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Zailani Surya Marpaung* Ermanovida An

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LOCAL CULINARY DEVELOPMENT: DOES GOVERNMENTAL INTERVENTION HELP?

Nurmah Semil
Zailani Surya Marpaung^{*}
Ermano³ da
Anang Dwi Santoso

Department of Public Administration,
Faculty of Social and Political Sciences,
Universitas Srwijaya

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Abstract. *As community interest in local cuisine grows, it is necessary for the government to exercise its purpose through a variety of policies and programs, primarily to help culinary micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) develop amidst intense market competition. This research responds to the academic need to study the development of MSMEs in the culinary sector—not only to escalate the scale of their businesses but also to create tourist destinations—by using a case study from the Ogan Ilir Regency in Indonesia. The authors interviewed government representatives and 10 owners of MSMEs in the culinary sector to draw up a list of the difficulties faced by MSMEs and the government³ at interventions that help them to develop as business entities and tourist attractions. The results of this study showed that the government tended to emphasize developing MSMEs through interventions in finance, marketing, and human resources, although the scale of these interventions is not yet adequate. Meanwhile, the development of UMKM as a tourist destination remains half-hearted. The practical implication of this study is that the government, at a more strategic level, needs to create a new strategic plan that integrates the development of MSMEs in the culinary sector in order to achieve both objectives.*

Keywords: *culinary MSME; government's intervention; MSME policy; entrepreneurship policy; culinary tourism*

Reikšminiai žodžiai: *kulinarijos MMVĮ; vyriausybės intervencija; MMVĮ politika, kulinarinis turizmas*

Introduction

The culinary experience is considered to be a significant aspect of tourist satisfaction because it allows visitors to achieve a more satisfying experience that involves all of their senses (Horng and Tsai 2012b; Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen 2014). Food spending is also a key component in the travel budget, accounting for one third of vacation spending and being the largest source of revenue within tourism (Horng and (Simon) Tsai 2010; Green and Dougherty 2008). Local cuisine offers tourists authentic cultural experiences and acts as a fundamental representation of the intangible heritage of the places that they visit (Chuang 2009).

Local cuisine plays a major role in differentiating and encouraging the branding of identity, as it reflects and communicates the distinctive character of localities (Lee, Wall, and Kovacs, 2015a). As more people travel to discover new food experiences, this is becoming an increasingly important aspect of the marketing of destinations (Cohen and Avieli 2004). It generates the potential for tourism based on food and art activities such as cultural festivals and involves the leveraging of local resources, which at the same time integrates the agricultural and cultural sectors (Yousaf and Xiucheng 2018). These developments involve the branding of locations, with the aim of promoting a distinctive local identity and an image of a place that can be marketed to outsiders.

More broadly, the establishment of the culinary sector is part of the development of MSMEs (micro, small, and medium enterprises). The government's interest in intervening in this sector is primarily due to the positive influence of MSMEs on productivity, innovation, and economic development (Mutalemwa 2015; Lee et al. 2012). Entrepreneurship contributes positively to economic growth and development and vice versa, predominantly through a process of structural transformation, and also serves as a major catalyst for the growth of employment (Acs and Szerb 2007).

The increasingly significant role played by MSMEs in the national economy has attracted growing attention not only from scholars but also from policy makers (Tambunan 2008; Setyawan Agus et al. 2015; Bhasin and Venkataramany 2010). For the sake of national development, it is necessary to understand the mechanisms of MSMEs and entrepreneurship in order to promote the development of SMEs. Unfortunately, researchers have mainly focused on describing policy, while only a few have explored whether the overall strategy is relevant to the problems faced by MSMEs (Tambunan 2011; Rusdarti and Kistanti 2018). In addition, studies within this scope focus more on developing MSMEs in the culinary sector to increase the scale and competitiveness of businesses through the development of human resources, marketing, and the integration of technology (Baregheh et al. 2012; Ueasangkomsate and Jangkot 2019). Meanwhile, few studies have examined the development of MSMEs in the culinary sector for the purpose of developing the scale of business alongside culinary tourism. Therefore, this study seeks to occupy this void by examining the problems faced by MSMEs and then presenting governmental interventions that might achieve both objectives.

This research took place in the Ogan Ilir District of South Sumatra. This location was chosen because it is one of the districts in the South Sumatra Province with a considerable

amount of local culinary potential that could be developed. The Ogan Ilir District is a relatively new, developing district which attracted our attention as it fit our requirement for a location for the study of the development of MSMEs: a district that has high local culinary potential but is still developing.

Local Culinary Culture and Culinary Tourism

Local culinary culture is considered to be a major source for creating competitive differentiation for a destination. It is a form of cultural expression that is required when other aspects of a destination such as climate, buildings, and shopping centers are otherwise unremarkable (Horng and Tsai 2012b; A. H. J. Lee, Wall, and Kovacs 2015a). The study of the development of local culinary products mostly focuses on the food image of a destination as a unique culinary asset (Horng and Tsai 2012a; Chuang 2009).

Therefore, culinary tourism is a form of cultural tourism since cuisine is an integral part of the culture of society. Culinary tourism is does not merely consist of food from a community or culture, but rather the food culture as a whole which involves narration, rituals, festivals, and other aspects of cultural expression (Chuang 2009). It is more than just the consumption of food on a tour, because it also relates to the direct experience of the unique culinary culture of a particular area, which is additionally related to local knowledge (Ignatov and Smith 2006). The taste of food sought in culinary tourism is not only connected to the dishes served but also to the locality, which makes it a popular culinary destination.

Local Culinary Culture as an MSME

Due to the fact that local cuisine in Indonesia is still being developed and managed in traditional ways, the sector is not shifting from a micro, small, or medium scale to a larger one (Haryono and Wijaya 2015). This is because these businesses are typically still family-owned enterprises that are transmitted over generations, mostly using secret ingredients transferred from one generation to the next (Wijaya 2019). As such, this sector is also less adaptable to change. These enterprises often focus on the characteristics and uniqueness of a product, and do not concentrate on marketing or technological advancement in order to enter a wider market (Nurmufida et al. 2017). The availability of raw materials, production processes and technology, finance, marketing, human resources, and the creation of added value are factors that have been identified as the causes of stagnation in the development of MSMEs in the culinary sector (Adelaja et al. 1999; Febriani 2015). Furthermore, other studies have revealed the factors that contribute to the competitiveness of the culinary MSME sector. These include: low production capacity; the relative simplicity of the technologies used; less attractive packaging; improper quality assurance; limited financial capital; and the local reach of marketing (Hubeis et al. 2015).

Considering the significant contribution of MSMEs in the culinary sector to local economic development, alongside efforts to protect and preserve local culinary culture as a unique local product, local governments are trying to intervene in this sector by

allocating various kinds of resources. Hubeis et al. (2015) recommend several strategies for scaling up this sector. Some steps that can be taken include: partnerships by developing the joint marketing of products; increasing cooperation to maintain the availability and continuity of raw materials; developing MSME centres; creating facilities to obtain business legality; increasing the role of universities as business incubators; and applying technology to escalate production.

Governmental Intervention in the Development of MSMEs

Since the government acts as a leader, sponsor, and administrator in a variety of MSME policies, the proclamation of the government related to MSME development aims to ensure the continuity and positive practice of businesses (Tambunan 2008). This is intended to bring regional economic development through the growth of MSMEs, job creation, and the emergence of new entrepreneurs. Various types of research have confirmed the significant impact of government intervention, in terms of developing MSMEs, on economic development (De 2008). Meanwhile, only a few have tried to explore exactly how the government intervenes in the development of MSMEs. MSME policy tends to be issued to promote MSME development, while entrepreneurship policy aims to encourage people to do business. Entrepreneurship is influenced by a variety of external factors of social, cultural, political, and economic natures (Taiwo, Ayodeji, and Yusuf 2013). Therefore, entrepreneurship policy is directed at influencing the social and cultural context of entrepreneurship.

MSME Policy

MSMEs have various deficiencies compared to large companies such as a lack of capital, a lack of market power, and informal systems of management. It is the government's responsibility to overcome these problems through various kinds of interventions (De 2008). This section specifically explains the policy that should be taken by the government to overcome the various kinds of obstacles experienced by MSMEs. It includes financial policy, policy related to innovation, and human resource policy, and these three forms of policy might overlap in their implementation. The main objective of these policies is to increase national and regional productive competitiveness, thus enabling MSMEs to participate in competition for business (Gao and Hafsi 2015).

Seen from a financial perspective, there are two main characteristics of MSMEs: (1) they are very dependent on the income of the owner or family; and (2) they rarely have access to credit (Taiwo, Ayodeji, and Yusuf 2013). The latter is critically important for companies in pursuing expansion and innovation. One of the most common solutions to the financial problems of MSMEs is to receive loans from banks. Thus, the problem of MSMEs then becomes access to loans and banks, and the higher credit prices that this entails. To overcome this problem, the government provides financial support to MSMEs. More specifically, subsidized loans and loan guarantees for MSMEs are the two forms of policy instrument most often applied.

The next obstacle relates to intervention that supports the development of innovation in MSMEs. Innovation can also be defined as research and development, intended to build knowledge and produce results (Mutalemwa 2015). This activity aims to improve a company's ability to understand and absorb knowledge (Foreman-Peck 2013). In this case, governmental policy provides subsidies to MSMEs for conducting research and development.

Research Methods

This research uses a qualitative case study structure. This was chosen because it properly answers the questions of why and how, especially when the phenomenon under study (product innovation) is at least partly related to its setting (Yin 2014). The design of this study allows for an in-depth exploration of the problems faced by MSMEs and the ways in which the government intervenes.

This study used in-depth interviews because this method encourages two-way oral communication between researchers and research subjects. More specifically, by employing this method of understanding deepening social phenomena and the reasons why they occur, we can more easily interpret the beliefs or actions of the people being interviewed (Creswell 2013). The interviews in this study were semi-structured and the topics described served only as clues. We let the informants outline the history of the MSME they operate, the obstacles they encounter, and the role of the local government.

The data in this study were obtained through interviews with a number of different individuals. These included: (1) three local community leaders, to receive their views on typical culinary culture; (2) ten owners of culinary MSMEs; (3) the Government Apparatus in a village that has a typical culinary MSME community; and (4) Apparatus such as the Head of the Office of Cooperatives, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises, Industry, and Trade in the Ogan Ilir District. In addition, we also collected various secondary data such as government reports, and several regulations related to the development of MSMEs in the Ogan Ilir District. Interviews were recorded and encrypted, primarily to ensure the reliability and variety of data. The interview transcript was crosschecked with field notes to verify the integrity of the data and the circumstances under which the responses appeared. Specifically, we applied the Miles and Huberman (1994) method of content analysis through data reduction, display, and verification.

To ensure the quality of the data, the researchers also triangulated it. As stated in the data source, the data in this study consisted of various forms (interviews, government reports, and news articles) and came from various sources (local communities and various government offices) (Creswell 2013). This data was then subjected to the data triangulation process, which was performed by comparing information or data in different ways. To obtain reliability and a complete overview of the information supplied, the researchers used the interview and observation methods to verify it.

Challenges in Developing Culinary MSMEs

This section contains obstacles to the development of culinary MSMEs in the Ogan Ilir District. We interviewed MSME actors, asking them to rank the obstacles that they faced. In general, we found that obstacles related to marketing and capital were the most frequently mentioned. We also tried to identify the difficulties faced by culinary MSME entrepreneurs based on the age of their businesses. For the most part, in the initial stages of a business, the most commonly encountered difficulty was financial shortages. A more detailed explanation of these obstacles follows:

Financial capital

Three of the interviewees answered that financial capital was the biggest barrier that they faced in the development of Culinary MSMEs. In more detail, one respondent explained that the financial problems they face are because financial demand is greater than financial supply. Another reason stems from the nature of the culinary company, which makes it difficult to earn money from external sources. This is because investors are more inclined to invest in non-culinary MSMEs, since they can easily maintain their businesses with loan money. Culinary MSMEs that attract the attention of investors are those that are able to export their products. Meanwhile, most MSMEs in the Ogan Ilir District are unable to compete. According to other interviewees, culinary MSMEs receive internal investment more easily. However, due to the nature of this industry, supply is smaller than demand—in other words there is an imbalance between input and demand.

The reason that the interviewees gave different explanations is probably because they are in different life cycles and industries. Investors might prefer to invest in older MSMEs since they are more stable than those in the initial phases. Stable companies already have a reputation and credibility, so they have an increased probability of securing external investment compared to new MSMEs that face the challenge of proving their superiority. Another reason is that culinary MSMEs do not have a clear evaluation system, creating a gap between the expectations of investors and those of the companies themselves, which creates an imbalance between input and demand. Judging from financial sources, most MSMEs obtain funding from self-help, while only a portion of MSMEs obtain capital from external financial sources. Almost all of the respondents expressed challenges related to receiving money from external sources.

Marketing

Culinary MSMEs often overlook marketing as a significant part of developing their enterprise. Conventional marketing is still their choice when marketing the products that they produce. Specifically, MSMEs do not apply marketing systems and management, which is usually due to their low level of knowledge regarding marketing strategy. Marketing is still performed utilizing conventional methods, predominantly by simply displaying their products. The characteristics of their products also become obstacles to

themselves in further expanding the market, because food products have a short period of time before they expire.

Network and Information

Although not everyone that was interviewed mentioned obstacles related to networks and information, we found that they were influential factors in the development of Culinary MSMEs. In general, the interviewees mentioned that certain MSMEs can access information related to market information and government support. Some MSMEs, based on the results of these interviews, do not realize how important this information is. Specifically, they do not know of the existence of useful information and the value of the information that they could receive. Another respondent considered that network is more important than information, and justified this argument by noting that useful information can come along with quality networks.

The interviewees also said that information is an essential factor in the development of MSMEs. They considered that the absence of governmental assistance in connecting markets and MSMEs is one example of the importance of information. The government should facilitate culinary MSMEs by helping them to gain access to useful information and networks. Thus, both can be seen as equally important components. The MSME operators that we interviewed received information from their private networks more often than from the government. The government, in terms of networks and information, should serve as actors who provide useful information and filter out unnecessary information, helping MSMEs to reduce the costs involved in obtaining useful information.

Human Resources

Our interviewees also found that human resources are a crucial element in the development of MSMEs. The MSME operators that we interviewed had various answers related to challenges in the area of human resources. Small MSMEs that have a reduced number of employees compared to large MSMEs cannot afford the human resources that they need, for example having staff to maintain financial records, marketing, and the management of human resources. Another respondent also revealed a dilemma in managing human resources, which is related to streamlining human resources that can improve operational efficiency.

MSME Policy

Having previously identified the main obstacles involved in the development of MSMEs, this section highlights a number of attempts by policy makers to remove these obstacles. In this section, we illustrate the policies and strategies that are formulated and implemented. In general, the development of MSMEs in Indonesia is a matter that is decentralized from the central government to the regions, but remains under central control.

Financial policy

Financial problems are the issues that are encountered most frequently, and as such financial-related policies are considered to be those that most effectively help MSMEs develop and maintain their businesses. Based on the interviews conducted, we found that there are two financial assistance schemes that have been created by policy makers: direct and indirect financial support. Direct financial support is direct investment that has a low return or is free of charge. Indirect financial support is a form of indirect policy-making intervention that supports culinary MSMEs' interactions with financial intermediaries such as banks or credit guarantee institutions. Both are intended to support MSMEs to accelerate the process of developing their businesses.

In the first scheme, MSMEs can apply for direct funding. This is a special program provided for MSMEs that want to start a business, and the direct investment program includes funds for innovation. This is for MSMEs that want to develop themselves, and the purpose of this program is both to accelerate the process of developing MSMEs and to promote innovation. In this case, local government does not play a role. Indirect financial support is provided by encouraging banks to provide loans to MSMEs, which creates a more inclusive scheme because every MSME can submit directly to the bank. In contrast, only certain MSMEs have access to direct funding, particularly those that are close to the government.

In terms of developing culinary MSMEs that involve tourism, we have not seen any special budget allocations in this regard. Local government is too focused on the budget for developing the scale of culinary MSMEs by providing several financing schemes. Meanwhile, the budget for the development of culinary MSMEs as tourist destinations is not yet a priority of the government.

Market and Network Information

As mentioned earlier, Culinary MSMEs have barriers to markets that are caused by a lack of R&D and unfair market competition with MSMEs that are close to the government. The reason why culinary MSMEs that are not close to the government have an unfair market relationship is that they have to struggle and incur greater costs in order to achieve the same results and profits.

Admittedly, government intervention in this matter is still lacking, as MSMEs have little access to information. As a consequence, they do not have the ability to decipher the market, and MSMEs that have a stronger market position can acquire more information. In short, because there is no government intervention in this matter, MSMEs must independently carry out activities in the development of information on markets and networks.

The local government has made several efforts to address this, for example by organizing food festivals and joining together culinary MSME exhibitions across districts. The local government has also integrated several culinary MSME centers as part of a flagship tourism project. Most of our interviewees noted the need to establish new attractions by

integrating culinary tourism with related economic activities, and promoting a sustainable culinary economy to attract the added value of culinary tourism.

Human Resource Development

Government interventions in human resource development are manifested in the form of training and education. The government has independently held MSME training sessions, including material from the perspectives of financial management, marketing, human resources, and others. Furthermore, the government also provides motivation for the participants of training to improve their entrepreneurial skills. Unfortunately, this program is not implemented equally—we found that the MSMEs that are close to the government take precedence over those that are not when it comes to training.

In terms of developing human resources to support the placement of culinary MSME centers as tourist destinations, the government has done nothing. Culinary MSME officers are still not trained on how to deal with tourists when they visit culinary MSME centers. During this time, HR development has only focused on developing MSMEs to enhance the competitiveness of the MSMEs themselves. We found that the development strategy of HR in culinary MSMEs is still not directed towards achieving the goal of culinary MSMEs as tourist destinations.

Discussion

Growing interest among policy makers in the importance of MSMEs and entrepreneurship is increasingly pushing policies designed to support small businesses and entrepreneurial activities. Numerous government strategies have been launched to support the development of MSMEs in the Ogan Ilir District. Some researchers have studied and tested these policies in the development of MSMEs, but this research mainly focuses on descriptions of policy (Tambunan 2008; Setyawan Agus et al. 2015; Bhasin and Venkataramany 2010).

In general terms, there are currently two directions to the development of MSMEs in the culinary sector in Indonesia. The first is to expand the market so that culinary MSMEs can compete not only at the local level but also at the national and global level. The second is to make culinary MSMEs tourist attractions. In other words, culinary MSMEs are to be treated as attractions that provide tourists with unique experiences, offering cultural expressions that make them part of the competitive advantage of an area.

This section begins with a description of the problems faced by MSMEs. Limited access to capital was the most frequently encountered obstacle in the survey conducted. This is mainly due to the fear of risk that is present in most MSMEs, even though capital can be used to develop their business. Therefore, they depend on savings and capital from the family that operates them, a phenomenon that is in line with the findings of previous research (e.g., Tambunan 2008). Small companies are those that rarely use debt to develop their businesses and, as such, do not benefit from the advantages that debt can bring. Another problem is the absence of governmental assistance in facilitating research

and development. In truth, this assistance is essential since determination and development can improve the quality and differentiation of products, which ultimately leads to competitive advantage (Foreman-Peck 2013).

The decentralized system in Indonesia gives each region the right to issue policies without deviating from the design of national policies. Therefore, policies and regulations related to entrepreneurship and the development of MSMEs can never exceed or differ from national policies. Based on the interviews conducted, the policy of MSME development in the Ogan Ilir District follows the policy styles of MSME development at the level of central government. In practice, local policies should be formulated more sensitively towards local issues to facilitate the process of their implementation and the successful achievement of their objectives. This is because local policies have a stronger direct influence on the development of local MSMEs (Taiwo, Ayodeji, and Yusuf 2013).

Despite the huge potential of the culinary industry in the Ogan Ilir District, the government seems to have failed to create a favorable entrepreneurial environment. This is mainly due to the policy of developing MSMEs and entrepreneurship—a policy that cannot help in dealing with the challenges experienced by MSMEs. It is also due to the differences between economic growth in rural and urban areas that affects the existence of the phases of each MSME (Mutalemwa 2015). For this reason, the government's efforts are not only directed towards training in developing entrepreneurship and MSMEs, but also towards encouraging a conducive political and economic situation.

Another problem created by the government is the mixing of the policies of MSMEs and developing entrepreneurship—these must be treated differently because they have different objectives and requirements. The entrepreneurial process requires opportunities, motivation, and skills (Lundström and Stevenson 2005), while MSMEs require financial support, research, and the development of innovation, networking, and institutions (Shane and Venkataraman 2003). The mixing of policies means that the programs run by the government ultimately do not function effectively.

An issue that is related to the development of the MSME culinary sector as a tourist destination—although the government has tried to intervene by organizing culinary festivals and integrating culinary MSME centers with leading tourist destinations—is that the government has not yet connected culinary tourism, culinary culture, and culinary resources. All three are important, and require careful examination to facilitate marketing planning and management, especially in ensuring that what is sold is not only food as a souvenir but also the culture and attributes that it possesses. In terms of tourism marketing, culinary tourism marketing still uses traditional methods. Our findings indicate that the government still needs to specifically market culinary tourism, establish and implement related policies, and coordinate with other agencies in order to make culinary tourism more complete and comprehensive.

Conclusion

1. This study aims to examine government intervention in the development of culinary MSMEs in the Ogan Ilir Regency of Indonesia. More specifically, this study examines governmental intervention in the development of culinary SMEs as business entities and as tourist attractions. The authors also identified various kinds of problems faced by SMEs in the culinary sector. In general, we found three main problems: access to capital; marketing; and the development of networking, information, and human resources.
2. The results of this study indicate that the government intervenes in this sector by providing capital assistance, marketing training, and market information. However, this intervention is insufficient and unfair because local governments tend to apply uniform programs to various differing types of MSMEs that exist at different phases.
3. The development of MSMEs heavily features programs intended to escalate MSMEs to compete at the local, national, and global levels. Meanwhile, MSMEs as tourist destinations have not seen much attention, or at best have received a half-hearted effort.
4. At a more strategic level, we recommend that the government develops a new MSME development strategy to achieve its two objectives. This involves directing policies and programs, as well as resources, towards the support of these objectives.
5. To provide human resources, the local government needs to create a culinary vocational school. This is important because the issue of human resources is one of the main issues in the development of culinary MSMEs. The management of culinary MSMEs has thus far been carried out in traditional ways because there is no regeneration in this sector.

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Nurmah Semil, Zailani Surya Marpaung,
Ermanovida, Anang Dwi Santoso

Vietos kulinarijos plėtra: ar padeda vyriausybės intervencija?

Anotacija

Didėjant bendruomenės susidomėjimui vietine virtuve, vyriausybei yra svarbu parodyti savo dalyvavimą vykdant įvairias politikos kryptis ir programas, visų pirma, siekiant padėti mikro, mažų ir vidutinių (MMVĮ) kulinarijos įmonių plėtrai, esant intensyviai konkurencijai rinkoje. Atliktas tyrimas atliepia akademinę poreikį ištirti kulinarijos sektoriaus plėtrą, siekiant ne tik išplėsti verslo mastą, bet ir tapti pirmaujančia turistine kryptimi, taikant atvejo analizės metodą Ogan Iir Regency Indonezijoje. Buvo apklausta dešimt kulinarijos sektoriaus MMVĮ savininkų ir vyriausybės atstovų, siekiant sudaryti sunkumų, su kuriais susiduria MMVĮ, bei vyriausybės intervencijų sąrašą, norint plėtoti MMVĮ kaip verslo subjektą ir turistų traukos kryptį. Rezultatai parodė, kad vyriausybė buvo linkusi skatinti MMVĮ plėtrą, vykdydama finansines, rinkodaros ir žmogiškųjų išteklių intervencijas, nors veiksmai ne visada buvo tinkami. O UMKM, kaip turistų lankytinos vietos, vystymasis išlieka pusėtinas. Praktinė šio tyrimo reikšmė yra ta, kad vyriausybė, siekdama abiejų tikslų, strateginiu lygmeniu turi sukurti strateginį planą, integruojantį kulinarijos sektoriaus MMVĮ plėtrą.

Nurmah Semil, PhD – associate professor at the Department of Public Administration at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences at Universitas Srwijaya
E-mail: nurmah@fisip.unsri.ac.id

Zailani Surya Marpaung, PhD – assistant professor at the Department of Public Administration at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences at Universitas Srwijaya
E-mail: zailanisuryamarpaung@fisip.unsri.ac.id

Ermanovida, PhD – assistant professor at the Department of Public Administration at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences at Universitas Srwijaya
E-mail: ermanovida@fisip.unsri.ac.id

Anang Dwi Santoso – junior lecturer at the Department of Public Administration at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences at Universitas Srwijaya
Email: anangdwi@fisip.unsri.ac.id

Doc. dr. Nurmah Semil – Srwijaya universiteto Socialinių ir politikos mokslų fakulteto Viešojo administravimo katedra.
El. paštas: nurmah@fisip.unsri.ac.id

Dr. Zailani Surya Marpaung – Srwijaya universiteto Socialinių ir politikos mokslų fakulteto Viešojo administravimo katedra.
El. paštas: zailanisuryamarpaung@fisip.unsri.ac.id

Dr. Ermanovida – Srwijaya universiteto Socialinių ir politikos mokslų fakulteto Viešojo administravimo katedra.
El. paštas: ermanovida@fisip.unsri.ac.id

Anang Dwi Santoso – Srwijaya universiteto Socialinių ir politikos mokslų fakulteto Viešojo administravimo katedros jaunesnysis lektorius.
El. paštas: anangdwi@fisip.unsri.ac.id

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