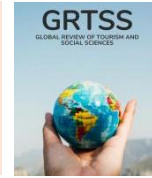




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Assessing Village Development Institutions' Role in Responsible Tourism: A Case Study of Rewarangga, Indonesia

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Abstract: This study explores the pivotal role of Village Development Institutions (VDIs) in fostering responsible tourism in Rewarangga, Indonesia. Using a case study approach, the research examines the socio-economic and human resource contributions of VDIs to sustainable tourism practices. The findings highlight VDIs' efforts in promoting community participation, economic diversification, and the preservation of local culture within the tourism sector. The study also identifies the challenges faced by VDIs, such as resource limitations and competing interests, that hinder their ability to fully implement responsible tourism initiatives. These insights contribute to the broader understanding of sustainable tourism development, offering practical implications for policymakers, local communities, and stakeholders in the tourism industry. By showcasing the collaborative potential of VDIs, this research underscores their vital role in advancing responsible tourism and empowering local communities in rural tourism destinations.

Keywords: responsible tourism, socio-economic development, human resources, village development, community participation, sustainable tourism

INTRODUCTION

Tourism has long been a critical driver of economic growth in many countries, including Indonesia (Pratama, Putra, & Azizurrohman, 2023). However, the rapid expansion of tourism has often resulted in negative impacts on local communities and the environment. To counter these adverse effects, the concept of responsible tourism has emerged, advocating for sustainable practices that minimize harm and promote long-term development (Angelia et al., 2020; Srirejeki, 2018). Within this context, Village Development Institutions (VDIs) have become essential agents in fostering responsible tourism at the grassroots level, working to align tourism growth with community well-being and environmental conservation.

This research aims to investigate the role of VDIs in promoting responsible tourism in Rewarangga, Indonesia, using a case study approach. By examining the contributions of VDIs to socio-economic and human resource development, this study seeks to uncover the ways in which these institutions can facilitate sustainable tourism practices that benefit local communities. The choice of Rewarangga as a case study is deliberate, as it provides a unique example of how a rural village can balance tourism growth with community empowerment.



The study also seeks to identify the challenges that VDIs face in their efforts to promote responsible tourism. These obstacles may include limited resources, a lack of awareness about sustainable practices, and conflicting interests among stakeholders. By addressing these challenges, the research aims to provide valuable insights for policymakers, community leaders, and tourism developers who are working to implement sustainable tourism initiatives.

This study will assess several key dimensions of responsible tourism, including social, economic, and human resource development. Social development will focus on the level of community participation and cultural preservation. Economic development will evaluate the impact of VDIs on income generation and local entrepreneurship, while human resource development will analyze the skills training and employment opportunities facilitated by VDIs. By investigating these aspects, the research aims to highlight the critical role VDIs play in sustainable tourism development and offer practical recommendations for enhancing their impact.

The findings of this research have implications beyond academia, offering practical guidance for policymakers and sustainable tourism stakeholders. By emphasizing the collaborative potential of VDIs, this study contributes to the ongoing discourse on responsible tourism and the empowerment of local communities in rural tourism destinations. The novelty of this research lies in its focus on the specific role of VDIs in advancing responsible tourism, filling a gap in the literature on community-based tourism development in Indonesia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Responsible Tourism and Its Importance

Responsible tourism, which advocates for minimizing negative social, economic, and environmental impacts while enhancing the well-being of host communities, has gained significant attention in both academia and policy-making circles ([Angelia et al., 2020](#)). The concept encourages local communities to actively participate in tourism management, emphasizing sustainability and community development over mere profit-driven tourism growth ([Srirejeki, 2018](#)). This approach is particularly vital in regions like Indonesia, where tourism is both a critical economic driver and a potential source of environmental degradation and social displacement ([Wulandari, 2020](#)).

The Role of Village Development Institutions (VDIs)

Village Development Institutions (VDIs) have become increasingly recognized as key actors in the promotion of responsible tourism. VDIs typically function as intermediaries between government policies and local communities, helping to ensure that tourism development is aligned with community needs and environmental sustainability ([Pratama et al., 2023](#)). Their responsibilities often include fostering community engagement, preserving local culture, and promoting economic diversification through sustainable tourism activities ([Wahyuni & Adda, 2022](#)).

A growing body of literature supports the idea that VDIs can significantly impact the success of tourism villages by enhancing the socio-economic conditions of local communities. For instance, [Fafurida et al. \(2023\)](#) argue that VDIs play a crucial role in empowering communities to take ownership of tourism development, which leads to increased local participation and improved economic outcomes. Similarly, [Wahyuni & Adda \(2022\)](#) note that VDIs can contribute to the development of human resources by offering training programs in tourism management and hospitality, thereby improving the quality of services provided to tourists.

Socio-Economic Contributions of VDIs

The socio-economic benefits of VDIs extend beyond income generation to include the preservation of cultural heritage and the promotion of local entrepreneurship. In Rewarangga, for example, VDIs have initiated programs that encourage the production of local crafts and the operation of community-based tourism services, which provide employment opportunities and stimulate the local economy ([Polonia & Ravi, 2021](#)). This aligns with findings from [Liu et al. \(2023\)](#), who highlight that rural tourism development can significantly improve living standards and alleviate poverty by promoting local enterprises and preserving cultural traditions.

However, the socio-economic success of VDIs is not without challenges. Limited access to financial resources, inadequate infrastructure, and a lack of expertise in tourism management can hinder the ability of VDIs to fully realize their potential ([Fafurida et al., 2023](#)). Addressing these challenges requires a coordinated effort between local governments, tourism stakeholders, and the community to build capacity and overcome barriers to sustainable tourism development.

Human Resource Development in Sustainable Tourism

The development of human resources is a critical component of responsible tourism, and VDIs are often at the forefront of this effort. Research by [Ernawati et al. \(2022\)](#) emphasizes the importance of capacity-building initiatives that equip local residents with the skills and knowledge needed to engage in sustainable tourism activities. These initiatives include vocational training programs in hospitality, customer service, and eco-tourism practices, which are essential for improving the quality of tourism services and enhancing the overall visitor experience ([Ernawati et al., 2022](#)).

Moreover, human resource development in tourism villages has been linked to broader socio-economic benefits, such as reduced unemployment and increased social cohesion within the community. By fostering a skilled workforce, VDIs contribute to both the short-term economic gains of tourism and the long-term sustainability of the industry ([Wahyuni & Adda, 2022](#)).

Challenges Faced by VDIs in Promoting Responsible Tourism

Despite their critical role, VDIs often face significant challenges in promoting responsible tourism. One of the primary barriers is the limited availability of resources, both financial and technical, which can restrict the scope and effectiveness of their initiatives ([Srirejeki, 2018](#)). Furthermore, a lack of awareness and conflicting interests among local stakeholders can impede efforts to implement sustainable practices ([Fafurida et al., 2023](#)).

To overcome these challenges, collaboration among local governments, tourism operators, and community members is essential. Studies suggest that the integration of digital technology and the green tourism model can enhance the visibility of local tourism products and attract more visitors, contributing to the economic sustainability of tourism villages ([Sadeghi & Seidaïy, 2023](#)). Additionally, knowledge-sharing and capacity-building efforts between different VDIs can foster innovation and improve the effectiveness of responsible tourism initiatives.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research approach to explore the role of Village Development Institutions (VDIs) in fostering responsible tourism in Rewarangga, a village located in Ende Regency, Indonesia. A qualitative approach was deemed appropriate for this research as it allows for a deeper, more nuanced understanding of the socio-economic and human resource contributions of VDIs to sustainable tourism development ([Cissé & Rasmussen, 2022](#)).

A case study design was chosen to facilitate an in-depth exploration of the unique context of Rewarangga. The case study method is particularly useful in examining complex, real-world phenomena such as the interaction between VDIs, local communities, and tourism initiatives. By focusing on a single village, this study aimed to uncover detailed insights into how VDIs shape tourism development and promote sustainable practices at the grassroots level. Rewarangga was selected as the case study due to its active engagement in tourism through the efforts of local VDIs, which have sought to balance economic growth with community well-being and environmental conservation ([Yin, 2018](#)).

To capture a comprehensive picture of the situation, data collection was conducted using three key methods: semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document analysis.

First, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a range of stakeholders, including VDI representatives, local government officials, members of community-based tourism groups (Pokdarwis), and local entrepreneurs involved in tourism. These interviews focused on understanding the roles and responsibilities of VDIs in promoting responsible tourism, the socio-economic benefits for the community, and the challenges faced by these institutions in implementing sustainable tourism practices. The semi-structured format provided flexibility, allowing interviewees to elaborate on their experiences and offer detailed perspectives ([Creswell & Poth, 2016](#)). This method was chosen for its ability to capture the complexities of participants' views in their own words.

Second, participant observation was employed to gather real-time data on tourism-related activities within the village. Observations were made during key events such as local festivals, training programs, and community meetings. These events provided opportunities to observe how VDIs facilitated community engagement and executed their tourism-related initiatives. Participant observation allowed the researcher to immerse in the community, gaining firsthand insight into the dynamics of responsible tourism as it unfolded in Rewarangga ([Wulandari, 2020](#)). This method complemented the interview data by providing a richer context to the participants' accounts.

Third, document analysis was conducted on a variety of relevant materials, including local tourism plans, government reports, and internal documents from VDIs. This method provided an additional layer of understanding by situating the primary data within the broader framework of regional tourism development policies and VDI strategies.



Document analysis allowed for the triangulation of data, strengthening the credibility of the findings by ensuring consistency across multiple sources (Bowen, 2009).

The data collected through these methods were analyzed using thematic analysis, a widely used approach in qualitative research. The process began with data reduction and coding, where recurring themes related to community participation, economic development, and human resource development were identified. These themes were then further categorized and analyzed to explore the underlying patterns that described the contributions and challenges faced by VDIs (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

To enhance the validity and reliability of the findings, triangulation was employed, comparing data from interviews, observations, and documents to identify commonalities and discrepancies. Triangulation ensured that the findings were not based on a single data source but rather reflected a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic (Cissé & Rasmussen, 2022). The final step involved interpreting the coded data to draw conclusions about the broader role of VDIs in promoting responsible tourism in Rewarangga. This interpretation focused on both the successes of VDIs and the obstacles they encountered, providing insights into how these institutions can enhance sustainable tourism practices.

In conducting this research, ethical considerations were carefully adhered to. Before participating, all interviewees were informed about the study's purpose and their rights, including the option to withdraw at any point without penalty. Informed consent was obtained from each participant to ensure their voluntary involvement. Confidentiality was maintained throughout the research process, with all data anonymized to protect the identities of the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Ethical considerations extended to the respectful treatment of the community and transparent reporting of the research findings, ensuring the integrity and credibility of the study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the interviews, documentation, and observations, we can conclude that the responsibilities of Village Development Institutions (VDIs) are depicted in Figure 1.

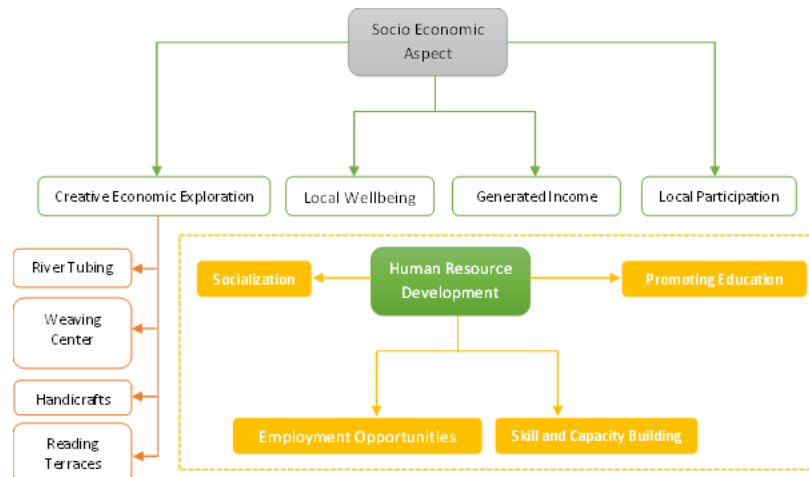


Figure 1. The Role of Village Development Institutions (VDIs)

Source: Data Processed, 2023

Social Economy

The evaluation of socio-economic criteria reveals several key aspects regarding the role of Village Development Institutions (VDIs) in fostering responsible tourism practices. These criteria encompass various dimensions, including the level of community participation in tourism development, economic impact, local population well-being, and leveraging the creative economic potential within the tourism industry. VDIs in Rewarangga have initiated the establishment of centers for weaving, bamboo souvenirs, handicrafts, reading terraces (teras baca), and river tubing, aiming to diversify tourism offerings, enhance local cultural experiences, and generate economic opportunities for community members. These initiatives not only contribute to the economic vitality of the village but also serve to preserve and promote indigenous crafts and cultural heritage.

Moreover, the success of these socio-economic endeavors depends on raising local residents' awareness of the tourism village's potential as a promising entrepreneurial avenue within the creative economy. By instilling a sense of pride and ownership in their cultural heritage and entrepreneurial endeavors, VDIs can empower community members to

actively participate in and benefit from tourism development initiatives. Furthermore, the utilization of digital technology to promote creative economy products through annual events, alongside the adoption of the green tourism model to attract more tourists, emerges as a pivotal strategy in enhancing tourist footfall and sustaining economic growth. By embracing innovative approaches and sustainable practices, VDIs can position Rewarangga as a model for responsible tourism development in the region.

The role of Village Development Institutions (VDIs) in the socio-economic aspect of the tourism sector is supported by several research articles. For instance, a study by [Fafurida et al. \(2023\)](#) published in *Economies* emphasizes the importance of public, social, and economic facilities in tourism village development. The study found that the tourism sector has a significant role in socio-economic development, and VDIs can contribute to the success of village development by measuring the effectiveness of socio-economic criteria.

Moreover, research by [POPŞA \(2020\)](#) in the *International Review on Public and Nonprofit Marketing* highlights the role of rural tourism in creating a balance between local community traditions and tourism development. The study suggests that rural tourism can contribute to economic development and the well-being of local communities ([Fafurida et al., 2023](#)).

Additionally, a study by [Liu et al. \(2023\)](#) in *Sustainability* emphasizes the importance of local residents' attitudes toward sustainable rural tourism development. The study found that rural tourism can contribute to the socio-economic development of local communities by improving living standards and alleviating poverty.

The findings of the study on the role of VDIs in fostering responsible tourism practices in Rewarangga, Indonesia, align with the broader literature on sustainable tourism and community development. The study highlights the importance of community participation, economic impact, local population well-being, and leveraging the creative economic potential within the tourism industry. The initiatives undertaken by VDIs in Rewarangga, such as the establishment of centers for weaving, bamboo souvenirs, handicrafts, reading terraces, and river tubing, contribute to the economic vitality of the village and serve to preserve and promote indigenous crafts and cultural heritage ([Sadeghi & Seidaity, 2023](#)).

In conclusion, the role of VDIs in the socio-economic aspect of the tourism sector is crucial for sustainable tourism development. The existing literature supports the findings of the study on the role of VDIs in fostering responsible tourism practices in Rewarangga, Indonesia. The initiatives undertaken by VDIs in Rewarangga highlight the importance of community participation, economic impact, and cultural preservation in responsible tourism initiatives.

Human Resources Development

In terms of human resource development, VDIs have undertaken several initiatives to enhance the skills and capacities of community members. They have implemented human resource development training programs and fortified institutions by optimizing specialized tourism cooperatives managed by Pokdarwis. These programs aim to equip individuals with the necessary skills and knowledge to actively participate in the tourism industry. Efforts have also been made to create employment opportunities within the tourism sector, such as roles in tour guiding and tourist operation, contributing to reducing unemployment and enhancing livelihood opportunities for local residents. Skills training and capacity building initiatives are prioritized, focusing on enhancing the skillsets of community members in various aspects of tourism management, hospitality, and customer service. Moreover, VDIs have been proactive in promoting education and awareness among community members, emphasizing the importance of sustainable tourism practices, environmental conservation, and cultural preservation. Through educational campaigns, workshops, and community outreach programs, VDIs seek to foster a culture of responsible tourism stewardship among residents, ensuring the long-term sustainability of tourism development efforts.

Overall, the results highlight the multifaceted efforts of VDIs in Rewarangga village to develop human resources and foster socio-economic development through responsible tourism initiatives. By harnessing the creative potential of the community, preserving cultural heritage, and investing in human capital, VDIs play a pivotal role in promoting inclusive and sustainable tourism development that benefits both local residents and visitors alike.

The role of Village Development Institutions (VDIs) in human resource development within the tourism sector is a crucial aspect of sustainable tourism village development. Research by [Fafurida et al. \(2023\)](#) emphasizes the significance of developing human resources in the tourism sector, particularly through collaborations between universities and other stakeholders, including village governments. This collaboration can contribute to the enhancement of human resources, thereby supporting the sustainable development of tourism villages ([Wahyuni Adda, 2022](#)).

Furthermore, a study by [Ernawati et al. \(2022\)](#) in *Economies* highlights the role of the tourism sector in socio-economic development and the effectiveness of public, social, and economic facilities in tourism village development. This underscores the importance of human resource development to support the growth and success of tourism villages.

Moreover, the study by [Liu et al. \(2023\)](#) in the *International Review on Public and Nonprofit Marketing* emphasizes the role of rural tourism in creating a balance between local community traditions and tourism development. This balance is essential for human resource development, as it supports the preservation of local traditions while equipping community members with the necessary skills and knowledge to engage in the tourism sector.

In summary, the role of VDIs in human resource development within the tourism sector is vital for the sustainable development of tourism villages. Collaboration with universities and other stakeholders, the effectiveness of public, social, and economic facilities, and the preservation of local traditions are all key aspects that contribute to human resource development and the overall success of tourism villages.

Implications

The findings of this research carry significant implications for various stakeholders involved in sustainable tourism development, particularly those engaged in promoting responsible tourism at the local level.

For Academia

This study contributes to the growing body of literature on sustainable tourism by providing empirical evidence on the role of Village Development Institutions (VDIs) in fostering responsible tourism in rural settings. The focus on Rewarangga offers valuable insights into how VDIs can drive socio-economic and human resource development through tourism initiatives. By examining the successes and challenges faced by VDIs, this research highlights the need for further studies on community-based tourism management in other rural contexts, both within Indonesia and globally. Future academic work could build on this research by comparing the effectiveness of VDIs across different regions, thereby contributing to a broader understanding of how local institutions can promote sustainable tourism development.

For Policymakers and Government Agencies

The research underscores the pivotal role that VDIs play in aligning tourism development with community needs and environmental conservation. Policymakers and government agencies can leverage these findings to inform the design and implementation of policies that support VDI initiatives. By providing financial support, capacity-building programs, and infrastructure development, governments can enhance the effectiveness of VDIs in promoting responsible tourism. Additionally, this research calls attention to the need for policies that encourage multi-stakeholder collaboration, ensuring that local communities, tourism operators, and government institutions work together to achieve sustainable tourism goals. The study also suggests that tourism policies should prioritize the empowerment of local institutions like VDIs, as they are well-positioned to address community-specific needs and challenges.

For Local Communities

For local communities in tourism villages like Rewarangga, the findings of this study highlight the importance of active participation in tourism development. VDIs serve as critical intermediaries, enabling communities to take ownership of tourism initiatives and benefit from the socio-economic opportunities they create. By involving local residents in decision-making and promoting their engagement in tourism-related activities, VDIs can foster a sense of pride and ownership that is essential for the long-term sustainability of tourism projects. This research also emphasizes the value of preserving cultural heritage through tourism, which not only attracts visitors but also strengthens community identity and cohesion.

For Tourism Operators and Entrepreneurs

The study offers practical guidance for tourism operators and entrepreneurs interested in aligning their business practices with the principles of responsible tourism. By collaborating with VDIs and local communities, businesses can enhance their competitiveness while contributing to the socio-economic development of the region. Tourism operators are encouraged to adopt sustainable practices, such as supporting local handicrafts, promoting eco-friendly tourism activities, and ensuring fair labor practices. The findings of this research suggest that businesses that align with responsible tourism values are more likely to gain trust and support from local communities, which can lead to long-term success and positive relationships with their stakeholders.

For Sustainable Tourism Development Organizations

The findings from this research provide valuable insights for sustainable tourism development organizations that seek to strengthen the capacity of VDIs. By focusing on capacity-building efforts, organizations can support VDIs in overcoming the challenges of limited resources and expertise. Additionally, this research highlights the importance of knowledge-sharing and networking among VDIs, allowing them to learn from best practices and innovative approaches implemented in other regions. Sustainable tourism development organizations can also play a role in advocating for greater support from governments and international donors to help VDIs realize their potential in promoting responsible tourism.

In conclusion, this study offers practical and theoretical insights that can help shape the future of sustainable tourism development in rural regions. By recognizing the critical role of VDIs in promoting community participation, economic diversification, and cultural preservation, stakeholders can work collaboratively to ensure that tourism contributes to the long-term well-being of local communities while minimizing its negative impacts. The implications of this research extend beyond the specific case of Rewarangga, offering lessons that are applicable to other tourism villages seeking to promote responsible tourism practices.

CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated the vital role that Village Development Institutions (VDIs) play in fostering responsible tourism in Rewarangga, Indonesia. Through the promotion of socio-economic development, community participation, and cultural preservation, VDIs have made significant contributions to the sustainable growth of the tourism sector in this rural village. The findings highlight how VDIs work to align tourism initiatives with community interests, providing local residents with opportunities for entrepreneurship, employment, and skill development. By emphasizing the importance of responsible tourism, this study underscores the potential of VDIs to serve as catalysts for sustainable development at the grassroots level.

However, despite their positive contributions, VDIs face several challenges that limit their ability to fully implement responsible tourism initiatives. These challenges include limited financial resources, insufficient infrastructure, and a lack of expertise in tourism management. Moreover, conflicting interests among stakeholders, such as local businesses and tourism operators, can create obstacles for VDIs in achieving their goals. Addressing these challenges requires coordinated efforts from government bodies, tourism operators, and the local community to ensure that VDIs have the support they need to maximize their impact.

This research is not without its limitations. Firstly, the study is confined to a single case—Rewarangga village—which limits the generalizability of the findings to other contexts. While the case study approach allows for an in-depth examination of the dynamics within this particular village, the insights gained may not fully capture the diversity of challenges and successes experienced by VDIs in different regions of Indonesia or in other countries. Secondly, the data collection relied primarily on interviews, observations, and document analysis, which, while robust, may have benefited from the inclusion of quantitative data to complement the qualitative findings. A mixed-methods approach might have provided a more comprehensive understanding of the economic impacts of responsible tourism initiatives.

Another limitation is the relatively short duration of the fieldwork. Given the complexity of tourism development, a longitudinal study that tracks the long-term impacts of VDIs on responsible tourism would provide richer insights. The study also focuses primarily on socio-economic and human resource contributions, leaving certain aspects of environmental sustainability underexplored. Future research could delve deeper into how VDIs manage environmental challenges in the tourism sector.

Building on the findings of this study, future research could address these limitations by expanding the scope of the analysis to include multiple case studies across different regions. A comparative analysis of VDIs in various villages or even in other countries would offer valuable insights into the factors that influence the success or failure of responsible tourism initiatives. Additionally, future studies could adopt a mixed-methods approach to better quantify the socio-economic impacts of VDIs' efforts and evaluate the effectiveness of different strategies for promoting sustainable tourism.

Another promising avenue for future research is to explore the role of digital technology and innovation in enhancing the capabilities of VDIs. With the growing importance of digital platforms in tourism promotion, understanding how VDIs can leverage technology to attract tourists and promote local products is crucial for the sustainability of tourism villages. Furthermore, research could examine the intersection of environmental sustainability and tourism, specifically



how VDIs address ecological concerns such as waste management, resource conservation, and the promotion of eco-friendly tourism activities.

Lastly, future studies could explore the evolving role of VDIs in the post-pandemic recovery of the tourism sector. As tourism globally adapts to new health protocols and changing traveler preferences, understanding how VDIs can contribute to resilient, health-conscious, and sustainable tourism practices will be critical for the future of rural tourism destinations.

In conclusion, while this study has provided valuable insights into the role of VDIs in promoting responsible tourism in Rewarangga, it also opens the door to further research. By addressing the limitations and pursuing new research directions, scholars and policymakers can better support the sustainable development of tourism in rural communities, ensuring that tourism serves as a tool for both economic prosperity and environmental stewardship.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper. All data used in this study were obtained from publicly available and reliable sources, and the research was conducted independently, without any external influence or funding that could bias the results. Additionally, the authors have no financial, professional, or personal relationships that could be interpreted as influencing the content of this research.

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