

The Influence of Work-Life Balance on Service Quality in Government Apparatus with Job Satisfaction as a Mediator Variable

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Abstract

In the government sector, public services are part of the duties of the state apparatus to provide services to the community and loyalty to the state. The quality of public services in government is a very important factor in public satisfaction. Employees who have a good work-life balance will provide quality services to the community. Work life balance in employees is influenced by job satisfaction including relationships with colleagues and leaders. Dissatisfaction felt by employees will lead to poor service quality. However, it is not yet known how work-life balance affects service quality. This study aims to examine the effect of work-life balance on employee service quality, through the mediation of job satisfaction. This explanatory quantitative research involved 262 employees in Langkat Regency. Data analysis using the Structural Equation Model (SEM) operated through the SmartPLS programme. The results show that job satisfaction mediates the effect of work life balance on employee service quality. The results of this study contribute to the problem of low employee service quality which is influenced by work life balance and mediated by job satisfaction.

Keywords: work life balance, service quality, job satisfaction, government employees, government.

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Introduction

The government plays a crucial role in providing various public services necessary for the welfare of the community (Mursyidah & Choiriyah, [2020](#)). Delivering these services is a core responsibility of the government, essential for achieving societal well-being and serving as a key

indicator of good governance (Sinaga & Hidayat, [2016](#)). According to Article I, Paragraph I of Law Number 25 of 2009, public service is defined as an activity or series of activities aimed at meeting service needs in compliance with laws and regulations, ensuring the provision of goods, services, and administrative assistance to all citizens and residents. Public services are central to upholding good governance, as they address the community's welfare needs (Dewi & Tobing, [2021](#)). The state's commitment to fulfilling the rights of its citizens is demonstrated through effective public services and governance (Dewi et al., [2021](#)). Achieving this requires a well-managed government organization supported by reliable, professional, innovative, and competent personnel with integrity (Nor et al., [2022](#)).

Good governance is intrinsically linked to the government's administrative system and public service delivery, which serve as inputs for producing high-quality outcomes. Effective service delivery reflects efforts to foster a well-managed government system (Faatihah & Utomo, [2022](#)). However, the reality often falls short of expectations, as the current government is frequently criticized for its inability to provide satisfactory services. Public service is a fundamental function of government, created to address the needs and interests of the community. These services, as products of the government, must be accessible to all citizens. In essence, public service involves a series of activities conducted by government agencies to meet the needs and interests of the community they serve (Bazarah et al., [2021](#)).

In practice, four key issues consistently challenge the quality of public services: a) Poor quality of public service products; b) Limited access to services for vulnerable groups, such as the poor, women, and people with disabilities; c) Inefficient delivery of public services; and d) Ambiguity in complaint and dispute resolution mechanisms (Pambudi & Hidayat, [2022](#)). These issues are reflected in the findings of research conducted in the specified context, which highlights declining community satisfaction attributed to the inadequate service quality provided by government officials.

Research by Sinaga and Hidayat ([2016](#)) indicates that service delivery in government agencies is often suboptimal, primarily due to the inability of these agencies to meet key dimensions of service quality, including physical evidence (tangibles), empathy, responsiveness, reliability, and assurance. Similarly, Selly ([2014](#)) highlights the critical role of human resources as a determining factor in service quality. Since government agencies interact directly with the community, maintaining high service quality is essential. However, declining service quality in these agencies is often attributed to an imbalance in the work-life dynamics of government officials. According to Rizan et al. ([2022](#)), work-life balance significantly impacts the quality of services delivered.

Government officials, who frequently engage directly with the public, are often unable to provide satisfactory services, partly due to poor work-life balance. This imbalance underscores the importance of fostering a healthy equilibrium between employees' professional and personal lives (Risna, [2018](#)). Work-life balance has been identified as a key factor influencing service quality (Hasugian et al., [2023](#)). Employees who maintain a good work-life balance are more likely to deliver high-quality services and demonstrate fairness and honesty in their interactions, thereby improving customer satisfaction (Dahad & Narkhade, [2014](#)).

Nevertheless, the perception of work-life balance is highly subjective and varies among individuals. What one employee considers balanced may feel imbalanced to another. For example, employees who prioritize family life may experience role strain in a demanding work environment, negatively affecting their perception of work-life balance. Conversely, those who prioritize their careers and dedicate less time to family may not perceive this as an imbalance. Instead, they may view their professional focus as a form of balance, seeing challenges as part of their chosen priorities (Köse et al., [2021](#)).

To provide quality services that satisfy the public, government officials must experience job satisfaction in their roles (Poetri et al., 2020). Achieving job satisfaction requires a balance between work and personal life. Research has shown a positive and significant relationship

between work-life balance and job satisfaction, as observed among BPJSTK Surabaya Karimunjawa employees (Asari, [2022](#)). The productivity and performance of an organization are directly influenced by the ability of employees to balance their professional responsibilities with personal life. Organizations with underperforming employees often struggle to deliver high-quality services, especially if they impose excessive job demands without addressing employee satisfaction (Nurbaya, [2023](#)).

Job satisfaction contributes both directly and indirectly to improved performance and organizational success in delivering services that meet societal needs (Memon et al., [2023](#)). There is a reciprocal relationship between job satisfaction and work-life balance, where a healthy balance enhances employees' ability to lead better lives and perform better at work. The level of satisfaction employees experience is influenced by how well their work-life balance fulfills both professional and personal interests (Kasbuntoro, [2020](#)).

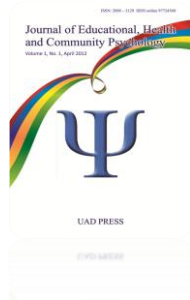
Historically, job satisfaction for government officials has been understood as the fulfillment of their wants, needs, and expectations (Ida, [2019](#)). However, this definition has evolved to encompass additional dimensions, such as satisfaction with job reliability and security (Kagioglou et al., [2001](#)). Four key factors significantly contribute to job satisfaction among employees. The first is mentally challenging work. Employees tend to prefer roles that allow them to utilize their skills and competencies, provide variety, autonomy, and constructive feedback, all of which make the work mentally stimulating. The second factor is appropriate rewards. Employees expect a pay system that is fair, transparent, and aligned with job demands, their skill levels, and societal standards. Perceived fairness in compensation is a critical element in enhancing satisfaction. The third factor is the work environment, as a comfortable and supportive workplace enables employees to perform better and maintain personal well-being. Finally, supportive co-workers play an essential role in fostering job satisfaction. Social interaction at work is crucial, and having friendly, cooperative colleagues creates a sense of camaraderie and support, enhancing overall satisfaction (Robbins et al., [2016](#)). This broader understanding of job satisfaction highlights the

need for organizations to address these factors to create a more engaged and motivated workforce.

According to Nurendra and Saraswati ([2017](#)), work-life balance can significantly increase job satisfaction by reducing workplace stress, especially for new employees. Conversely, a poor balance between personal and professional life can diminish job satisfaction and escalate job stress. To improve job satisfaction, organizations can implement strategies and policies aimed at reducing employee stress. These might include fostering a supportive work environment, adjusting workloads or job demands, and providing opportunities for professional development to enhance stress management skills. Additionally, organizations can support work-life balance through family-friendly policies, such as flexible working hours. These measures not only enhance job satisfaction but also contribute to a more engaged and productive workforce.

Efforts to improve the quality of government services, as explored in this study, require the implementation of work-life balance programs and a strong organizational focus on job satisfaction among government officials. These factors are crucial for creating optimal service quality, as government officials face challenges not only at work but also in their personal lives. Unlike prior studies that primarily focused on the general quality of employee services, this research examines the specific impact of work-life balance on job satisfaction among government officials and how it influences service quality provided to the community.

Research on the influence of work-life balance on service quality among government officials in Indonesia remains limited. Adaron et al. ([2021](#)) found that work-life balance significantly affects the quality of services provided by government officials. Similarly, Mahendra and Kurniawati ([2024](#)) observed that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between work-life balance and job performance in public hospital employees. Susanto et al. ([2022](#)) also identified that work-life balance indirectly enhances job performance through job satisfaction. Harahap et al. ([2023](#)) demonstrated that job satisfaction mediates the influence of work-life balance on



professionalism among government officials. Building on these findings, this study will focus on how work-life balance impacts the service quality of government officials, with job satisfaction serving as a mediator. By exploring this mediating role, the research aims to provide deeper insights into how organizational strategies can enhance both job satisfaction and service quality, ultimately benefiting the community.

Method

Participants

The participants in this study consisted of 262 employees from five regional apparatus organizations that have direct contact with public services. The demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented in Table 1. A majority of the respondents were female (54.2%) and aged between 40–49 years (38.9%). Most participants were married (92.7%) and had worked for 16–20 years (52.3%). Meanwhile, 13.7% of respondents reported not having children. Before participating in the study, all respondents were provided with an informed consent form, which they read and signed as an agreement to be involved in the research.

Design

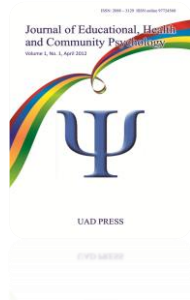
This study employed an explanatory quantitative approach to investigate the impact of work-life balance in the workplace on service quality, with job satisfaction serving as a mediating variable.

Measurement

Data were collected using three validated and reliable scales: the work-life balance scale, the job satisfaction scale, and the service quality scale. These instruments demonstrated satisfactory results in measuring the constructs of interest.

Work-Life Balance Scale

The work-life balance scale measured the participants' levels of work-life balance and consisted



of 17 items. Each item was rated on a four-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). The scale was adapted from Gunawan (2019), based on dimensions developed by Fisher et al. (2009). It demonstrated high reliability ($\alpha = 0.975$) and validity (AVE = 0.707). Examples of items measuring psychological well-being include: "I come home from work too tired to do the things I want to do." "My personal life has deteriorated because of my job." "My job makes it difficult for me to maintain the kind of personal life I want."

Quality of Service scale

The service quality scale utilized in this study is based on the guidelines outlined in Minister of Administrative Reform and Bureaucratic Reform Regulation No. 14 of 2017. This scale evaluates service quality through several key elements, including requirements, systems, mechanisms, and procedures, completion time, costs/tariffs, product specifications, types of services, executor competence, executor behavior, complaint handling, suggestions and input, and facilities and infrastructure. The scale comprises nine statement items, each with four response options ranging from "Not Good" to "Very Good." Examples of items on the service quality scale include: "How do you feel about the suitability of service requirements with the type of service?", "How do you understand the ease of service procedures in this unit?", and "How do you feel about the speed of time in providing services?"

Table 1

Demographic Data

<i>Participant Characteristic</i>	<i>category</i>	N	(%)
Age	< 30 years	26	9,9
	30-39 years	77	29,4
	40-49 years	102	38,9
	>= 50 years	57	21,8
Gender	Male	120	45,8
	Female	142	54,2
employment status	Honorar	84	32,1
	ASN	178	67,9
Position	Head of Field	15	5,7 %
	Head of General Subdivision	4	1,5 %
	Treasurer	2	0,8 %
	General functional position	92	35,1 %
	First Functional Officer	10	3,8 %
	Junior Functional Official	58	22,2 %
	Middle Functional Officer	1	0,4 %
	Service operator	74	28,2 %
	Office guard	2	0,8 %
	Janitor	4	1,5 %
Work unit	Population and Civil Registry Office	70	26,7
	Health Office	89	34
	Investment and PTSP Office	34	13
	Education Office	37	14,1
	Social Service Office	32	12,2
Marriage Status	Not yet married	17	6,5
	Diforce	2	0,8
	Married	243	92,7
Length of Time Working	< 5 years	22	8,4
	5-10 years	58	22,1
	16-20 years	137	52,3
	> 20 years	45	17,2
number of children	no children yet	36	13,7
	'1	40	15,3
	'2	147	56,1
	'3	36	13,7
	'4	1	0,4
	'5	2	0,8

Job Satisfaction Scale

The job satisfaction scale used in this study is adapted from Locke's (1969) framework, as translated and validated for Indonesian contexts by Sukoco (2019). This scale contains 21

statement items, each with response options ranging from 1 to 4, indicating varying levels of job satisfaction. Reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha yielded a coefficient of 0.15, while content validity for individual items ranged from 0.314 to 0.662. Among the 21 items, one was deemed invalid, while the remaining 20 items demonstrated validity. Examples of statements on the job satisfaction scale include: “The work I do is interesting,” “The workload in my current work unit is not burdensome, and I can enjoy work,” and “Work rules are always unclear and therefore confusing.”

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using the Structural Equation Model (SEM), implemented via the Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach using the SmartPLS software. The analysis involved inferential statistical techniques, with a particular focus on the Structural Equation Model (SEM) to examine relationships between variables.

Result

The validity test results indicate that the average variance extracted (AVE) values for the three variables exceed 0.5. This demonstrates that all three variables meet the validity criteria as determined by the AVE measure, as shown in [Table 2](#).

Table 2

Validity test results based on Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Variable	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
<i>Work-Life Balance (X)</i>	0.757
<i>Quality of Service (Y)</i>	0.820
<i>Job Satisfaction (M)</i>	0.765

The results of the Cronbach's alpha test indicate that all three variables achieved a value greater than 0.7 ($CA > 0.7$), demonstrating that they meet the reliability criteria. This finding is summarized in [Table 3](#).

Table 3

Reliability Testing based on Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha (CA)

Variable	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha
<i>Work-Life Balance (X)</i>	0.981	0.980
<i>Quality of Service (Y)</i>	0.976	0.973
<i>Job Satisfaction (M)</i>	0.986	0.984

The analysis revealed that the R-Square value for service quality is 0.386, indicating that work-life balance and job satisfaction collectively explain or influence 38.6% of the variance in service quality. Similarly, the R-Square value for job satisfaction is 0.234, suggesting that work-life balance accounts for 23.4% of the variance in job satisfaction. Additionally, the Q-Square (Q^2) value for service quality is 0.312, which is greater than 0, confirming that work-life balance and job satisfaction have predictive relevance for service quality. Likewise, the Q-Square (Q^2) value for job satisfaction is 0.178, also greater than 0, demonstrating that work-life balance has predictive relevance for job satisfaction.

Table 4

R-Square dan Q-Square

Variabel Dependent	R Square	$Q^2 (=1-SSE/SSO)$
<i>Quality of Service</i>	0.386	0.312
<i>Job Satisfaction</i>	0.234	0.178

It is known that based on the results of the SRMR goodness of fit test, the SRMR value= 0.041 <0.1, it is concluded that the model has FIT.

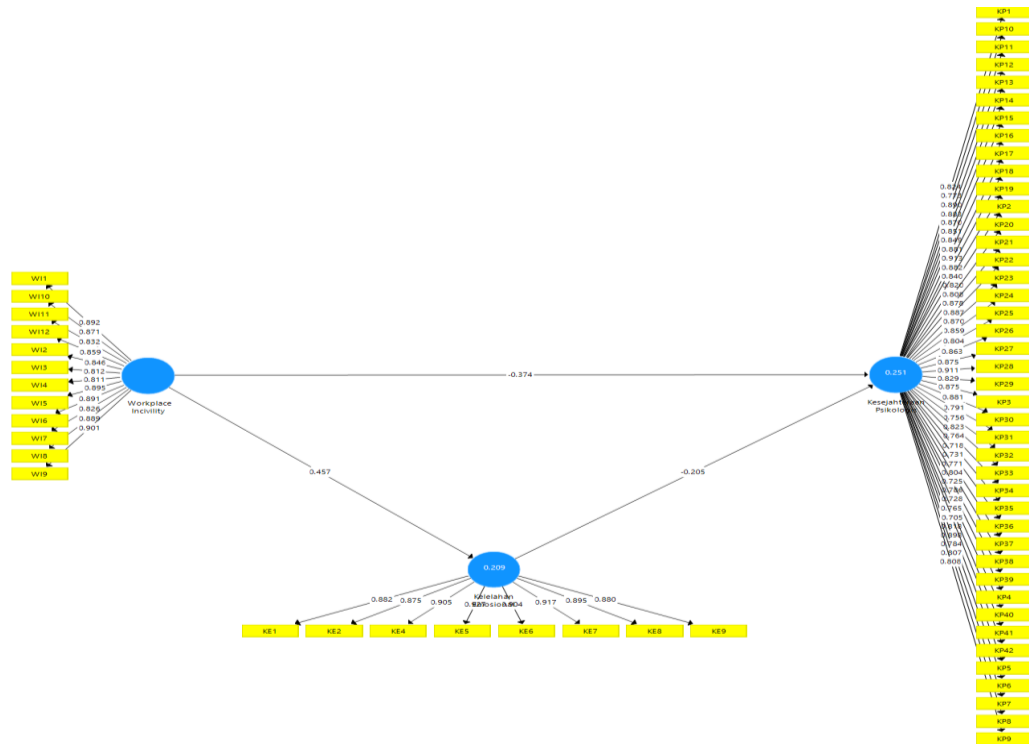


Figure 1. SEM-PLS Model Test Result

Table 5

Path Coefficient & Significance Test of Direct Effect (Boostrapping)

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Job Satisfaction -> Quality of Service	0.372	0.366	0.158	2,357	0.019
Work Life Balance -> Job Satisfaction	0.484	0.485	0.106	4,560	0.000
Work Life Balance -> Quality of Service	0.349	0.351	0.162	2.160	0.031
Work Life Balance -> Job Satisfaction -> Quality of Service	0.180	0.176	0.088	2.037	0.0042

Based on the comparison of the hypothetical mean and empirical mean, it shows that service quality, work-life balance, and job satisfaction are classified as moderate ([Table 6](#) and [Table 7](#)).

Table 6

Comparison of Empirical Mean and Hypothetical Mean

Variable	Hypothetical Mean				Empirical Mean			
	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Quality of Service	9	36	22,5	4,5	9	36	29,351	6,295
Work Life Balance	17	68	42,5	8,5	17	68	51,359	11,431
Job Satisfaction	21	84	52,5	10,5	21	84	63,481	14,165

Table 7

Categorization of Work life balance

Range	Category	Number of Participants	Percentage (%)
$X < 39,928$	Low	32	12,21 %
$39,928 \leq X \leq 62,790$	Moderate	182	69,47 %
$X \geq 34,37$	High	42	15,6 %

Categorization of Job Satisfaction

Range	Category	Number of Participants	Percentage (%)
$X < 49,316$	Low	33	12,60 %
$49,316 \leq X \leq 77,646$	Moderate	181	69,08 %
$X > 77,646$	High	48	18,32 %

Categorization of Quality of Service

Range	Category	Number of Participants	Percentage (%)
$X < 23,056$	Low	30	11,45 %
$23,056 \leq X \leq 35,646$	Moderate	183	69,85 %
$X > 35,646$	High	49	18,70 %

Discussion

Statistical tests reveal that job satisfaction mediates the effect of work-life balance on service quality, with a p-value of 0.042 (<0.05). This aligns with the findings of Tupamahu et al. (2022), which indicate that increased time spent at work can lead to an imbalance in managing life

outside of work, ultimately reducing productivity and job satisfaction. A well-maintained work-life balance is essential; without it, employee productivity diminishes. Supporting this, Rizan (2022) found an indirect effect of 0.112 for work-life balance on service quality through job satisfaction, with a t-value of 2.824 (Significance: $t > 1.96$). These findings demonstrate that work-life balance positively and significantly influences service quality, and this effect is mediated by job satisfaction.

The study also shows that work-life balance positively impacts job satisfaction, with a p-value of 0.000 (<0.05). This confirms that a healthy work-life balance significantly enhances job satisfaction and improves the work quality of government officials. Similar findings by Puspitawati and Mujiati (2023) indicate a positive and significant relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction among employees at the Mengwi District Head Office, with a significance value of 0.000 (<0.05). A strong work-life balance helps employees avoid conflicts related to workload distribution, interactions with colleagues, rest time, and other factors. Kasbuntoro (2020) similarly reported a significant impact of work-life balance on job satisfaction in Jakarta's banking industry.

Regression analysis reveals that the coefficient of determination (R-Square) for the effect of work-life balance on job satisfaction among government officials is 0.234, indicating that work-life balance accounts for 23.4% of the variation in job satisfaction. Factors influencing job satisfaction include psychological, social, physical, and financial aspects, as well as workplace work-life balance. For instance, the job satisfaction of Langkat Regency government officials falls into the medium category, partly because salaries do not align with their workload (Lassa & Longa Tiza, 2021).

This study further confirms that job satisfaction significantly influences the quality of government services. Giovanni and Sitorus (2020) found that job satisfaction positively impacts the service quality of PT Tata Mandiri Daerah employees. Similarly, Haris (2017) demonstrated a strong,

positive relationship between job satisfaction and service quality.

Service quality in this study is also shown to be significantly influenced by work-life balance, with a p-value of 0.031 (<0.05) and a t-statistic of 2.160 (Significance: $t > 1.96$). This indicates that work-life balance has a positive and statistically significant impact on service quality by helping employees maintain equilibrium between personal and professional life (Maslichah, [2017](#)). Achieving work-life balance often requires flexible working arrangements where schedules are mutually agreed upon to benefit both employees and the organization without disrupting operations (Galea et al., [2014](#)).

These findings align with Rizan et al. ([2022](#)), who observed that work-life balance enhances service quality by fostering morale, satisfaction, and a sense of responsibility in employees. Work-life balance enables employees to perform better, ultimately improving service quality (Khateeb, [2021](#)). Pongpanich ([2019](#)) also highlights the significant role of sufficient working hours in balancing personal and professional life, further emphasizing their impact on service quality.

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that job satisfaction positively and significantly mediates the relationship between work-life balance and the quality of service provided by government officials. This research provides valuable insights for government officials and regional apparatus organizations aiming to enhance service quality. Improving work-life balance can lead to better service outcomes. This can be achieved by ensuring time balance, engagement balance, and satisfaction in both work and personal life. For instance, government officials can maximize their free time and time off to connect with family, manage stress effectively, and find enjoyment in their work. Regional apparatus organizations should consider optimizing working hours, fostering leadership motivation, and encouraging peer support to create a balanced work-life environment for employees.

However, this study has several limitations. The respondents were primarily married individuals, most of whom had been employed for over ten years, which suggests they may already have established a balance between work and personal life. Additionally, the majority of respondents were over 40 years old, an age often associated with maturity in decision-making and life balance. Future research should focus on more diverse samples with varying demographic characteristics to allow for broader generalizations.

This study also utilized a cross-sectional approach, which limits the ability to analyze reciprocal or longitudinal relationships. Data collection relied on psychological scales that may carry risks of social desirability bias, potentially leading respondents to provide overly positive answers. Another limitation is that the research did not encompass all regional apparatus organizations at the study site. Instead, it focused on five organizations directly involved in service areas identified by the Ombudsman RI. As a result, the findings may not fully reflect the quality of service across all regional apparatus organizations.

Conclusion

The findings of this study reveal that job satisfaction plays a partial mediating role in the relationship between work-life balance and service quality in government employees. This indicates that work-life balance influences the quality of service either directly or indirectly through its effect on job satisfaction.

In light of these findings, it is recommended that government institutions prioritize policies and initiatives aimed at fostering a healthy work-life balance among employees. Flexible work arrangements, supportive workplace environments, and resources to help manage both professional and personal responsibilities are key measures that can enhance employee well-being. These efforts not only directly improve the quality of service delivered by government employees but also contribute to higher job satisfaction, which in turn further strengthens service quality.

Moreover, organizations should integrate efforts to boost job satisfaction into their overall strategies. Implementing regular employee feedback mechanisms, recognizing achievements, and offering opportunities for professional growth can create a more engaging and fulfilling work environment. Since job satisfaction mediates the link between work-life balance and service quality, improving this factor can amplify the impact of work-life balance initiatives, ultimately resulting in more efficient, effective, and citizen-focused government services.

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Author Contribution Statement

The author was responsible for proposing the research idea and design, designing the study, creating the module, writing the initial draft of the publication manuscript, coordinating the research implementation, and revising the publication manuscript. The academic advisor assisted in developing the research idea, guided the module creation, guided the drafting of the publication manuscript, and coordinated the research implementation.

Conflict of Interest

The researchers declare that this paper has no conflicts of interest.

Data Availability

Data can be provided upon request to the author.

Declarations Ethical Statement

The study followed the guidelines of the Declaration of Helsinki.

Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was obtained from all persons involved in the study.

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