepted, where p < 0.05. From this model, we conclude that the influence of company interest on moral awareness is the most dominant relationship among others. As a result,

all the proposed hypotheses also accepted and there is no need for any paths to be omitted. We consider motivation as the right variable to strengthen the relationship between the independent variables to the dependent variable because p < 0.05. Specifically, motivation plays the most dominant role in moderating the relationship between personal morality and moral awareness significantly compared to the other four hypotheses (see Figure 1). Correlation (R represents the closeness of the relationship in one model). Interpreting the R value between 0.70-0.89 shows that there is a very strong relationship between the first structure and the second structure.

This finding implies that the logical things needed by public offices such as team play, company interests, personal morality, rules and procedures, friendship, and motivation for employees during Covid-19 to support moral awareness actively. Currently, the short-term impact because of the lockdown period on performing public employees at the Department of Public Works and Public Housing – East Kutai Regency can still overcome by implementing WFH. However, in the long term, it has the potential to threaten mental health and psychological stress. Without realizing it, they can disturb their morals. As a result, the sensitivity of fellow employees affects work productivity. In order to avoid a prolonged conflict from a decrease in moral awareness, it is necessary to combine motivation.

From a different engel, Farooq et al. (2021) support this finding. With the crosscultural diversity in the world of work, proper opportunities and challenges face decision making. Success in the workplace requires the interaction of stakeholders from different backgrounds. Integrating moral consciousness in the modern era prioritizes the harmonization of diverse personal interests. It connected this study with the concept of Farooq et al. (2020) which investigated the feasibility of employee specialization who took the initiative to fully voluntarily develop skills in the workplace.

#### Conclusion

- This study attempts to show the impact of team play, corporate interests, personal morality, rules and procedures, friendship, and motivation on moral awareness in the Department of Public Works and Public Housing–East Kutai Regency. Empirical evaluation proves that if the increase in team play, corporate interests, personal morality, rules and procedures, and friendship can increase moral awareness. Another sign that the increase in team play, corporate interests, personal morality, rules and procedures, and friendship through employee motivation, the higher the role of moral awareness.
- 2. The theoretical contribution of these findings has practical implications for regulators (public officials) and is useful through their attention to determining direction and finding the best solutions in advancing public services, employee resources, performance monitoring, and community satisfaction.
- 3. The limitations of this study are further work for other researchers in the future. From sample size needs to be enlarged, thus ensuring reliability and validity appropriately. The objectives of the concepts and indicators in the variables need to be explored in depth in order to get an interactive response from the informants.

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Sri Langgeng Ratnasari, Rahmawati Rahmawati, Ramadania Ramadania, Dio Caisar Darma, Gandhi Sutjahjo

#### Etiškas darbo klimatas motyvacinio ir moralinio sąmoningumo perspektyvoje: dilema COVID-19 krizės kontekste

#### Anotacija

COVID-19 pandemija yra šokiruojanti XXI amžiaus tragedija. Šio viruso plitimas ir užsikrėtimai iš darbuotojų atima energiją, sukelia stresą, konfliktus ir kitas problemas. Šiame tyrime analizuojami keli veiksniai, turintys įtakos moraliniam darbo klimatui, taip pat komandiniam darbui, institucijų interesams, asmeninei moralei, taisyklėms ir procedūroms, darbuotojų bendradarbiavimui ir motyvacijai. Tyrimui buvo pasitelktas interviu metodas, kuris buvo taikomas 205 informantams iš Viešųjų darbų ir viešojo būsto departamento Rytų Kutajaus regione (Kalimantano provincijoje, Indonezijoje). Taip pat buvo pasitelktas MRA metodas (apskaičiuojant tiesioginių ir netiesioginių veiksnių poveikį etiškam darbo klimatui). Išvados patvirtina, kad komandinis darbas, institucijų interesai, asmeninė moralė, taisyklės ir procedūros bei darbuotojų bendradarbiavimas stipriai veikia etišką darbo klimatą. Taigi, šiame straipsnyje pateikti tyrimai parodė, kad etišką darbo klimatą suformavo ir motyvaciją itin sustiprino komandinis darbas, institucijų interesų paisymas, kiekvieno darbuotojo asmeninė moralė, taisyklių ir procedūrų laikymasis ir darbuotojų bendradarbiavimas.

Sri Langgeng Ratnasari – Dr. Associate Professor in Posgraduate Program, Universitas Riau Kepulauan. Jl. Pahlawan, No.99, Bukit Tempayan, Batu Aji, Batam City 29425, Riau Islands, Indonesia. E-mail: sarisucahyo@yahoo.com

Rahmawati Rahmawati – Dr. Associate Professor in Department of Management, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Mulawarman. Jl. Tanah Grogot, Gn. Kelua Unmul, No.1, Samarinda City 75117, East Borneo, Indonesia. E-mail: rahmawati@feb.unmul.ac.id

Ramadania Ramadania – Dr. Associate Professor in Department of Management, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Tanjungpura. Jl. Prof. Dr. H. Hadari Nawawi, Bansir Laut, Pontianak City 78124, West Borneo. Indonesia. E-mail: ramadhania@ekonomi.untan.ac.id *Dio Caisar Darma* – M.Si, Junior Researcher in Department of Management, Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Ekonomi Samarinda. Jl. K.H. Abul Hasan, No. 77, Samarinda City 75242, East Borneo, Indonesia. E-mail: diocaisar@stiesam.ac.id

Gandhi Sutjahjo – M.Si, Senior Lecturer and Assistant Professor in Program of Information System Study, Faculty of Engineering, Universitas Batam. Jl. Uniba, No. 5, Batam Center, Batam City, 29432, Riau Island, Indonesia. E-mail: gandhi.sucahyo@gmail.com

Sri Langgeng Ratnasari – Dr. Riau Kepulauan universiteto doktorantūros studijų programos docentas. Jl. Pahlawan, Nr.99, Bukit Tempayan, Batu Aji, Batam City 29425, Riau salos, Indonezija. El. paštas: sarisucahyo@yahoo.com Rahmawati Rahmawati – Dr. Mulawarman universiteto Ekonomikos ir verslo fakulteto Vadybos katedros docentas. Jl. Tanah Grogot, Gn. Kelua Unmul, No.1, Samarinda City 75117, Rytų Borneo, Indonezija.

El. paštas: rahmawati@feb.unmul.ac.id

Ramadania Ramadania – Dr. Tanjungpuros universiteto Ekonomikos ir verslo fakulteto Vadybos katedros docentė. Jl. Dr. H. Hadari Nawawi, Bansir Laut, Pontianak City 78124, Vakarų Borneo. Indonezija.

El. paštas: ramadhania@ekonomi.untan.ac.id

Dio Caisar Darma – M.Si, Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Ekonomi Samarinda Vadybos katedros jaunesnysis mokslo darbuotojas. Jl. K.H. Abul Hasan, Nr. 77, Samarinda City 75242, Rytų Borneo, Indonezija. El. paštas: diocaisar@stiesam.ac.id

*Gandhi Sutjahjo* – M.Si, Batamo Universiteto Inžinerijos fakulteto Informacinių sistemų studijų programos vyresnysis dėstytojas ir docentas. Jl. Uniba, Nr. 5, Batamo centras, Batam miestas, 29432, Riau sala, Indonezija.

El. paštas: gandhi.sucahyo@gmail.com

