

The Influence of Leadership and Work Motivation on Employee Performance at Putra Abadi Langkat University

Sarifah Rista Maulina, Sri Rahayu, Saimara A. M. Sebayang

Abstract

Employee performance is a key factor in determining the effectiveness and quality of services provided by higher education institutions. This study aims to analyze the influence of leadership and work motivation on the performance of non-academic employees at Putra Abadi Langkat University, both partially and simultaneously, as well as to identify the most dominant influencing variable. This research employed a quantitative approach with a causal associative design. The population consisted of all 45 permanent non-academic employees of Putra Abadi Langkat University. Since the population was fewer than 100 individuals, a census (total sampling) technique was applied, resulting in a sample of 45 respondents. Data were collected through structured questionnaires using a five-point Likert scale and analyzed using SPSS through validity and reliability tests, classical assumption tests, multiple linear regression analysis, t-test, F-test, and coefficient of determination (R^2). The findings reveal that leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee performance ($\beta = 0.385$; $t = 3.420$; $p = 0.001$), while work motivation also has a positive and significant effect ($\beta = 0.475$; $t = 4.115$; $p = 0.000$). Simultaneously, leadership and work motivation significantly influence employee performance ($F = 28.450$; $p = 0.000$). The coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.575 indicates that 57.5% of the variation in employee performance is explained by leadership and work motivation, while the remaining 42.5% is influenced by other factors not examined in this study. Furthermore, work motivation was identified as the most dominant variable affecting employee performance. These findings suggest that strengthening leadership practices and enhancing employee motivation are essential strategies for improving organizational performance and service quality in higher education institutions.

Keywords: Leadership, Work Motivation, Employee Performance, Higher Education, Putra Abadi Langkat University.

Sarifah Rista Maulina¹

¹Management, Universitas Pembangunan Panca Budi, Indonesia
e-mail: sarifahrستا28@gmail.com¹

Sri Rahayu², Saimara A. M. Sebayang³

^{2,3}Management, Universitas Pembangunan Panca Budi, Indonesia

e-mail: srirahayu@dosen.pancabudi.ac.id², saimarasebayang@dosen.pancabudi.ac.id³.

3rd International Conference Epicentrum of Economic Global Framework (ICEEGLOF)

Theme: Cross-Sector and Cross-Disciplinary Strategies for Achieving the SDGS

<https://proceeding.pancabudi.ac.id/index.php/ICEEGLOF>

Introduction

The Importance of Employee Performance in the Higher Education Sector. The existence and development of a higher education institution are largely determined by the quality of administrative and support services provided by its employees. University employees are not merely responsible for carrying out routine administrative tasks; they serve as the driving force behind the implementation of the Three Pillars of Higher Education (Tri Dharma Perguruan Tinggi). Optimal employee performance directly contributes to institutional quality, accreditation, and student satisfaction as the primary stakeholders (Mangkunegara, 2017). Conversely, declining productivity among administrative staff can hinder the university's bureaucratic processes, ultimately damaging the institution's reputation in the eyes of the public.

The Crucial Role of Leadership in University Organizations. One of the primary factors influencing employee performance is the leadership style adopted by university leaders. Leaders in higher education institutions are expected not only to provide direction but also to support, guide, and create a conducive working environment. Participative and visionary leadership styles have been shown to align employees' perceptions and efforts toward achieving organizational goals (Robbins & Judge, 2018). However, when top-down communication becomes overly rigid or leadership tends to be passive, coordination among departments weakens, resulting in reduced employee effectiveness and organizational performance.

Work Motivation as an Internal Driving Force. In addition to external influences such as leadership, internal factors—particularly work motivation—also play a significant role in determining employee performance. Both intrinsic motivation (such as job satisfaction and self-actualization) and extrinsic motivation (such as incentives, recognition, and career advancement opportunities) serve as essential drivers that encourage employees to fulfill their responsibilities effectively (Hasibuan, 2019). When employees feel that their contributions are appreciated and their fundamental needs are met, they are more likely to demonstrate stronger commitment and dedication. In practice, a common issue is the gradual decline in work enthusiasm caused by insufficient appreciation, leading employees to perform only at a minimum standard and consequently reducing the quality of services provided.

The Context of Putra Abadi Langkat University. As one of the rapidly developing higher education institutions in Langkat Regency, Putra Abadi Langkat University faces significant challenges in strengthening its global competitiveness. Achieving this vision requires maintaining and continuously improving employee performance. Preliminary observations indicate fluctuations in the achievement of daily work targets, including delays in completing academic administrative tasks and inconsistent staff attendance. These issues are presumed to be closely associated with the effectiveness of leadership practices at both the faculty and rectorate levels, as well as with employee work motivation that has not yet been optimally fostered.

Research Significance and Purpose. Considering that leadership and work motivation are two fundamental factors that reinforce one another in influencing employee productivity, a comprehensive evaluation of these variables is essential. This study aims to examine the extent to which leadership and work motivation affect employee performance at Putra Abadi Langkat University. Based on the theoretical considerations and empirical phenomena described above, this research is conducted under the title: *"The Influence of Leadership and Work Motivation on Employee Performance at Putra Abadi Langkat University."*

1.5 Research Objectives

Based on the research problems that have been formulated, the objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To Analyze the Partial Effect of Leadership. To identify, examine, and analyze the extent to which leadership has a partial effect on improving the performance of non-academic employees at Putra Abadi Langkat University (Robbins & Judge, 2018).

2. To Analyze the Partial Effect of Work Motivation. To examine and analyze the significant effect of work motivation on the performance achievement of non-academic employees at Putra Abadi Langkat University (Hasibuan, 2019).
3. To Analyze the Simultaneous Effect of Leadership and Work Motivation. To evaluate and analyze the combined (simultaneous) influence of leadership and work motivation on the performance of non-academic employees at Putra Abadi Langkat University (Mangkunegara, 2017).
4. To Identify the Most Dominant Variable. To determine which variable—leadership or work motivation—has the most dominant influence on the performance of non-academic employees at Putra Abadi Langkat University (Robbins & Judge, 2018).

Literature Review

2.1 Leadership (X_1)

According to Kasmir (2019), leadership refers to the actions and behaviors demonstrated by a leader in managing, guiding, supporting, and directing subordinates to accomplish their assigned duties and responsibilities. Leadership is not merely a formal position but a practical process of providing direction and guidance to achieve organizational goals. Effective leadership is characterized by a leader who is supportive, educational, and capable of protecting and motivating employees.

Factors Affecting Leadership

According to Kasmir (2019), the effectiveness of leadership is influenced by several key factors:

- 1) **Leader's Personality:** The leader's character, emotional stability, integrity, and attitude toward employees.
- 2) **Management Style:** The leadership approach used to manage and delegate responsibilities within the organization.
- 3) **Communication Skills:** The ability to communicate the organization's vision, provide clear instructions, and encourage two-way communication.
- 4) **Organizational Climate and Culture:** The internal work environment, including organizational rules and workplace culture that support or limit leadership effectiveness.

Leadership Indicators

According to Kasmir (2019), leadership can be measured through the following indicators:

- 1) Providing support and protection to employees.
- 2) Guiding, coaching, and developing employees.
- 3) Organizing work and allocating responsibilities effectively.
- 4) Giving clear directions and making firm decisions.

2.2 Work Motivation (X_2)

According to Kasmir (2019), work motivation is the internal and external drive that encourages employees to perform their jobs enthusiastically in order to achieve organizational objectives. Motivation stimulates employees to utilize their abilities and contribute effectively to the organization. Without sufficient motivation, employees are unlikely to perform at their full potential.

Factors Affecting Work Motivation

According to Kasmir (2019), work motivation is influenced by several factors, including:

- 1) **Financial Rewards and Welfare:** Fair salaries, incentives, and employee benefits.
- 2) **Work Environment:** Comfortable physical facilities and positive relationships among coworkers.
- 3) **Leadership Policies:** Recognition, promotion opportunities, and managerial support.
- 4) **Career Development Opportunities:** Access to training, skill development, and career advancement.

Work Motivation Indicators

Kasmir (2019) identifies the following indicators of work motivation:

- 1) Enthusiasm and willingness to work.
- 2) Employee discipline and attendance.
- 3) Responsibility in completing assigned tasks.
- 4) A strong sense of belonging to the organization.

2.3 Employee Performance (Y)

According to Kasmir (2019), employee performance refers to the work results achieved by an employee within a specific period based on assigned duties and organizational standards. Employee performance reflects not only the quality of the final results but also the effectiveness and seriousness of the work process.

Factors Affecting Employee Performance

According to Kasmir (2019), employee performance is influenced by several important factors:

- 1) Ability and Skills: Educational background, knowledge, and technical competence.
- 2) Work Facilities and Infrastructure: The availability of equipment, technology, and supporting facilities.
- 3) Physical and Mental Condition: Employees' health, stress levels, and emotional well-being.
- 4) Leadership and Motivation: Effective leadership and employee motivation that encourage better work performance.

Employee Performance Indicators

According to Kasmir (2019), employee performance can be evaluated using the following indicators:

- 1) Quality of Work: Accuracy, neatness, and overall quality of completed tasks.
- 2) Quantity of Work: The amount of work completed compared with organizational targets.
- 3) Timeliness: The ability to complete tasks within the specified deadlines.
- 4) Teamwork: The ability to cooperate effectively with colleagues to accomplish organizational objectives.

2.4 Previous Studies

Tabel 1. Previous Studies

No	Researcher & Year	Research Title	Research Variables	Research Method	Research Findings	Similarities
1	Setiawan, A. (2018)	<i>Analysis of Leadership and Work Ethic on Employee Performance in the Rectorate Office of UNPAB</i>	X ₁ : Leadership X ₂ : Work Ethic Y: Employee Performance	Quantitative associative research using surveys and multiple linear regression analysis.	Leadership and work ethic had significant partial and simultaneous effects on the quality of administrative services in the university rectorate office.	Examines the variables of Leadership (X ₁) and Employee Performance (Y) within a higher education institution.
2	Ririhena, S. W. (2020)	<i>The Effect of Work Motivation and Work Environment on the Productivity of</i>	X ₁ : Work Motivation X ₂ : Work Environment Y: Staff Productivity	Descriptive quantitative research using questionnaires and path analysis.	Work motivation was found to be the dominant factor in improving the	Examines the variable of Work Motivation (X ₂) and the performance of non-academic administrative staff in a higher

		<i>Administrative Staff at a Private University</i>			performance and service efficiency of administrative staff.	education institution.
3	Rahayu, S. (2018)	<i>The Influence of Motivation and Discipline on Employee Job Performance at PT. Langkat Nusantara Kepong Langkat Regency</i>	X ₁ : Motivation X ₂ : Discipline Y: Job Performance	Quantitative, questionnaire, multiple linear regression analysis.	Motivation and discipline have a positive and significant effect on employee job performance, both partially and simultaneously.	Investigates the Motivation variable (X ₁) to measure its impact on employee performance (Y).
4	Sebayang, S., Nuzuliati, N., & Wahyuni, S. (2021)	<i>Education for Village Officials Regarding Leadership Work Motivation and Organizational Culture</i>	Leadership Work Motivation Organizational Culture	Descriptive qualitative, community empowerment workshop, educational counseling.	The training effectively improved the village officials' understanding and capacity regarding the importance of leadership, motivation, and positive	Examines the Work Motivation variable within a public service institution/educational framework.
5	Mirdhatillah, M., Sebayang, S. A. M., & Wahyono, T. (2025)	<i>Analysis of Work Ability, Work Discipline, and Work Motivation on Employee Performance at the Bureau of Organization and Human Resources of the National Research and Innovation Agency</i>	X ₁ : Work Ability X ₂ : Work Discipline X ₃ : Work Motivation Y: Employee Performance	Quantitative, questionnaire, multiple linear regression analysis.	Work ability, discipline, and motivation have a positive and significant effect on employee performance, both partially and simultaneously.	Investigates the Work Motivation variable (X ₃) to measure its impact on employee performance (Y) in a state institution.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework serves as a strategic foundation for developing the research design and guiding the data collection process. By providing a clear understanding of the relationships among the variables under investigation, it enables the researcher to formulate preliminary assumptions that are subsequently tested through empirical analysis. Furthermore, the conceptual framework provides a theoretical basis for interpreting the research findings, allowing conclusions to be drawn systematically and logically based on the empirical evidence obtained.

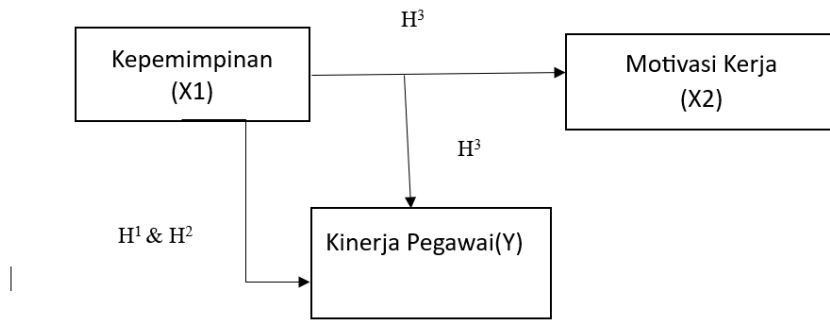


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Hypotheses

- H₁: Leadership has a positive and significant partial effect on the performance of employees at Putra Abadi Langkat University.
- H₂: Work motivation has a positive and significant partial effect on the performance of employees at Putra Abadi Langkat University.
- H₃: Leadership and work motivation have a positive and significant simultaneous effect on the performance of employees at Putra Abadi Langkat University.

Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative approach with a causal associative research design to examine the effects of leadership (X₁) and work motivation (X₂) on employee performance (Y) at Putra Abadi Langkat University.

3.2 Research Location and Time

The research was conducted at Putra Abadi Langkat University, Langkat Regency, North Sumatra, Indonesia. Data collection, questionnaire distribution, and data analysis were completed over a one-month period after obtaining research approval from the university.

3.3 Population and Sample

The population consisted of 45 permanent non-academic employees at Putra Abadi Langkat University. Since the population was fewer than 100 individuals, this study used a census (total sampling) technique, in which all 45 employees were included as respondents.

3.4 Data Collection Techniques

The study used both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires using a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). Secondary data were obtained from university documents, including the institutional profile, organizational structure, employee attendance records, and relevant books and journal articles.

3.5 Data Analysis Techniques

The data were analyzed using SPSS through validity and reliability tests, classical assumption tests (normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity), multiple linear regression analysis, hypothesis testing using the t-test and F-test, and the coefficient of determination (R²) to measure the explanatory power of the independent variables.

Finally, hypothesis testing was conducted using the t-test to examine the partial effect of each independent variable on employee performance and the F-test to assess their simultaneous effect. In addition, the coefficient of determination (R²) was calculated to measure the proportion of the variation in employee performance that could be explained by leadership and work motivation.

Results

4.1 Results of Statistical Data Analysis

a. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Based on the primary data collected through questionnaires from 45 non-academic employees at Putra Abadi Langkat University, the data were analyzed using SPSS. The results of the multiple linear regression analysis are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Multiple Linear Regression and Partial t-Test Results

Variable	Regression Coefficient (Beta)	t-value	Sig.	Conclusion
Constant	4.210	2.150	0.037	Significant
Leadership (X_1)	0.385	3.420	0.001	H_1 Accepted
Work Motivation (X_2)	0.475	4.115	0.000	H_2 Accepted

The multiple linear regression equation is:

$$Y = 4.210 + 0.385X_1 + 0.475X_2$$

The regression equation indicates that the constant value of 4.210 represents the baseline level of employee performance when leadership and work motivation remain unchanged. The positive regression coefficients for leadership (0.385) and work motivation (0.475) indicate that an increase in either independent variable leads to an improvement in employee performance.

b. Partial Hypothesis Testing (t-test)

The results show that the leadership variable has a t-value of 3.420, which is greater than the critical t-value of 2.018 ($df = 42$), with a significance value of 0.001 (< 0.05). Therefore, H_1 is accepted, indicating that leadership has a positive and significant partial effect on employee performance.

Similarly, work motivation has a t-value of 4.115, which exceeds the critical t-value of 2.018, with a significance value of 0.000 (< 0.05). Thus, H_2 is accepted, indicating that work motivation has a positive and significant partial effect on employee performance.

c. Simultaneous Hypothesis Testing (F-test) and Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Table 2. F-test and Coefficient of Determination Results

F-value	Sig.	R Square (R^2)	Conclusion
28.450	0.000	0.575	H_3 Accepted

The simultaneous hypothesis test shows that the F-value of 28.450 is greater than the critical F-value of 3.22, with a significance value of 0.000 (< 0.05). Therefore, H_3 is accepted, indicating that leadership and work motivation simultaneously have a positive and significant effect on employee performance at Putra Abadi Langkat University.

The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.575$) indicates that 57.5% of the variation in employee performance can be explained by leadership and work motivation, while the remaining 42.5% is influenced by other factors not included in this study, such as employee competence, work discipline, and organizational commitment.

4.2 Discussion

a. The Effect of Leadership on Employee Performance

The findings indicate that leadership has a positive and significant influence on the performance of non-academic employees at Putra Abadi Langkat University. Effective leadership, characterized by clear direction, guidance, and open communication, helps employees perform their duties more efficiently and reduces administrative errors. Leaders who actively support and guide employees create a more productive working environment. These findings are consistent with Kasmir (2019), who argues that effective leadership is reflected in a manager's ability to direct and influence employee behavior. The results also support the findings of Robbins and Judge (2018), who emphasize that supportive leadership improves employee performance and organizational effectiveness.

b. The Effect of Work Motivation on Employee Performance

The results show that work motivation is the most influential variable, as indicated by its higher regression coefficient (0.475) compared to leadership. Employees with strong intrinsic motivation, such as job satisfaction, and extrinsic motivation, such as recognition and rewards, tend to demonstrate greater responsibility, commitment, and discipline in completing their work. These findings support Kasmir's (2019) motivation theory, which states that employee motivation is a key driver of organizational productivity. Well-motivated employees contribute to higher-quality academic and administrative services, as also suggested by Hasibuan (2019).

c. The Simultaneous Effect of Leadership and Work Motivation on Employee Performance

The statistical results confirm that leadership and work motivation jointly have a significant positive effect on employee performance. Effective leadership alone is not sufficient to achieve organizational goals unless it is accompanied by high employee motivation. The combination of supportive leadership and motivated employees creates a positive work environment, strengthens teamwork, and improves organizational effectiveness. This synergy enables Putra Abadi Langkat University to enhance service quality and achieve its institutional objectives more effectively.

Conclusion

5.1 Conclusion

Based on the results of the data analysis and discussion presented in the previous chapter, several conclusions can be drawn regarding the influence of leadership and work motivation on employee performance at Putra Abadi Langkat University.

First, leadership has a positive and significant partial effect on the performance of non-academic employees. This finding indicates that the more effective, communicative, and supportive the leadership practices implemented by university leaders, the better the quality and timeliness of administrative services provided by employees (Kasmir, 2019).

Second, work motivation has a positive and significant partial effect on employee performance and was identified as the most dominant variable influencing performance. This suggests that employees' enthusiasm, responsibility, and discipline, supported by appropriate recognition and fulfillment of their needs, are the primary factors contributing to higher productivity (Kasmir, 2019).

Third, leadership and work motivation simultaneously have a positive and significant effect on employee performance, explaining 57.5% of the variation in employee performance (Mangkunegara, 2017). The combination of effective leadership and strong employee motivation creates a productive work environment and enhances the overall quality of administrative services at Putra Abadi Langkat University.

5.2 Research Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be considered in interpreting the findings.

First, the study examined only two independent variables, namely leadership and work motivation. The coefficient of determination indicates that 42.5% of the variation in employee performance is explained by other factors that were not included in this study, such as employee competence, organizational culture, workload, and organizational commitment.

Second, the study involved a relatively small sample of 45 non-academic employees using a census sampling technique. Therefore, the findings are specific to Putra Abadi Langkat University and should be generalized to other higher education institutions with caution.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings and limitations of this study, several recommendations are proposed.

Practical Recommendations

Since work motivation was found to be the most influential factor affecting employee performance, the university management is encouraged to strengthen employee motivation by improving both financial and non-financial reward systems, providing greater recognition for

employee achievements, and ensuring transparent career development opportunities for non-academic staff. In addition, university leaders should continue to promote supportive two-way communication and regularly engage with administrative staff to identify and address workplace challenges.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future researchers are encouraged to expand this study by including additional variables that may influence employee performance, such as organizational commitment, organizational culture, employee competence, workload, burnout, transformational leadership, or the use of information technology systems. Involving larger samples from multiple higher education institutions would also improve the generalizability of the findings.

References

- [1] Mangkunegara, A. A. A. P. (2017). *Manajemen sumber daya manusia perusahaan*. PT Remaja Rosdakarya.
- [2] Robbins, S. P., & Judge, T. A. (2018). *Organizational behavior* (18th ed.). Pearson.
- [3] Hasibuan, M. S. (2019). *Manajemen sumber daya manusia*. PT Bumi Aksara.
- [4] Kasmir. (2019). *Manajemen sumber daya manusia (teori dan praktik)*. PT RajaGrafindo Persada.
- [5] Kasmir. (2019). *Manajemen sumber daya manusia (teori dan praktik)*. PT RajaGrafindo Persada.
- [6] Setiawan, A. (2018). Analisis kepemimpinan dan etos kerja terhadap kinerja pegawai di lingkungan Biro Rektor UNPAB Medan. *Jurnal Kajian Ekonomi dan Kebijakan Publik*, 3(1), 83–89.
- [7] Ririhena, S. W. (2020). Pengaruh motivasi kerja dan lingkungan kerja terhadap produktivitas staf administrasi kampus swasta. *Jurnal Manajemen dan Bisnis*, 2(1), 45–55.
- [8] Rahayu, S. (2018). Pengaruh motivasi dan disiplin terhadap prestasi kerja karyawan di PT. Langkat Nusantara Kepong Kabupaten Langkat. *Jurnal Manajemen Tools*, 9(1), 10–27.
- [9] Sebayang, S., Nuzuliati, N., & Wahyuni, S. (2021). Edukasi kepada perangkat desa tentang motivasi kerja kepemimpinan dan budaya organisasi. *Jurnal Pemberdayaan Sosial dan Teknologi Masyarakat*, 1(1), 51–58.
- [10] Mirdhatillah, M., Sebayang, S. A. M., & Wahyono, T. (2025). Analisis kemampuan kerja, disiplin kerja, dan motivasi kerja terhadap kinerja pegawai pada Biro Organisasi dan Sumber Daya Manusia Badan Riset dan Inovasi Nasional. *Jurnal Penelitian Inovatif*, 5(2), 1153–1164.
- [11] Sugiyono. (2019). *Metode penelitian kuantitatif, kualitatif, dan R&D*. Alfabeta.
- [12] Robbins, S. P., & Judge, T. A. (2018). *Organizational behavior* (18th ed.). Pearson.
- [13] Hasibuan, M. S. (2019). *Manajemen sumber daya manusia*. PT Bumi Aksara.
- [14] Kasmir. (2019). *Manajemen sumber daya manusia (teori dan praktik)*. PT RajaGrafindo Persada.
- [15] Hasibuan, M. S., 2019. *Manajemen sumber daya manusia*. Jakarta: PT Bumi Aksara.
- [16] Kasmir, 2019. *Manajemen sumber daya manusia (teori dan praktik)*. Depok: PT RajaGrafindo Persada.
- [17] Hasibuan, Malayu S.P. 2019. *Manajemen Sumber Daya Manusia*. Jakarta: PT Bumi Aksara.
- [18] Kasmir. 2019. *Manajemen Sumber Daya Manusia (Teori dan Praktik)*. Depok: PT RajaGrafindo Persada.
- [19] Rusiadi, Hidayat., & Subiantoro, N. (2016). *Metode Penelitian Manajemen Akuntansi dan Ekonomi Pembangunan : Konsep, Kasus dan Aplikasi SPS, SEviews, Amos, Lisrel*. Medan : USU Press.

- [20] Samrin, Desky, T. R., & Suherman, G. (2025). Budaya organisasi UMKM dan koperasi. Medan: PT Tri Selaras Cendekia.
- [21] Samrin, Noviani, & Arifin, D. (2022). Pengantar manajemen dan bisnis. Medan: CV. Andalan Bintang Ghonim.
- [22] Samrin, Sinto, & Syahputra, J. (2024). Kewirausahaan. Medan: PT Tri Selaras Cendekia.