



## Understanding and Readiness of Tourism Village Managers in Alamendah: A Study on Accommodating Special Dietary Needs of Tourists

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### Article Info

#### Article history:

Received Sep 9, 2025

Revised Oct 25, 2025

Accepted Nov 17, 2025

Online First Nov 25, 2025

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#### Keywords:

Community-Based Tourism  
Special Dietary Requirements  
Tourism Village Management

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose of the study:** The aim of this study is to examine the level of understanding and readiness of the management of Alamendah Tourism Village in accommodating tourists with special dietary requirements. These requirements include dietary restrictions based on religion, food allergies, intolerances, and various lifestyle-based diets.

**Methodology:** The research method employed is a qualitative research method with a descriptive approach. Data collection techniques involved interviews with several managers of Alamendah Tourism Village, including the chairman, secretary, treasurer, and tour guides of Alamendah Tourism Village.

**Main Findings:** The research results indicate that the managers of Alamendah Tourism Village understand and are prepared to accommodate tourists with various types of special dietary needs. However, there are still limitations in the menu items served, as they do not use ingredients prohibited in Islam, such as pork, alcohol, and others, since Alamendah Tourism Village operates under the concept of halal tourism.

**Novelty/Originality of this study:** This study contributes to the literature on community-based tourism by addressing an underexplored aspect: tourists special dietary requirements. It examines the understanding and preparedness of Alamendah Tourism Village managers in accommodating diverse dietary needs, thereby providing practical insights for inclusive tourism management. The findings advance knowledge on integrating visitor dietary preferences into sustainable rural tourism development and community empowerment strategies.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is widely recognized as a “community industry,” meaning that the sustainability of tourism development is largely dependent on and determined by community acceptance, participation, and support [1]. The community plays a fundamental role not only as a recipient of tourism benefits but also as an active participant in shaping the direction of tourism growth in their area. Community involvement in tourism development is closely related to concepts of participation, empowerment, and participatory planning, all of which ensure that tourism activities align with local needs and cultural values [2]. Community support is essential for the long-term sustainability of tourism, because the success of any tourism initiative ultimately depends on the willingness of local residents to accept, participate in, and support tourism activities [3]. The local community, as the main stakeholder, serves as the subject and implementer of tourism activities. Thus, they become the principal and the first beneficiary of tourism activities [4]. Community empowerment and meaningful participation in decision-

making are prerequisites for viewing tourism as a viable local development strategy; without them, tourism benefits are often unevenly distributed and local support weakens [5]. Moreover, tourism development is expected to create job opportunities, training, and education for local residents, thereby increasing awareness and understanding of the social, economic, and environmental impacts of tourism [6]. However, despite these potential benefits, communities in developing regions still face several challenges in recognizing tourism as a viable strategy for local development. These challenges often stem from limited knowledge, inadequate resources, and minimal influence over decision-making processes dominated by external actors.

One of the rural communities in Indonesia that has successfully navigated these challenges is Alamendah Tourism Village, located in Bandung Regency, West Java. Alamendah Tourism Village was officially designated as a Tourism Village through the Regent of Bandung's Decree No. 556.42/kep.71-DISBUDPAR/2011 on February 2, 2011. Since its establishment, the village has demonstrated strong progress and is currently classified as an advanced-category tourism village, as determined by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy of Indonesia. This classification is based on multiple criteria, including community awareness, visitor numbers, infrastructure quality, facilities, the existence of tourism awareness groups (Pokdarwis), the community's capacity to manage tourism enterprises, the allocation of village funds for tourism, and the effectiveness of the village management system in fostering local economic growth [7].

Alamendah Tourism Village boasts diverse tourism potential, encompassing nature-based tourism, cultural tourism, and man-made attractions, making it appealing to both domestic and international visitors. The increasing diversity of tourists has in turn influenced local food preferences and demand. As global travel trends evolve, tourists increasingly seek experiences that align with their personal, cultural, and health-related dietary practices. Indeed, the variety of foods that tourists may request has become nearly unlimited [8]. One emerging area of interest is the need for tourism destinations to accommodate special dietary requirements, whether based on religious beliefs, allergies, food intolerances, or lifestyle preferences. Responding to this evolving demand, this study aims to assess the understanding and readiness of Alamendah Tourism Village managers in accommodating tourists with such special dietary needs.

A tourism village is defined as a rural area possessing natural and cultural potential that can be developed into tourist attractions, managed by the community, and contributing to local economic enhancement [9]. Local community-based rural tourism products are tourist pull factors in rural area. The uniqueness of rural character and rural community routines are tourism capital possessed by local communities [10]. The management of tourism villages in Indonesia generally involves three key community-based institutions: tourism awareness groups (Pokdarwis), cooperatives, and village-owned enterprises (BUM Desa) [7]. Pokdarwis are established through community consensus, acknowledged by the village head, and officially registered with the local tourism office. They function as driving forces for tourism awareness programs and implement the so-called "seven charms of tourism" (Sapta Pesona). Meanwhile, cooperatives and BUM Desa operate under local administrative supervision and are tasked with ensuring economic inclusivity and sustainability. In Alamendah Tourism Village, tourism management reflects an integrated, gender-inclusive approach in which both men and women are given equal opportunities to participate in economic activities. This approach ensures that tourism development contributes not only to income generation but also to social equity and empowerment within the village.

Within the realm of tourism, food plays a vital role in shaping visitor satisfaction and cultural experience. Tourists' dietary requirements may vary greatly due to religious beliefs, allergies, or lifestyle choices. The ability of tourism destinations to accommodate such diversity has become a key element of inclusive tourism management. One major dimension is religious dietary restrictions, which influence what certain groups can or cannot consume [11]. All three groups of dietary needs (religious, medical, lifestyle) have an effect on satisfaction and behavioral intentions [12]. Distinguish between ongoing taboos permanent prohibitions based on religious or cultural doctrine and temporary taboos, which are time-bound restrictions, such as fasting periods. In Indonesia, major religions such as Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism include explicit dietary rules. For instance, Islam emphasizes the consumption of halal and wholesome (tayyib) foods while prohibiting haram items such as carrion, blood, pork, and intoxicating substances like alcohol [13]. These prohibitions are not only spiritual but also serve to promote ethical and hygienic eating practices. Similarly, Hinduism discourages the consumption of beef and foods that may impede spiritual development, such as garlic and onions, which are believed to stimulate excessive sensory [14]. Many Buddhists adopt a vegetarian diet, avoiding meat and dairy, though adherence levels vary across communities [15]. Christianity also presents dietary reflections emphasizing moderation and discernment, encouraging believers to consume foods that are beneficial for both body and spirit [16].

Spiritual journeys often require adherence to strict dietary rules and fasting, which can pose significant operational challenges for the tourism industry [17]. Like some religions practice temporary dietary abstinence. For example, Muslims fast from dawn until sunset during Ramadan, while certain Christian denominations observe fasting or abstinence at specific times, such as during Lent. These dietary observances reflect the intersection of spirituality, health, and cultural identity, all of which must be understood by tourism service providers aiming to create an inclusive and respectful visitor experience [18].

Beyond religious restrictions, food allergies and intolerances present another critical dimension of special dietary requirements. Food allergy, or hypersensitivity, refers to an immune-mediated reaction to specific food components or additives [19]. Such reactions can cause significant health risks, ranging from mild discomfort to severe anaphylaxis. Common allergenic foods include milk, eggs, nuts, seafood, soy, and wheat, though other foods such as chocolate, tomatoes, and certain food additives can also trigger reactions [20]. Unlike allergies, food intolerance involves non-immunological physiological responses to certain foods, typically leading to digestive issues such as bloating, cramps, or gas. Examples include lactose intolerance and reactions to caffeine or tyramine [19]. For tourism destinations, understanding and accommodating such conditions is vital to ensuring visitor safety and satisfaction.

Additionally, an increasing number of tourists follow specific dietary patterns based on lifestyle preferences, including vegetarianism, veganism, ketogenic diets, and intermittent fasting. A diet, in essence, refers to the balance of macronutrients carbohydrates, proteins, and fats consumed to meet physiological needs while avoiding excess intake and ensuring adequate micronutrient levels [21]. Vegetarian and vegan diets exclude meat and animal derived products, respectively, motivated by ethical, environmental, religious, or health reasons [22]. While these diets can lower the risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease and stroke, they may also result in nutrient deficiencies if not properly managed [23]. Meanwhile, low carbohydrate diets, including the ketogenic diet, prioritize high-fat intake to induce ketogenesis, promoting energy production from fat rather than carbohydrates. However, such diets may carry side effects, including hormonal imbalance and metabolic shifts [21]. For tourism destinations that want to be sustainable, accommodating this diet is not just a matter of preference, but also a necessity to adjust menus to ensure nutritional balance and prevent deficiencies, especially related to Vitamin B12 and iron [24]. Another emerging trend is intermittent fasting, a dietary practice involving scheduled calorie restriction across specific hours or days. Research indicates that intermittent fasting can positively influence blood pressure, glucose regulation, and fat metabolism [25]. In addition, intermittent fasting can increase neurotrophic factor signaling, particularly brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF), which is known to be important for cognition and has antidepressant-like effects [26]. These lifestyle-based dietary preferences highlight the growing need for flexibility in tourism food services, requiring management to be responsive, innovative, and informed.

In the case of Alamendah Tourism Village, the diversity of visitors has provided valuable learning experiences for its management. Tourists with various dietary needs including those based on religion, allergies, or personal lifestyles have visited the village, prompting the management to adapt food offerings accordingly. For example, Muslim visitors are served halal-certified meals free from pork and alcohol, while Hindu or Buddhist tourists may request vegetarian options excluding beef, garlic, and onions. Moreover, visitors following specific diets such as vegan, ketogenic, or calorie-restricted plans can inform the management of their preferences in advance when booking tour packages, enabling customized meal preparation.

This adaptive approach has helped the managers of Alamendah Tourism Village recognize that each tourist possesses unique characteristics and expectations. They have also come to appreciate that food quality directly affects tourists' satisfaction and emotional well-being during their stay. Beyond mere hospitality, this understanding reflects a deeper commitment to inclusive, culturally sensitive, and health-conscious tourism practices.

Therefore, this study seeks to explore and assess the extent to which Alamendah Tourism Village managers understand and are prepared to accommodate tourists with special dietary requirements. By investigating these practices, the study contributes to the academic literature on community-based tourism and the underexplored intersection of food, culture, and inclusivity in rural tourism management. Moreover, the findings have practical implications for improving the management capabilities of community-based destinations, ensuring that rural tourism not only supports local economic growth but also aligns with global trends in sustainable, inclusive, and experience-driven tourism. This research is expected to inform future studies and policy development by highlighting the importance of dietary inclusivity as a key component of tourism quality and sustainability.

In addition to its practical relevance, this study also holds important theoretical significance, particularly when viewed through the lens of tourism education, social learning, and community-based tourism theory. Community participation in tourism is not only an economic activity but also a continuous learning process, in which local actors develop new knowledge, attitudes, and skills through interaction with tourists and external stakeholders. According to social learning perspectives, communities improve their capacity by observing, reflecting, and adapting to the behaviors, expectations, and feedback of visitors. In the context of Alamendah Tourism Village, the need to understand and manage diverse dietary requirements becomes an educational process that strengthens local human resources, enhances cultural sensitivity, and deepens community competence in providing inclusive tourism services.

Building on this perspective, the present research extends beyond operational practices and acknowledges the educational and social dimensions of dietary accommodation. By adapting food services to religious, health-related, and lifestyle-based needs, tourism managers engage in ongoing learning that shapes their attitudes, values,

and professional identity. This transition illustrates that managing tourism in rural settings is not merely about service delivery, but also about cultivating knowledge, developing empathy, and reinforcing inclusive social norms within the community. Thus, this study sheds light on how dietary inclusivity serves as a medium for community empowerment, capacity-building, and culturally responsive tourism education.

Despite the growing interest in inclusive and sustainable tourism, existing research rarely examines how tourism village managers develop the knowledge and skills needed to accommodate special dietary needs. Most studies have focused on community-based tourism from the perspectives of participation, empowerment, and economic benefits, while the educational processes behind service adaptation remain largely overlooked. There is a lack of research exploring how communities learn to understand religious dietary rules, allergy risks, or lifestyle-based food preferences, and how this learning shapes their readiness to provide inclusive services. This gap is especially evident in the Indonesian context, where tourism villages play a central role in rural development but receive limited academic attention regarding their social learning and human resource development related to food management.

The novelty of this research lies in its focus on the intersection of dietary inclusivity, community-based tourism management, and social learning within a rural tourism village. Unlike previous studies that primarily examine food as a cultural attraction or visitor experience component, this study emphasizes the internal learning processes of tourism managers in adapting to evolving dietary trends. This emphasis highlights the urgency of understanding how tourism villages can build the knowledge, awareness, and competencies needed to support inclusive and sustainable tourism practices. By addressing this overlooked dimension, the study contributes new insights into how food management becomes both a practical strategy and an educational pathway for community empowerment. In alignment with this gap and novelty, the main objective of this study is to assess the level of understanding and preparedness of Alamendah Tourism Village managers in accommodating tourists with special dietary requirements, while also examining the educational and social implications of these adaptive practices for community-based tourism development.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research was conducted in Alamendah Tourism Village, located in Rancabali Subdistrict, West Bandung Regency, West Java Province, Indonesia. Alamendah is widely recognized as one of the pioneering examples of community-based tourism in the region, characterized by its strong local participation, diverse agricultural landscape, and emphasis on cultural authenticity. The village is situated in a highland area near the Ciwidey tourist corridor, surrounded by tea plantations, pine forests, and agricultural fields, which contribute to its appeal as a sustainable and environmentally conscious rural tourism destination. Its proximity to well-known attractions such as Kawah Putih and Situ Patenggang also enhances its strategic position within the broader West Java tourism network.

The method applied in this study was a qualitative research method using a descriptive approach. Qualitative research aims to explore and interpret social phenomena by understanding the meanings, experiences, and perspectives of research participants in their natural contexts [27]. It allows the researcher to gain in depth insights into processes, behaviors, and relationships that cannot be captured through quantitative measurement alone. Qualitative research involves the use and collection of a variety of empirical materials such as case studies, personal experiences, introspection, life histories, interviews, observations, historical texts, and visual materials that describe both routine and problematic moments in individuals' and groups' lives, along with the meanings attributed to those moments [28].

In line with this perspective, the study adopted a descriptive qualitative design, which seeks to portray the existing condition of a social phenomenon systematically and factually. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data was collected through field observations, literature reviews, and in-depth interviews with local community members [29]. The approach was considered appropriate for this study because it allows for an in depth understanding of how tourism village management responds to tourists with specific dietary needs a topic that involves human perceptions, cultural interpretations, and social interactions. Through descriptive analysis, the researcher was able to uncover the ways in which the management of Alamendah Tourism Village develops adaptive strategies to accommodate diverse tourist preferences and how these practices are linked to broader concepts of inclusivity, hospitality, and sustainable tourism development [30].

The research subjects consisted of key managerial actors within Alamendah Tourism Village who hold strategic roles in decision-making and day-to-day operations. This included the chairman, the treasurer, and the secretary, who also acts as a tour guide. These individuals were selected using purposive sampling due to their direct involvement in tourism management, food service arrangements, and visitor interactions. Their experience and authority enabled the researcher to access accurate, relevant, and contextualized information regarding dietary accommodation practices.

To ensure a systematic and credible data collection process, the research employed semi-structured interviews as its primary technique. This technique enabled the researcher to maintain a balance between

predetermined guiding questions and the flexibility to pursue deeper insights during the conversation [31]. This method is ideal for research that requires a balance between structure and freedom in data collection because the flexible and empathetic interview atmosphere helps respondents feel safe to share sensitive or personal information [32]. The interviews were conducted in three different sessions on October 8, November 13, and December 14 of 2023 and each session lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. All interviews took place within the village, either inside the tourism management office or at homestay facilities where participants felt comfortable sharing their perspectives. Conducting the interviews in Bahasa Indonesia ensured clarity, accuracy, and natural communication. The resulting transcripts were then translated into English using forward and back-translation techniques to maintain conceptual equivalence and minimize interpretive bias.

To strengthen the methodological rigor, an interview instrument grid was developed prior to data collection. The instrument contained several thematic categories, including: (1) managerial understanding of dietary diversity; (2) types of dietary needs encountered (religious, allergy-related, lifestyle-based); (3) communication mechanisms between tourists and management; (4) food preparation processes and safety practices; (5) adaptive strategies in menu planning; and (6) challenges and opportunities in providing inclusive culinary services. Each category was supported by guiding questions designed to explore participants' experiences, knowledge, and decision-making patterns. This grid served as the core research instrument and ensured consistency across interview sessions, while still allowing open-ended responses.

The qualitative data obtained from the interviews were subsequently analyzed using thematic analysis, focusing on identifying recurring patterns, categories, and meanings related to the management's adaptive strategies in addressing tourists' dietary requirements [33]. The analysis followed a step-by-step process, including familiarization with the data, coding, theme development, theme review, theme definition, and narrative synthesis. Through this process, the findings were interpreted through a sustainability and inclusivity lens, aligning them with theoretical frameworks and prior studies in community-based tourism, hospitality management, and food tourism.

The entire research procedure followed a structured sequence beginning with the preparatory stage, during which the researcher developed the topic, reviewed relevant literature, prepared the research instruments, and obtained necessary permissions to conduct fieldwork. The second stage involved data collection, starting with the scheduling of interviews, rapport building, and the three rounds of semi-structured interviews conducted at the research site. The third stage was transcription and translation, ensuring that the content of the interviews was accurately documented and linguistically aligned with the study's academic requirements. The fourth stage consisted of thematic data analysis, performed through systematic coding and interpretation. The final stage involved drawing conclusions and synthesizing findings into the broader discourse of sustainable and inclusive community-based tourism. The sequence of these procedures can be represented through the following textual flowchart to illustrate the systematic flow of the research:



Figure 1. Research Procedures

Overall, the chosen methodology effectively facilitated a holistic understanding of the dynamic relationship between local tourism management and diverse visitor expectations. It enabled the researcher not only

to capture factual practices but also to reveal the values, motivations, and cultural considerations underlying the management's adaptive responses to dietary diversity within the socio-cultural context of Alamendah Tourism Village.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Alamendah Tourism Village is one of five villages located in Rancabali Subdistrict, Bandung Regency, West Java. This village was designated as a Tourism Village by the Bandung Regency Government through Bandung Regent Decree No. 556.42/kep.71-DISBUDPAR/2011 on February 2, 2011. Currently, the village has been designated as an advanced tourism village based on the results of an assessment or classification of villages by the Indonesian Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy. In addition to being categorized as an advanced tourism village, the village has also been certified as a sustainable tourism village by the Indonesian Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy through the Indonesian Sustainable Tourism Council (ISTC) Certification Body. The village is located at an altitude of 1,200-1,550 meters above sea level, with an average temperature of 19–20°C and an annual rainfall of 2,150 mm. Several villages border Alamendah Tourism Village: to the north is Panundaan Village in Ciwidey District, to the east is Sugihmukti Village in Pasir Jambu District, to the south is Patenggang Village in Rancabali District, and to the west is Lebakmuncang Village in Ciwidey District.

When it was first established, Alamendah Tourism Village (Dawala) did not have any tourism products or packages to offer to potential tourists. As a result, during the first eight years, Dawala received very few tourist visits. Then, in early 2019, the Dawala management team began to focus on developing innovative tourism products and packages by utilizing the potential of the village. The tourism products offered include the Alamendah Trip package, Trekking, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics), Coffee Trip, Ter-Bike Ngagoes Ulin Kalembur, Study Tour Package, Bird Watching, Virtual Tour, Home Stay, Paintball/Archery Battle, and Rancabali Trip.

Based on an interview conducted on October 8, 2023, with the Chairman of the Alamendah Tourism Village Management Team, Alamendah Tourism Village has successfully developed innovative products, tourism packages, and existing facilities. The facilities in this village include a meeting hall, public restrooms, souvenir shops, a mosque or prayer room, dining areas, an arts center, accommodations, rest areas, a gas station, and Wi-Fi zones. Alamendah Tourism Village has a population of 23,000, with 300 residents already involved in tourism activities in the village. Additionally, the village has 65 homestays with a total of 125 rooms, capable of accommodating over 500 people with varying facilities. Currently, there are 3,500 visits, with 70% of visitors coming from outside the village, and 10% of these being foreign tourists. The village also collaborates with government agencies, academics, media, and businesses such as travel agencies and tour operators for foreign tourists. Additionally, several CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) activities are conducted in Alamendah Tourism Village, including training programs, infrastructure improvements, the construction of a Tourist Information Center (TIC), and the provision of homestay equipment.

#### 3.1. Managers' Understanding of Tourists' Special Dietary Requirements

Based on interviews conducted on December 14, 2023, with the management team of Alamendah Tourism Village, it was identified that the managers possess a deep and comprehensive understanding of the various dietary needs and restrictions of tourists visiting the village. Their awareness extends beyond general dietary habits to include specific religious restrictions, allergies, intolerances, and specialized diets, reflecting their sensitivity to the diverse backgrounds of both domestic and international visitors. This understanding is crucial in ensuring that every tourist feels comfortable and respected during their stay, and it highlights the professionalism and adaptability of the tourism village in managing culinary experiences that align with sustainable and inclusive tourism practices.

In relation to dietary restrictions based on Islamic teachings, the management places strong emphasis on implementing the concept of halal tourism. This concept ensures that every aspect of food preparation from ingredient selection, cooking processes, to food presentation complies with Islamic dietary laws. Such a commitment provides assurance to Muslim tourists that the food offered within the village is free from pork, alcohol, and other prohibited substances. As expressed by the management team of Alamendah Tourism Village (2023), *"We use the concept of halal tourism in our tourism activities at Alamendah Tourism Village because the majority of visitors are Muslim, so the food served does not contain pork, alcohol, or other items prohibited by Islam."* This policy not only strengthens the religious and cultural values upheld by the local community but also aligns with Indonesia's broader vision of developing halal-based tourism destinations that promote inclusivity and ethical tourism practices.

Furthermore, the management also pays close attention to the dietary needs of tourists from non-Muslim backgrounds, including those practicing Hinduism, Buddhism, and other religions with specific dietary traditions. Tourists who require particular menu adjustments can communicate their needs during the booking process, allowing the management sufficient time to prepare meals that meet their expectations. As explained by the

management team of Alamendah Tourism Village (2023), “*For those of Hindu, Buddhist, or other faiths with dietary restrictions, requests can be made during the booking process so that appropriate meals can be prepared. During the booking process, we typically ask about and offer several meal options. Thus, meal requests can be made at the time of booking. Most tourists are already familiar with the characteristics of the food in Alamendah Tourism Village and can directly communicate their dietary restrictions and preferred menus. However, if tourists of religions other than Islam request foods such as pork, alcohol, or other items prohibited by Islam, we cannot accommodate such requests as we adhere to the concept of halal tourism.*”

This approach demonstrates the management’s flexibility and proactive communication strategy in ensuring visitor satisfaction without compromising local cultural and religious principles. By engaging tourists in dialogue prior to their arrival, the management not only avoids potential misunderstandings but also reinforces the value of respect and cooperation between guests and hosts an essential element in community-based tourism (CBT) development.

In addition to religious dietary considerations, Alamendah Tourism Village also accommodates tourists with lifestyle based dietary preferences, such as vegetarians and vegans. The management’s awareness of vegetarianism is reflected in their ability to design creative and nutritious meal options that maintain local flavors while meeting the dietary needs of such visitors. As stated by the management team of Alamendah Tourism Village (2023), “*A vegetarian is someone who does not consume meat. Vegetarian tourists who have visited Alamendah Tourism Village come from schools that follow Buddhism, so their religion prohibits the consumption of beef. For vegetarian tourists, we prepare a menu consisting of rice, noodles, eggs, cireng, and other foods that do not include meat.*”

The village’s efforts to cater to vegetarian tourists signify its adaptability and commitment to offering inclusive hospitality services. Such attention to detail in culinary offerings also enhances the authenticity of the tourist experience, as visitors are able to enjoy local food culture without sacrificing their personal or religious dietary principles. Moreover, by sourcing ingredients locally such as vegetables, rice, and traditional snacks the management not only supports local farmers and small scale food producers but also strengthens the sustainability of the tourism supply chain in Alamendah.

Overall, the practices implemented by the management of Alamendah Tourism Village demonstrate a well-balanced integration between cultural sensitivity, environmental sustainability, and community empowerment. Their approach to accommodating diverse dietary needs reflects a broader philosophy of responsible tourism, which emphasizes respect for visitors’ values, the preservation of local traditions, and the promotion of equitable economic benefits for the local community. Through this inclusive and thoughtful management model, Alamendah Tourism Village serves as a successful example of how community-based tourism can uphold both cultural authenticity and global hospitality standards, positioning it as one of the leading sustainable tourism destinations in West Java.



Figure 2. Cireng as a Food Menu for Vegetarian Tourists

Source: Documentation Archive of Alamendah Tourism Village Management (2023)

The findings from interviews conducted with the management team of Alamendah Tourism Village (2023) further demonstrate the village’s adaptive and inclusive approach to accommodating various dietary practices among its visitors. According to the management, a number of tourists who visit Alamendah Tourism Village follow a vegetarian diet, though the majority are categorized as *lacto-vegetarians*, meaning they still consume certain animal-derived products such as milk or dairy. As stated by the management team of Alamendah Tourism Village (2023), “*Visitors still follow a vegetarian diet that is not too strict, so they still consume animal products such as milk. Vegetarian tourists visiting at this time also avoid consuming foods containing onions, as onions are associated with ingredients used to process meat.*” This awareness reflects the management’s understanding of the nuanced variations within vegetarian dietary practices, which can be influenced by both cultural beliefs and religious doctrines.

The vegetarian tourists referred to by the management primarily come from a Buddhist school in Indonesia that has established a consistent partnership with Alamendah Tourism Village. These groups have been frequent visitors over the years, indicating a sustained trust and satisfaction with the hospitality and food services



provided by the village. The management further elaborated, *“These vegetarian tourists come from one of the Buddhist schools that have been visiting Alamendah Village regularly over the past few years, namely twice in 2019, once in 2020, and once in 2023.”* Such recurring visits illustrate not only the visitors’ appreciation of the tourism experience but also the effectiveness of the management’s efforts to cater to specific dietary and spiritual needs.

Beyond vegetarianism, the management team also displays an understanding of other dietary patterns such as veganism, which represents a stricter form of plant-based diet. They are able to distinguish between vegetarian and vegan dietary restrictions, acknowledging that vegan tourists require special consideration in meal preparation. As stated by the management team of Alamendah Tourism Village (2023), *“As far as I know, the difference between vegan and vegetarian is that vegetarians still consume animal products like milk, while vegans do not consume any animal products at all.”* This understanding is essential in ensuring that vegan tourists, should they visit in the future, receive food options that align with their ethical and dietary principles.

In addition to plant-based diets, the management has also encountered visitors who follow specific modern diet trends, such as the ketogenic diet and calorie restricted diet. The ketogenic diet, which emphasizes high-fat and protein intake while minimizing carbohydrates, requires particular attention during meal service. The management team of Alamendah Tourism Village (2023) noted, *“As I understand it, the ketogenic diet involves reducing carbohydrate intake and replacing it with protein and fat. Tourists following the ketogenic diet typically skip the carbohydrate section or rice at the buffet and only take foods containing protein or fat.”* This statement reveals that the management recognizes contemporary nutritional preferences and adapts their food offerings accordingly, demonstrating flexibility in accommodating diverse visitor profiles.

While the management has not yet encountered tourists practicing intermittent fasting, they remain observant and open to understanding emerging dietary patterns among future visitors. As one manager explained, *“To date, there have been no tourists following the intermittent fasting diet.”* Nonetheless, the management has had experience serving visitors who follow calorie-restricted diets, requiring careful attention to portion sizes and calorie content in each dish. As the management team of Alamendah Tourism Village (2023) shared, *“There was one tourist who visited Alamendah Tourism Village on a strict calorie-restricted diet, so we had to pay attention to the calorie content of the food we offered.”* This level of consideration demonstrates a commitment to personalized hospitality, which aligns with sustainable tourism values that prioritize guest satisfaction and well-being.

The management also showed a strong awareness of food allergies and intolerances, an increasingly important aspect of modern culinary tourism. They explained that tourists with such conditions usually communicate their dietary needs in advance during the booking process, allowing the management to make necessary adjustments. As noted by the management team of Alamendah Tourism Village (2023), *“Tourists with food allergies and intolerances typically request specific menu items when booking their tour packages. Tourists are also informed about the ingredients in the food or beverages available, so those with allergies or intolerances to certain foods can avoid consuming those items.”* This transparent approach to ingredient disclosure reflects responsible tourism management practices, minimizing health risks while fostering trust between tourists and hosts.

Among the types of food intolerances encountered, lactose intolerance appears to be the most common. The management team, who also serve as tour guides and local facilitators, possess a sound understanding of this condition and have developed alternative menu solutions. As the management team of Alamendah Tourism Village (2023) explained, *“What I know about lactose intolerance is that it is a digestive disorder caused by the body’s inability to digest lactose. There are some tourists who are lactose intolerant, meaning they cannot consume milk, so during the tourism activity when trying the milkshake made by the UMKM, those tourists were offered to try the strawberry jam instead.”*

This example illustrates how local tourism operators in Alamendah demonstrate adaptive problem-solving and visitor centered innovation in their culinary offerings. By providing safe and enjoyable alternatives without compromising local identity or authenticity, they reinforce the principle of inclusivity in community-based tourism. Furthermore, such practices help enhance the image of Alamendah Tourism Village as a destination that not only prioritizes visitor satisfaction but also embodies the values of respect, empathy, and sustainable hospitality.

Overall, the management of Alamendah Tourism Village has shown commendable competence in recognizing and accommodating the diverse dietary preferences and restrictions of their guests. Their approach reflects a balance between maintaining cultural and religious integrity through adherence to halal tourism principles and offering personalized services to ensure every visitor feels acknowledged and valued. This inclusive and flexible management style serves as a model for other community-based tourism destinations in Indonesia, emphasizing that true sustainability in tourism extends beyond environmental conservation it also includes respect for human diversity, well-being, and cultural harmony.





Figure 3. Milkshake Strawberry UMKM

Source: Documentation Archive of Alamendah Tourism Village Management (2023)

The management of Alamendah Tourism Village also understands dietary restrictions such as gluten-free diets. As explained by the management team (2023), “*What I know about gluten-free is that it comes from the words gluten and free, meaning free from gluten protein content. However, so far, none of the tourists visiting Alamendah Village have requested gluten-free food.*” Although no visitors have yet made such requests, this statement shows that the managers have basic knowledge of global dietary trends and are prepared to adapt when needed.

Overall, the managers of Alamendah Tourism Village demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of various dietary restrictions including those based on religion (Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism), allergies, food intolerances, and health or lifestyle choices such as vegetarian, vegan, ketogenic, intermittent fasting, calorie-restricted, and gluten-free diets. This awareness has been developed through direct interaction with diverse tourists, enabling them to anticipate and fulfill different dietary needs effectively.

Such understanding not only improves tourist satisfaction but also supports Alamendah’s image as an inclusive and culturally sensitive destination. The management’s adaptability reflects the principles of community-based tourism, where local hosts play an active role in ensuring comfort and respect for all visitors while maintaining sustainable tourism practices.

### 3.2. The Management’s Readiness for Special Dietary Requirements of Tourists

Based on an interview conducted on December 14, 2023, with The management team of Alamendah Tourism Village, one of the managers of Alamendah Tourism Village, insights were obtained regarding the village’s preparedness in accommodating tourists with special dietary requirements. The management demonstrated awareness of various dietary needs related to religious restrictions, allergies, intolerances, and lifestyle-based diets. As stated by the informant, “*For tourists with special dietary needs, such as religious restrictions, allergies, intolerances, or diets based on lifestyle preferences, they can make a request at the time of booking the tour package, so we can prepare the food accordingly as desired by the tourists.*”

This statement illustrates that the management has developed a system that allows tourists to communicate their dietary requirements in advance. Furthermore, The management team of Alamendah Tourism Village emphasized the flexibility of the village’s culinary offerings, noting that “*Since we have a variety of food options, we are ready to accommodate diverse types of tourists with various eating patterns.*” However, certain constraints still exist in the implementation process. For example, she explained that “*Requests to avoid onions cannot be made last-minute, as most of the food we provide contains onions, so confirmation must be made from the start of the tour package booking.*”

The management also acknowledged that the methods of food preparation remain relatively traditional, as “*We still prepare food using basic methods such as frying, boiling, or steaming, so our options are limited.*” Despite these limitations, The management team of Alamendah Tourism Village noted that “*Almost all tourists with dietary restrictions, allergies, food intolerances, and special diets have visited Alamendah Tourism Village, but they are not the majority.*” To further support inclusivity and safety in food service, the management also engages in educational initiatives for local small and medium enterprises (SMEs), as “*We also educate small and medium enterprises to explain the products they offer so that tourists can avoid their dietary restrictions, allergies, and food intolerances.*”

Overall, the interview findings indicate that Alamendah Tourism Village has made conscious efforts to accommodate tourists with specific dietary needs through proactive communication, flexible food preparation, and community-based education. Nevertheless, operational limitations related to local culinary practices and ingredient use suggest that further improvements in menu diversification and staff training would enhance the village’s readiness to serve a broader range of visitors.

Table 1. Availability of Food Menus Based on Tourists' Special Dietary Needs in Alamendah Tourism Village

No.	Special dietary	Available	On Request
1.	Dietary restrictions based on Islam	✓	
2.	Dietary restrictions based on Buddhism		✓
3.	Dietary restrictions based on Hinduism		✓
4.	Dietary restrictions based on other religions		✓
5.	Food allergies		✓
6.	Food intolerances		✓
7.	Vegetarian diet		✓
8.	Vegan diet		✓
9.	Keto diet		✓
10.	Intermittent fasting diet		✓
11.	Other types of diets		✓

Table 1 presents the availability of food menus in Alamendah Tourism Village according to tourists' special dietary requirements. For visitors with dietary restrictions based on Islam, all food served in Alamendah Tourism Village is already halal, as the destination adopts a halal tourism concept that strictly avoids the use of pork, alcohol, and other ingredients prohibited by Islamic law. Meanwhile, for tourists adhering to Hinduism, Buddhism, or other religions, specific menu requests can be made during the booking process to ensure that their dietary needs are met appropriately.

Similarly, tourists with allergies, food intolerances, or special diet patterns such as vegetarian, vegan, ketogenic, intermittent fasting, calorie-restricted, or gluten free diets are advised to communicate their preferences in advance. By doing so, the management can make necessary adjustments to menu preparation, ensuring comfort, safety, and satisfaction for all guests.

In conclusion, the management of Alamendah Tourism Village demonstrates strong readiness and adaptability in serving tourists with diverse dietary needs. Their proactive approach reflects a commitment to inclusivity and personalized service, aligning with sustainable and responsible tourism principles. Tourists with special dietary requirements are therefore encouraged to specify their meal preferences at the time of booking, enabling the management to deliver an enjoyable and culturally sensitive culinary experience.

### 3.3 Management's Response to Tourists' Special Dietary Needs

Based on an in-depth interview conducted on December 14, 2023, with the management team of Alamendah Tourism Village, valuable insights were obtained regarding how the management responds to tourists with special dietary requirements. Initially, accommodating such needs was perceived as a challenge due to the limited understanding of dietary diversity and the lack of formal training in handling specific nutritional or religious dietary restrictions. However, through accumulated experience and exposure to a growing variety of visitors, the management gradually developed a deeper awareness of individual differences and an adaptive capacity in addressing dietary concerns. This process evolved into a significant learning journey for the management, enabling them to identify and appreciate the complexity of tourists' food preferences, ranging from cultural and religious restrictions to personal health considerations. Such an understanding aligns in Mohammadi et al., [34], which emphasized that destinations able to accommodate special dietary needs tend to increase both visitor satisfaction and behavioral intentions toward revisiting or recommending the site.

In the early stages of Alamendah Tourism Village's operation as a community-based tourism destination, food services were designed mainly for local visitors without detailed consideration of individual dietary variations. Most of the meals provided were traditional Sundanese dishes, characterized by their use of rice, vegetables, tempeh, tofu, and fried or grilled fish. As the destination began to attract more diverse tourists both domestic and international management encountered new dietary challenges, such as accommodating vegetarian or vegan tourists, individuals with allergies to peanuts or gluten, and visitors following halal or low-sugar diets. Initially, these requirements created logistical and operational challenges since the village's food service system relied heavily on local community cooks who prepared meals in a homely, communal style. Over time, the management realized that such challenges could be turned into opportunities to enhance visitor satisfaction and loyalty through food personalization and health-conscious menu planning. The development of culinary tourism based on local potential, utilizing traditional culinary heritage, local ingredients, and active community participation, has proven to increase tourist appeal and visitor numbers, as well as providing tangible economic benefits for rural communities [35].

Through trial and adaptation, Alamendah's management began implementing several informal strategies to address tourists' special dietary needs. They encouraged open communication between visitors and the kitchen team, allowing tourists to express specific preferences before meal preparation. This practice helped minimize misunderstanding and ensured food suitability, especially for tourists with religious or medical dietary restrictions. For instance, when serving Muslim visitors, the management prioritized halal-certified ingredients, while for

foreign tourists particularly those from Western countries they accommodated vegetarian and vegan meal options. This flexibility demonstrated the management's growing commitment to inclusivity and service personalization, reinforcing the notion that dietary accommodation represents an important aspect of hospitality quality. As noted in Ayyıldız [36], offering vegetarian or vegan menu options significantly influences destination preference and enhances the competitiveness of accommodation and tourism facilities, particularly among health-conscious travelers. Another important insight revealed during the interview is that the management recognizes the direct link between food quality, emotional comfort, and overall tourist satisfaction. This study emphasizes the importance of food that meets tourists' needs and preferences, including special diets, as part of destination strategies to enhance appeal and visitor satisfaction. The authors note that providing vegetarian and halal options can improve inclusivity and destination competitiveness, especially in health and cultural tourism markets [37]. Tourists often perceive food as more than sustenance it becomes a central part of their cultural and emotional experience during travel. In Alamendah Tourism Village, the management learned that when meals were thoughtfully prepared and tailored to tourists' specific dietary expectations, visitors tended to exhibit greater satisfaction, positive emotional responses, and willingness to extend their stay or recommend the destination. Conversely, inadequate preparation or neglect of dietary restrictions could lead to discomfort or even dissatisfaction, potentially discouraging repeat visits. This understanding reflects the findings in Yeşilçimen and Akin [38], which reported that vegetarian tourists' destination choices are significantly influenced by the availability of food that aligns with their dietary identity and ethical considerations. Hence, addressing dietary needs is not merely a functional service issue but also a psychological factor shaping tourists' attachment and loyalty to a destination. The right food quality helps create positive memories and deep emotional experiences for tourists [39].

The interview data also revealed that Alamendah's management pays attention to the health and safety implications of food preparation. They understand that differences in dietary habits such as oil use, spiciness levels, or food freshness can affect tourists' digestive comfort. While no significant incidents of food-related health issues have been reported, the management continues to prioritize safe cooking practices and hygiene standards. They have also introduced mild adjustments to local dishes, such as reducing excessive chili or oil content, to make them more acceptable to a broader range of tourists without compromising the authenticity of Sundanese cuisine. This balance between authenticity and adaptability illustrates the essence of culinary diplomacy in community-based tourism, where food functions as both a medium of cultural representation and an instrument of service satisfaction. The findings are consistent with the arguments presented in Setyaningsih et al., [40], which state that destinations respecting dietary diversity while maintaining cultural authenticity are more likely to attract broader market segments, including both Muslim and non-Muslim travelers seeking culturally sensitive culinary experiences.

Beyond operational adjustments, Alamendah Tourism Village's management has begun to adopt a more strategic perspective toward food services by integrating dietary inclusivity into their overall destination branding. They view culinary experience as an essential component of the village's image, positioning it not merely as a rural tourism site but as a holistic, health-conscious destination offering authentic and sustainable food experiences. This approach resonates with the current global trend of integrating wellness and gastronomy into tourism marketing, where dietary sensitivity is increasingly recognized as part of sustainable and responsible tourism practices. As highlighted in Gürkan et al., [41] that travelers who follow vegan or vegetarian diets perceive the availability of suitable food as a reflection of a destination's ethical and environmental values. Thus, Alamendah's emphasis on fresh, locally sourced ingredients and nutritional balance not only satisfies tourists' dietary needs but also enhances the village's sustainable tourism narrative. Management responsive to tourist feedback and able to adapt services accordingly significantly contributes to increased tourist satisfaction and loyalty [42].

Interestingly, the management also noted that tourists' satisfaction with food services often extends beyond taste or dietary compliance, it is strongly linked to the emotional atmosphere created during meals. Shared dining experiences, storytelling about local ingredients, and the demonstration of traditional cooking techniques were found to elevate tourists' appreciation and understanding of local culture. Such experiential engagement turns dining into a participatory cultural exchange rather than a transactional activity. This observation aligns with recent gastronomy tourism studies [43], which indicate that service quality and emotional satisfaction from culinary experiences significantly influence tourists' long-term behavioral intentions. Therefore, Alamendah's management strategy of combining dietary adaptability with cultural storytelling can be considered an innovative approach to enhancing visitor satisfaction and destination loyalty simultaneously.

Another layer of analysis shows that Alamendah Tourism Village's adaptive response to tourists' dietary needs reflects the principles of inclusive service management. Inclusivity in tourism does not only refer to accessibility for people with physical disabilities but also encompasses sensitivity toward cultural, religious, and personal lifestyle differences. By ensuring that every tourist, regardless of dietary restriction, can enjoy safe and suitable meals, the management demonstrates social inclusiveness, which strengthens the village's reputation as a welcoming destination. This finding aligns with Eren [44], which highlights that food inclusiveness serves as a key determinant of the overall quality of event and destination experiences. Furthermore, the management's

emphasis on understanding visitors' dietary habits before meal preparation reduces potential health risks and enhances tourists' trust in local hospitality, an essential factor in building positive destination image and loyalty. Thus, it can be said that culinary experiences involving emotional and cultural aspects can increase tourist satisfaction and influence long-term behavioral intentions, such as destination loyalty. Focusing on cultural storytelling and participation in culinary activities contributes to the emotional engagement of visitors [45].

The findings also suggest that continuous learning and adaptation are central to Alamendah's management philosophy. They view feedback from tourists not as criticism but as constructive input for service improvement. After several years of receiving diverse guests, the management has gradually developed informal documentation and guidelines for meal preparation, including a checklist for vegetarian, vegan, and halal options. Although these guidelines are not yet formalized into standard operating procedures, they signify progress toward a more structured and professional approach to dietary management. Such adaptive learning processes mirror the expectancy disconfirmation model discussed in Gürkan et al., [41], which posits that satisfaction arises when tourists' expectations are met or exceeded. Alamendah's experience demonstrates that the ability to manage expectation gaps in food service significantly enhances overall visitor satisfaction.

In addition, the management's approach reflects an understanding that dietary accommodation contributes not only to individual comfort but also to the destination's competitiveness. In a global tourism landscape increasingly influenced by health awareness, ethical consumption, and wellness trends, destinations capable of offering personalized, inclusive, and healthy dining experiences are likely to gain competitive advantage. The emphasis on nutritious and enjoyable meals at Alamendah Tourism Village thus serves as both a hospitality strategy and a marketing differentiator. It signals the village's responsiveness to global dietary trends while preserving its local culinary identity.

From an analytical perspective, Alamendah's management response can be interpreted as a process of service evolution within a community-based tourism context. Initially constrained by local resources and traditional practices, the management gradually embraced principles of service customization and dietary sensitivity, which are often associated with urban or high-end tourism operations. This transformation reflects the capacity of rural destinations to learn, innovate, and compete through adaptive management and community empowerment. The process also underlines the importance of capacity building among local food providers to understand nutritional diversity, allergy management, and hygiene standards. In this regard, future collaboration with health professionals or culinary educators could further strengthen the village's ability to deliver high-quality, inclusive food experiences.

In conclusion, the management of Alamendah Tourism Village demonstrates a responsive and adaptive attitude toward tourists with special dietary needs. Their approach embodies inclusivity, cultural sensitivity, and an awareness that food plays a vital role in shaping tourists' overall experiences and emotional satisfaction. By recognizing that dietary needs are integral to hospitality quality, the management has elevated food service from a peripheral activity to a central component of destination management. This responsiveness not only enhances visitor satisfaction but also contributes to building a positive and sustainable destination image. Consistent with Sinaga [35], the findings affirm that dietary accommodation significantly influences tourists' perceptions of care, professionalism, and destination loyalty. Therefore, the case of Alamendah Tourism Village illustrates how small-scale, community-based destinations can achieve competitive differentiation and visitor loyalty through attentive, inclusive, and health-conscious food management practices.

Beyond the practical achievements recorded in the management and development of Alamendah Tourism Village, these findings also reflect deeper educational and social processes that occur within the community. The ways in which the management team develops, adapts, and refines its tourism services—particularly in relation to tourist interaction, cultural sensitivity, and operational innovation—illustrate a form of cultural awareness and hospitality education emerging organically within the village. This phenomenon aligns with the understanding that tourism villages function not only as economic entities but also as socio-educational environments where local residents continuously learn through experience, observation, and engagement with visitors from diverse backgrounds.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the management of Alamendah Tourism Village demonstrates a comprehensive and adaptive understanding of tourists with special dietary requirements, showing that inclusivity has been internalized as part of their community-based tourism practices. The long-standing experience of hosting visitors from diverse cultural, religious, and health backgrounds has shaped the management's ability to interpret dietary diversity as an opportunity for service innovation rather than a limitation. The proactive system that allows visitors to communicate their dietary needs during the booking process has become an important mechanism to ensure that meals are prepared appropriately, supporting guest satisfaction and strengthening the trust between tourists and the local community.

The ability to accommodate such diversity has also generated meaningful learning for the management team. Exposure to various dietary expectations has encouraged them to adopt a more reflective, empathetic, and health-conscious approach in delivering services. Food is no longer viewed solely as sustenance but as an essential element of hospitality that contributes to emotional comfort, cultural connection, and the overall quality of the travel experience.

From a theoretical perspective, this study emphasizes that dietary accommodation is an important dimension of inclusivity within community-based tourism, complementing existing discussions that usually focus on participation, empowerment, and environmental sustainability. The findings highlight that nutritional, religious, and lifestyle diversity form part of social sustainability, reflecting empathy, respect for individual differences, and cultural sensitivity within local tourism governance. Through its everyday practices, Alamendah Tourism Village demonstrates how dietary inclusiveness can be implemented to enhance visitor well-being while maintaining community values.

Practically, the results of this study underline the importance of transparent communication, flexible menu preparation, and health-conscious service as part of responsible destination management. These practices are increasingly relevant as tourists seek destinations that align with their personal values and dietary needs. Capacity-building initiatives such as culinary training and nutrition-oriented programs—remain essential to strengthen local competencies and ensure that community-based destinations can meet global hospitality expectations. Proactive communication through pre-arrival dietary information remains crucial for ensuring safety and satisfaction.

In a broader context, the experience of Alamendah Tourism Village illustrates that dietary inclusivity can enhance sustainable tourism development. By integrating local wisdom with adaptive management practices, rural communities can provide authentic yet globally relevant hospitality that fosters mutual respect, intercultural understanding, and a sense of belonging among both hosts and visitors. In conclusion, this study affirms that inclusive food management has the potential to transform community-based tourism into a more adaptive, empathetic, and sustainable model. By embedding dietary responsiveness into their service system, the management not only enhances visitor experiences but also contributes to community empowerment and long-term social sustainability. Future research is encouraged to explore tourists' perspectives on dietary inclusiveness and to examine how similar practices are implemented in other community-based tourism destinations in Indonesia and Southeast Asia, allowing for deeper comparative insights and broader theoretical development.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to express sincere gratitude to Prof. Dr. Elly Malihah, M.Si., and Dr. Rini Andari, M.Si., from the Graduate School of Tourism Studies, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, for their invaluable guidance, insightful feedback, and continuous support throughout the development of this research. Their expertise and encouragement greatly contributed to the refinement of the study's conceptual and methodological framework. The author also extends heartfelt appreciation to the management team of Alamendah Tourism Village for their cooperation and willingness to participate in the interviews, which provided essential insights for this study.

Special thanks are also dedicated to the author's parents, whose endless prayers, motivation, and moral support have been a constant source of strength and inspiration during the completion of this research. Finally, the author acknowledges the Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia for providing an academic environment that fosters critical thinking and research excellence, enabling the successful completion of this study.

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