Ethical Leadership in Information Technology Decision Making and its Impact on Risk Management

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ABSTRACT

In the rapidly growing digital era, information technology has become an integral part of almost all aspects of our lives, including in the world of business and management. Appropriate and effective use of information technology is the key to achieving competitive advantage in today's competitive business environment. However, making decisions related to information technology is not an easy task, as information technology is often complex and high-risk. The purpose of this study is to analyse ethical leadership in information technology-related decision making and its impact on risk management. The method used is a qualitative literature review that focuses on an in-depth understanding of the topic in the time span from 2006 to 2023. The main objective of this method is to identify, analyse, and synthesise relevant scientific literature that has been published in various journals, conference papers, and other academic sources accessible through Google Scholar. The study results show that ethical leadership plays a central role in ensuring that IT-related decisions are taken with ethical principles in mind and with the aim of minimising risk. Ethical leadership contributes to the avoidance of data misuse, creating a culture of transparency and accountability, ensuring fair use of technology, and being mindful of the impact of IT decisions on society and the environment.

Keywords: Ethical Leadership, Decision Making, Information Technology, Risk Management

INTRODUCTION

In the context of the rapidly developing digital era, we cannot ignore the major role that information technology plays in almost all aspects of our lives, including in the field of business and management. In the face of fierce competition in today's business world, the appropriate and effective use of information technology has become a key cornerstone to achieving and maintaining a competitive advantage (Harahap, Kraugusteeliana, et al., 2023; Wahyoedi et al., 2023). Nonetheless, information technology-related decision-making is not a simple task, given the complexity and high risks often inherent in information technology itself (Prastyaningtyas et al., 2023; Sutrisno, Ausat, et al., 2023). Therefore, organisations and business leaders must be committed to understanding and managing information technology well. They must have a clear vision of how information technology can support their business objectives, and simultaneously
plan effective strategies to implement them. It is also important to understand that information technology decision-making is not a static process, but must be continuously updated and adapted to changing technological developments. In dealing with the complexities of information technology, collaboration with technology experts and companies can be a wise move to ensure that the decisions taken are the best to achieve success in this rapidly changing business world.

The importance of leadership in information technology-related decision-making cannot be overlooked. Ethical leadership in this context is an approach that prioritises decision-making that considers not only the technical and financial aspects, but also the moral, ethical and social impacts of using information technology. The concept of ethical leadership in information technology decision-making is a relatively new paradigm, but has great significance in this digital era, where information technology has become the operational and strategic backbone of many companies. Ethical leadership in information technology decision-making reflects an awareness of corporate social responsibility towards the influence of technology on society and the environment (B.-J. Kim et al., 2021). This includes considering the moral implications of data collection and use, privacy protection, and the social consequences that may arise from the implementation of certain technologies. Leadership that focuses on the ethical and social impact of information technology can help organisations integrate technology more responsibly, create long-term value, and ensure that technological innovation provides balanced benefits to all parties involved, from employees to customers and society as a whole (Cortellazzo et al., 2019).

In addition to the aspects already mentioned, the importance of leadership in making decisions related to information technology can also be seen from a risk management point of view. The more information technology develops, the more complex the risks that may arise (Rodríguez-Espíndola et al., 2022). Smart and ethical decision-making in this context involves a company's ability to systematically identify, manage and mitigate risks related to the utilisation of information technology (Aldboush & Ferdous, 2023). This includes a deep understanding of potential cyber security threats, data breach opportunities, and the financial and reputational impacts that could arise in the event of an information technology-related failure or incident. Ethical leadership in information technology risk management requires companies to take proactive measures in designing security policies, implementing best practices, and involving stakeholders in the decision-making process (Liu et al., 2023). In this way, companies can maintain their reliability, sustainability and reputation, while still seeking to capitalise on the opportunities that exist in this digital age. In a world that is increasingly connected and vulnerable to rapid technological change, ethical leadership in information technology risk management is a necessary foundation to ensure long-term success and corporate well-being.

Although awareness of the importance of ethical leadership in information technology-related decision-making and its impact on risk management is increasing, in-depth research in this regard is still limited. Therefore, efforts are needed to fill the existing knowledge gap by conducting more in-depth and comprehensive research. This research will aim to provide a deeper insight into the key role of ethical leadership in information technology decision making and how this role has a significant impact on risk management in a business organisation environment. In order to thoroughly understand the role of ethical leadership in information technology decision-making, this research will involve an in-depth analysis of the best practices applied in the use of information technology in different types of organisations. In addition, the research will also explore how ethical leadership practices can minimise the risks associated with information technology, such as data leaks, security breaches, and social impacts that may arise. The results of this research are expected to provide richer and more valuable insights for business organisation leaders, information technology practitioners, and researchers to optimise ethics-based information technology-related decision-making, as well as enhance effective risk management in facing the challenges of the evolving digital era.

The research will involve a comprehensive literature review to understand existing theoretical frameworks, current research, as well as key concepts related to ethical leadership, information technology decision-making, and risk management. As such, this research is expected to provide deeper insights into how ethical leadership in information technology-related decision-
making can impact risk management in an increasingly digitally connected business environment. This research is also expected to provide practical recommendations for leaders and managers in dealing with the challenges and opportunities associated with the use of information technology in their organisations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ethical Leadership

Ethical leadership is an approach to leadership in which leaders endeavour to act and make decisions based on moral principles and good values (Arar & Saiti, 2022). It emphasises the importance of integrity, honesty, fairness and social responsibility in the decision-making process and leadership behaviour. In the context of ethical leadership, leaders do not only consider economic aspects or self-interest, but also think about the broader impact on individuals, groups, or society (Hosseini & Ferreira, 2023). Here are some key elements of ethical leadership:

1. Integrity: Ethical leaders act with high integrity. They follow strong moral principles and maintain consistency between their words and actions. This integrity includes honesty, trustworthiness, and ethical consistency.
2. Fairness: Ethical leaders treat everyone fairly, without discrimination or oppression. They strive to maintain fairness in their decisions, even if it means taking difficult or unpopular actions.
3. Social Responsibility: Ethical leaders recognise their responsibility towards society and the environment. They think not only about financial gain, but also social, environmental, and sustainability impacts in every decision they make.
4. Empathy: Ethical leaders are able to understand the feelings, needs, and perspectives of others. They consider the perspectives of individuals and groups affected by their decisions.
5. Values-Based Leadership: Ethical leaders often have strong values and stick to them in making decisions and interacting with others.

Ethical leadership is essential in a variety of contexts, including business, government, non-profit organisations, and society in general. It helps ensure that leaders not only achieve their goals, but also do so in ways that support the general welfare and respect human rights. Ethical leadership can also help build trust, maintain a positive reputation, and motivate team or group members in achieving common goals.

Decision-making

Decision-making is a mental process or activity that involves selecting from a range of alternatives or options available to achieve a particular goal or address a particular problem (Wang & Ruhe, 2007). It is a very important aspect of everyday life, in both personal and professional contexts, and involves a series of steps or stages. Here are some key elements of decision-making:

1. Problem or Goal Identification: The decision-making process begins with identifying the problem that needs to be solved or the goal that needs to be achieved. This involves recognising a situation that requires an action or decision.
2. Gather Information: Once the problem or goal is identified, the next step is to gather relevant information. This includes gathering data, facts, and information needed to understand the situation better.
3. Identify Alternatives: Once the information is gathered, various alternatives or options for action or decision should be identified. This is the step where the selection of possible options is explored.
4. Evaluation of Alternatives: Each alternative must be carefully assessed. This involves weighing the pros and cons of each option, as well as considering the possible impacts of each alternative.
5. Select a Solution or Decision: Once all alternatives have been assessed, the leader or decision-maker must choose one alternative that is deemed most suitable for solving the problem or achieving the goal. This decision can be in the form of a concrete action to be taken.
6. Decision Implementation: The next step is to implement the decision that has been taken. This involves taking concrete steps to implement the chosen action or solution.
7. Evaluation of Results: Once the decision has been implemented, the results should be evaluated. Was the decision successful in achieving the goal or solving the problem? Are there any changes that need to be made based on the results obtained?

8. Learn from Experience: The final step is to learn from the decision-making experience. Information and experience gained from previous decision-making can be used to make better decisions in the future.

Decision-making is a key ability in an individual's life and in an organisational or business context. The ability to make good and effective decisions can have a significant impact on personal and professional success, as well as on organisational performance and sustainability (U Asikhia & Nwadiuru, 2021).

Information Technology

Information Technology (IT) refers to the various technologies used to collect, store, process, transmit, and manage information (Harahap, Ausat, et al., 2023; Sutrisno, Kuraesin, et al., 2023). It includes hardware and software along with the communications infrastructure that supports them. Information Technology plays an important role in the collection, storage, processing, and distribution of information in a variety of contexts, including business, government, education, healthcare, entertainment, and everyday life (Harahap, Sutrisno, et al., 2023; Kamar et al., 2022). Here are some of the main components of Information Technology:

1. Hardware: This includes all physical devices used to process and store data, such as computers, servers, networking devices (routers, switches, modems), storage devices (hard drives, SSDs), and communication devices (smartphones, tablets).

2. Software: This includes all computer programmes, applications, operating systems, and other software used to manage and process data. Examples include database management systems, productivity software (such as Microsoft Office), operating systems (such as Windows, macOS, or Linux), as well as various types of specialised applications such as accounting, graphic design, or web development software.

3. Network Infrastructure: This includes the devices and technologies used to connect devices and allow data communication between them. Network infrastructure involves cables, wireless networks (Wi-Fi), network devices, communication protocols, and the Internet itself.

4. Information System: This is a combination of hardware, software, data, and procedures used to collect, process, store, and disseminate information within an organisation. Information systems can serve as powerful management tools in businesses and organisations.

5. Database Management System (DBMS): A DBMS is software used to manage and organise databases, which are structured collections of data. It allows users to store, access, and manage data efficiently.

6. Web and Internet Applications: Information Technology also includes various web applications and online services that enable access to information and communication over the Internet, such as websites, social media, email, e-commerce, and more.

Information Technology has a central role in changing the way we work, communicate, interact and access information (Arjang et al., 2023; Ausat, 2023a). It has contributed greatly to globalisation, business innovation, operational efficiency, and cultural change around the world. In addition, information technology has also had a significant impact on changing the way we live and work, and continues to evolve rapidly over time (Ausat, 2023b; Kraugusteeliana et al., 2022; Touriano et al., 2023).

Risk Management

Risk Management is a systematic approach to identifying, measuring, managing, and mitigating risks in an organisation or project with the aim of maintaining the continuity of operations, reducing potential losses, and achieving established objectives (Gurtu & Johny, 2021). Risk in the context of risk management can refer to the potential occurrence of events that may affect the achievement of organisational or project objectives with undesirable impacts (Berg, 2010). Here are some important components of risk management:
1. Risk Identification: This is the first step in risk management, where the organisation or project team identifies all potential risks that could affect their operations or objectives. Risks can be either adverse threats or favourable opportunities.

2. Risk Evaluation: Once the risks have been identified, the next step is to evaluate them. This involves measuring the probability of the risk occurring and its impact if it does. This helps in prioritising the risks that need to be addressed more carefully.

3. Risk Management Planning: In this stage, the organisation develops strategies and plans to manage the identified risks. This includes determining whether risks should be avoided, accepted, mitigated, or transferred.

4. Implementation of Risk Reduction Actions: Concrete actions are taken to reduce risks or minimise their negative impact. This could involve changes in operational processes, investments in insurance, increased security, or a variety of other relevant measures.

5. Risk Monitoring and Control: Risk management is a continuous process. Once risk reduction measures are implemented, risks must continue to be monitored and evaluated periodically. Changes in the environment or operations may alter the risk, necessitating corrective action if necessary.

6. Risk Reporting and Communication: Information about risks and actions taken should be properly communicated to all concerned parties. This includes internal and external stakeholders, such as business owners, partners, investors, and regulators.

Risk management is an essential practice in business, finance, construction projects, healthcare, and various other industries (Bahamid et al., 2022). Its purpose is to identify risks early, manage risks effectively, and avoid or minimise the negative impacts that can arise from these risks. Risk management helps organisations to make better decisions, reduce uncertainty, and achieve their goals more efficiently and effectively.

**RESEARCH METHOD**

In this study, we utilize a qualitative literature review methodology to attain a deep understanding of ethical leadership in the context of decision-making related to information technology (IT) and its consequences for risk management between 2006 and 2023. The primary objective of this approach is to identify, analyze, and incorporate relevant scholarly literature that has been published across a variety of academic journals, conference papers, and other reputable sources accessible through Google Scholar. The research process encompasses several crucial phases. Initially, the researcher identifies a specific and pertinent research topic, along with a comprehensive understanding of the background and research objectives. Following this, well-defined and precise search criteria are established to guide the literature exploration through Google Scholar, covering the timeframe spanning 2006 to 2023. Once the search results are retrieved, the researcher conducts a literature selection process by evaluating the abstracts and summaries of each discovered article or source. Any literature that lacks relevance or fails to meet the research criteria is excluded from the analysis. The selected literature is then subject to a thorough examination, with a focus on identifying critical discoveries, concepts, theories, and trends embedded within the literature. A qualitative approach is employed to achieve an in-depth understanding of the research subject. The outcomes of the literature review are subsequently synthesized and elaborated upon by the researcher to establish a comprehensive grasp of the research topic. Moreover, these findings are organized into a comprehensive research report with a structured and coherent format. The report encompasses the principal findings, analysis, and in-depth interpretations. The research concludes by formulating concise conclusions that encapsulate the central findings and implications of the literature review pertaining to the research subject. This methodology empowers researchers to acquire a thorough and profound comprehension of the research subject without the need for primary data collection. By drawing upon existing literature, this research has the potential to contribute significantly to the advancement of theories, problem-solving, or decision-making across various scientific domains, particularly within the realm of ethical leadership in IT-related decision-making and its impact on risk management.
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Information technology (IT) decision-making has become one of the most crucial aspects in the era of modern business management that is increasingly linked to technological developments. IT transformation has had a profound impact on various aspects of an organisation's operations, changing the way it interacts with customers and improving the efficiency of internal communications (Verhoef et al., 2021). In this situation, the important role of ethical leadership becomes very prominent. Ethical leadership bases every IT-related decision on strong moral principles, ensuring that moral and social aspects are carefully considered in the use of information technology, while positively impacting effective risk management. Ethical leadership in the context of IT decision-making also includes the responsibility to minimise the risks associated with the technology, such as data leaks, privacy breaches and possible social consequences. Leaders must understand that information technology not only has the potential to advance the organisation, but can also have detrimental effects if not managed properly. Therefore, ethical leadership in IT decision-making is not just about seeking opportunities, but also about protecting the organisation's moral and ethical values, and optimising risk management to achieve sustainable long-term goals in this rapidly changing business world.

Ethically grounded leadership in information technology (IT) decision-making brings a number of very significant positive impacts. First of all, a strong ethical leadership role helps prevent potential data misuse by ensuring that the data collected and used by the organisation is not misused (Kamilah et al., 2023). This involves implementing and enforcing strict privacy policies, so that customer and employee data remains safe from potential threats. In addition, ethical leaders also play a role in shaping an organisational culture that focuses on data protection (Muktamar B, 2023), as well as setting an example in proper information management. Furthermore, ethical leadership in the context of IT decision-making also enables organisations to build strong trust with stakeholders, such as customers, investors, and society at large. When an organisation treats data with integrity and puts ethics first in every aspect of its use, it creates a positive reputation and increases public trust. This trust is invaluable in an increasingly competitive business environment where data is often a valuable asset. Ethical leadership in IT decision-making is therefore not just about complying with applicable regulations and laws, but also about building strong relationships with stakeholders and creating long-term value for the organisation.

The second action ethically grounded leaders take in information technology (IT) decision-making is to create a strong culture of transparency and accountability. This culture brings significant benefits as it allows stakeholders, both internal and external, to have a deeper understanding of how IT decisions are made and how they can participate in the process. Transparency requires organisations to clearly disclose the rationale and considerations underlying each IT decision, as well as providing wider access to relevant information (Felzmann et al., 2020). Accountability is also at the core of this culture, with leaders and members of the organisation being held accountable for their actions and decisions in the context of IT (Ghanem, 2022). By creating a culture based on transparency and accountability, organisations are able to reduce the risk of mistrust and uncertainty that may arise in IT decision-making (Schnackenberg & Tomlinson, 2016). It also allows stakeholders to feel more involved and have greater trust in the organisation, as they have a better view of the processes and principles underlying IT decisions. In the long run, this culture of transparency and accountability can benefit the organisation by strengthening customer relationships, improving operational efficiency, and supporting sustainable growth in an increasingly complex business environment.

In addition, the important role of ethical leadership is not limited to information technology (IT)-related decision-making, but also extends to broader aspects of human resource (HR) management. Ethical leaders ensure that the fair use of technology is reflected in all aspects of HR relations in the organisation, including in payroll, promotion and employee development (Alshammari et al., 2015). By promoting the principles of fairness in the use of IT, organisations can prevent discrimination, ensure that individuals are given equal opportunities, and create an inclusive work environment. The fair use of IT in HR is a critical step towards achieving diversity
and equality in organisations (Sharma, 2016). Ethical leaders play a role in ensuring that the pay system is based on objective and impartial criteria, so that there is no unfair pay gap among employees. In addition, they also closely monitor the promotion process, ensuring that promotion decisions are based on qualifications and merit, not on discriminatory factors such as gender, race or other backgrounds. In this way, ethical leadership in the context of IT and HR contributes to the establishment of an inclusive organisational culture, where every individual is valued and has the opportunity to develop according to his or her potential.

In addition to focusing on ethically grounded IT decision-making within the internal context of the organisation, responsible leaders must also look at the impact of IT decisions on society and the environment more broadly. This includes efforts to mitigate any negative impacts that may arise, such as e-pollution associated with poorly managed e-waste. Ethical leaders understand that rapidly evolving information technology often leads to an acceleration in the replacement of electronic devices, and they are committed to reducing environmental impact by promoting recycling practices and responsible e-waste management (Shittu et al., 2021). In addition, ethical leaders also consider the impact of IT decisions on energy consumption (Dey et al., 2022). They strive to optimise the use of energy resources by adopting more energy-efficient technologies and reducing the organisation's carbon footprint. Furthermore, such leaders also pay attention to the social impact that may arise from the use of information technology. They work to minimise negative social impacts, such as unemployment due to job automation, and seek to create sustainable solutions that can provide wider benefits to society. As such, ethically grounded leaders in IT decision-making take greater responsibility, ensuring that the impact of information technology on society and the environment is measured, considered and effectively managed.

Ethics-based leadership plays a significant role in the context of risk management related to the use of information technology (IT) (Özsungur, 2019). They serve as leaders who are not only able to identify IT-related risks, but also have a vision and deep awareness of the ethical implications of any IT-related actions. One important aspect is a better understanding of the potential cyber threats that can disrupt an organisation's operations (Li & Liu, 2021). Ethical leaders understand that cyber threats are constantly evolving and require proactive measures to protect sensitive data and IT infrastructure from attacks. They work closely with security teams to identify and respond to these threats quickly, while ensuring that the steps taken remain grounded in ethical principles. In addition, ethical leaders also have a deep understanding of data privacy risks. They recognise the importance of keeping customer and employee data safe and following applicable privacy regulations. These leaders not only ensure that the company complies with relevant privacy laws, but also develop an organisational culture that prioritises data protection and values individual privacy. As such, ethical leadership in IT risk management not only recognises risks, but also works proactively to maintain data security and integrity and ensure that all IT-related actions and policies are grounded in strong ethical values.

Ethically grounded leadership has a much broader impact than simply ensuring that decisions and actions relating to information technology (IT) conform to ethical principles. One important contribution of ethical leadership is to build and maintain the trust of an organisation's various stakeholders, including customers, investors and governments (B.-J. Kim et al., 2021). By demonstrating a strong commitment to ethical values, organisations are able to create a positive reputation in the eyes of the public. This is an important step in mitigating reputational risks that can arise from unethical actions or IT-related misconduct. When stakeholders feel confident that an organisation puts integrity, privacy and data protection first, they are more likely to establish a strong relationship with the company (Khando et al., 2021). This can have a positive impact on business growth and the organisation's ability to access capital and support from investors. In addition, the trust built can also help organisations interact with governments, reduce the risk of strict regulations, and enable smoother collaboration with various stakeholders. Thus, ethical leadership in the context of IT not only protects an organisation's reputation, but also solidifies its position in a complex and versatile business ecosystem.

The role of ethics-focused leadership in information technology (IT)-related decision-making also includes the obligation to ensure that the organisation complies with all applicable...
regulations in the use of IT (M.-S. Kim & Thapa, 2018). This compliance includes adherence to laws and regulations governing various aspects of IT use, including data protection, consumer privacy, cybersecurity and more. Ethical leaders understand that violating laws in the use of IT can have serious consequences, including potential legal sanctions, significant fines, or substantial financial losses. Therefore, they work hard to ensure that the organisation always operates in accordance with applicable rules, thereby avoiding potential adverse legal consequences. In addition to complying with regulations, ethical leaders can also utilise a deep understanding of the regulatory framework to create a competitive advantage (Ahmed Iqbal et al., 2020). They recognise that regulatory compliance can add value to customers, investors and business partners. By ensuring that the organisation is always compliant with regulations, ethical leaders can create a stronger corporate image in the eyes of stakeholders, which can have a positive impact on business growth, trust and brand value. In an era where IT regulations are increasingly complex and stringent, ethical leadership in ensuring compliance is an invaluable asset in the face of changing regulatory challenges.

In addition to the aforementioned roles, it is important to recognise that ethical leadership in information technology (IT)-related decision-making also has a significant impact on driving sustainable innovation. Leaders who hold ethical principles have a long-term vision that involves continuous change in the use of IT in their organisations (Metwally et al., 2019). They encourage organisations to continuously adapt to rapid technological developments, not only to remain competitive in the market, but also to consider their impact ethically. Ethically grounded leaders encourage a culture of innovation in the organisation, where every team member is given the freedom to come up with new ideas that can improve efficiency, add value to customers, or even solve social problems (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006). They understand that innovation in IT is not just about new technologies, but also about more effective and ethical ways of using them. Furthermore, such leaders motivate employees to think creatively and boldly in the face of inevitable technological change. In this way, ethical leadership not only keeps organisations relevant in a rapidly changing business environment, but also helps create better and more sustainable change in society as a whole.

In closing, it cannot be underestimated that ethics-based leadership in information technology (IT) decision-making plays a role that is not only crucial, but also multidimensional in managing risk and upholding organisational integrity. Ethical leadership is not only about ensuring that IT decisions adhere to sound ethical principles, but also about taking greater responsibility for the social and environmental impacts that IT use may have. In this context, ethical leadership is at the forefront of shaping an inclusive and responsible organisational culture, which in turn can mitigate reputational risks and increase the trust of stakeholders such as customers, investors and governments. With ethical leadership in place, organisations are not only able to achieve long-term sustainable success, but also contribute to positive change in the wider society.

CONCLUSION

In the analysis of this research, the importance of ethical leadership in the context of information technology (IT)-related decision-making, and its positive impact on risk management, has been emphasised. Ethics-based leadership plays a central role in ensuring that any IT-related decisions are taken with ethical principles as a top priority, while endeavouring to mitigate any risks that may arise. In this context, ethical leadership plays a significant role in preventing potential misuse of data, creating a transparent and accountable organisational culture, ensuring fair use of IT, and considering the impact of IT decisions on society and the environment in a thoughtful manner. In terms of risk management, ethical leadership also serves as a pillar that helps organisations better identify and manage risks, while winning the trust of various stakeholders, complying with applicable regulations, and driving continuous innovation. Suggestions that can be given for the results of this study include:

a) Ethical Leadership Development: Organisations need to develop ethical leadership through in-depth training and education on ethics in IT decision-making. This will ensure that leaders have a strong understanding of relevant ethical principles.
b) Strict Privacy Policy Implementation: Organisations should have strict privacy policies and ensure that customer and employee data is properly safeguarded. This will help avoid privacy breaches that can damage reputation.

c) Transparency and Accountability: Encouraging a culture of transparency and accountability within the organisation is key to enabling stakeholders to participate in the IT decision-making process.

d) Continuous Risk Assessment: Organisations need to conduct continuous risk assessments to identify and manage risks associated with the use of IT. This involves a deep understanding of cyber threats and other operational risks.

e) Regulatory Compliance: It is important for organisations to understand and comply with all applicable regulations in the use of IT. This can avoid adverse legal consequences.

By implementing these suggestions, organisations can ensure that ethical leadership is a strong foundation for IT-related decision-making, and that risk management is well integrated into their business strategy. This will help create a safe, ethical and sustainable environment for the organisation and its stakeholders.

REFERENCES


