


RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Cultural intelligence as a determinant of performance: Unveiling the role of job satisfaction and the impact of knowledge sharing

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## ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of cultural diversity in the workplace increasingly influences the dynamics of employee performance and interactions. This study aims to deepen the understanding of the impact of cultural intelligence and knowledge sharing on employee performance, with job satisfaction serving as a mediator. Employee performance is defined as the ability and outcomes achieved by employees in fulfilling their tasks. This research employs a quantitative approach, utilizing four questionnaires based on a 1-5 Likert scale to measure cultural intelligence, knowledge sharing, performance, and job satisfaction. The sample consists of 116 employees from X Company, a coal-fired power plant located in Cirebon, West Java, selected based on specific criteria. The results of the analysis indicate that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between cultural intelligence and performance, but does not mediate the relationship between knowledge sharing and performance. This study provides implications for multicultural organizations to focus on the development of cultural intelligence to enhance employee satisfaction and performance.

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## INTRODUCTION

In an era of globalization characterized by uncertainty, various aspects of human life—such as economic, social, political, and cultural dimensions—are undergoing significant changes that impact cultural diversity in the workplace. This rapid transformation presents new challenges within multicultural work environments, particularly concerning employee performance and job satisfaction. Cultural diversity has emerged as a key issue faced by multinational companies, where employees from diverse cultural backgrounds interact within an interdependent work ecosystem (Foley et al., 2020; Roberson et al., 2017). Organizations have the opportunity to harness a variety of perspectives, experiences, and ideas arising from this diversity. Research indicates that effective management of

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cultural diversity can enhance organizational performance through increased employee commitment, job satisfaction, and higher levels of innovation (Patrick et al., 2012; Nishii & Mayer, 2009).

Cultural diversity significantly impacts workplace dynamics in multinational corporations. While it may offer potential benefits such as enhanced creativity and more effective problem-solving, this diversity can also incite challenges, such as communication difficulties, conflicts among employees from different backgrounds, and variations in work norms (Harrison et al., 1998; Van Knippenberg et al., 2004). A study by Li et al. (2017) emphasizes that teams composed of individuals with diverse cultural backgrounds tend to excel in creative problem-solving. However, on the other hand, companies like X Company have experienced a marked decline in productivity due to the challenges posed by cultural diversity (Stahl et al., 2010).

X Company, a multinational corporation specializing in coal-fired power generation, has experienced a notable decline in performance over the past few years. This downturn is evident from the annual reports indicating that the company's revenue declined by 7.68% from 2020 to 2021, followed by a further decrease of 9.73% from 2021 to 2022 and 11.24% from 2022 to 2023 (Smith et al., 2022). The decline in performance can be attributed to various internal and external factors, including cross-cultural communication difficulties faced by employees from diverse cultural backgrounds (Morrison, 2021). According to Stahl et al. (2010), unmanaged cross-cultural conflicts can reduce employee productivity and hinder teamwork, which is a critical factor in the success of multinational companies (Gibson et al., 2016).

Previous research has shown that cultural intelligence, an individual's ability to adapt and interact effectively in diverse cultural environments, can positively influence employee performance (Ang et al., 2008; Earley & Mosakowski, 2004). Cultural intelligence enables individuals to understand and respond to cultural differences in the workplace, enhancing employee collaboration and fostering improved performance (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990; Nguyen & Williams, 2022). Furthermore, cultural intelligence is also positively correlated with job satisfaction. Employees with high cultural intelligence tend to be better equipped to adjust to diverse work environments, leading to greater job satisfaction (Bücker et al., 2014; Chen et al., 2020).

In addition to cultural intelligence, knowledge sharing among employees from diverse cultural backgrounds is crucial for enhancing performance. A knowledge-sharing culture fosters a collaborative environment where employees exchange information and experiences, ultimately improving work effectiveness and team productivity (Kogut & Zander, 1992; Reagans & McEvily, 2003). Employees engaged in knowledge-sharing practices tend to experience higher levels of job satisfaction as they feel more valued and supported by their colleagues (Bock et al., 2005; Park & Kim, 2015). Research indicates that knowledge sharing within multicultural teams can strengthen social bonds and accelerate learning, positively impacting employee performance (Peltokorpi, 2006; Han et al., 2018).

However, studies concerning the relationship between cultural intelligence, knowledge sharing, and employee performance have produced varied results. Although evidence supports a positive relationship between these two variables and performance, the correlations found are often not particularly strong and are limited to specific geographic or methodological contexts (Kumar et al., 2008; Liu et al., 2019). Therefore, this study further examines the relationship between cultural intelligence and knowledge sharing with employee performance and job satisfaction as a mediator. Through this research, it is hoped that factors influencing employee performance in diverse multinational work environments will be identified, along with practical solutions that companies can implement to enhance employee productivity (Thomas & Ely, 1996; Choi et al., 2021).

This research focuses on two primary research questions: (1) Is there a relationship between cultural intelligence and performance mediated by job satisfaction? Moreover, (2) Is there a relationship between knowledge sharing and performance mediated by job satisfaction? This study is expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, this research can enrich the literature related to cultural intelligence, knowledge sharing, and employee performance in a multicultural context. Practically, the findings may serve as a guide for multinational companies to more effectively manage cultural diversity and improve employee performance by enhancing cultural intelligence and a culture of knowledge sharing (Harrison et al., 1998; Thomas, 2008). Therefore, this study presents two hypotheses. First, cultural intelligence plays a role in job satisfaction and performance as a mediator. Second, knowledge sharing is a mediator in performance and job satisfaction.

## **METHOD**

This study employs a quantitative approach that enables researchers to pose specific, targeted questions and collect numerical participant data. The collection and analysis of data through quantitative methods allow for an objective and unbiased conclusion, making it suitable for examining relationships among various variables. The population for this research comprises employees of X Company, located in Cirebon, West Java. A sample size of 116 individuals, aged between 23 and 60, was selected using purposive sampling techniques. This sampling method ensures that the participants possess relevant characteristics critical for addressing the research questions.

Data was collected via an online questionnaire explicitly designed in English, aligning with the company's official language. A web-based questionnaire facilitated efficient data gathering and allowed respondents to participate conveniently. The study used two primary software tools for data analysis: SmartPLS and SPSS. SmartPLS was employed to conduct Partial Least Squares (PLS) analysis, which is instrumental for examining the relationships among the variables of interest. PLS analysis is particularly beneficial when dealing with complex models and can handle small sample sizes effectively. On the other hand, SPSS was utilized for descriptive analysis and reliability and validity tests of the research instruments.

Integrating these analytical tools ensures a comprehensive data evaluation, providing insights into the underlying patterns and relationships among cultural intelligence, knowledge sharing, job satisfaction, and employee performance. Given the complexities of cultural interactions within a diverse workforce, this methodological rigor is essential for drawing meaningful conclusions that can inform practical strategies for enhancing organizational performance. By utilizing a structured quantitative methodology and robust analytical tools, this research aims to contribute to understanding how cultural dynamics influence employee performance in a multicultural work environment. The findings are expected to provide valuable implications for organizations striving to harness the benefits of cultural diversity while mitigating its challenges.

## **RESULT**

In Table 1, the categories of respondents are divided into two levels: moderate and high. The 'moderate' and 'high' criteria indicate specific degrees or levels of certain variables within a given demographic group. The 'moderate' criterion signifies that respondents possess cultural intelligence, knowledge sharing, or job satisfaction in the middle of the scale used. In contrast, the 'high' criterion indicates that respondents have levels above average or at the peak of the scale. The absence of a 'low' category is due to the characteristics of the collected data, which indicate that no respondents achieved very low scores on the measured variables. The figures in the table represent the number of

respondents falling into each category (moderate or high), often accompanied by percentages that reflect the proportion of respondents within these categories. For instance, within the age group of 23 to 30 years, 4 respondents are classified as moderate, and 50 respondents are classified as high for the variable of cultural intelligence.

**Table 1.** Categorization for each variable

Characteristics	Cultural Intelligence		Knowledge sharing		Job satisfaction		Performance	
	Moderate	High	Moderate	High	Moderate	High	Moderate	High
<b>Age</b>								
23-30 years	4	50	2	52	4	50	23	31
31-40 years	4	41	2	43	4	41	19	26
41-50 years	0	12	0	12	0	12	8	4
51-60 years	0	5	0	5	0	5	1	4
<b>Position</b>								
Staff	8	90	4	94	8	90	39	59
Manager	0	14	0	14	0	14	9	5
Director	0	4	0	4	0	4	3	1
<b>Education</b>								
Bachelor	8	89	4	93	8	89	46	51
Master	0	16	0	16	0	16	5	11
PhD	0	3	0	3	0	3	0	3

Table 1 demonstrates that within the age range of 23 to 30 years, most individuals exhibit high levels of cultural intelligence, knowledge sharing, job satisfaction, and performance. Similarly, the age group of 31 to 40 years shows comparable characteristics, with a significant portion exhibiting high levels of cultural intelligence, knowledge sharing, job satisfaction, and performance. In the age range of 41 to 50, all individuals show high levels of cultural intelligence, knowledge sharing, and job satisfaction; however, their performance tends to be moderate. For the age group of 51 to 60, all individuals also display high levels of cultural intelligence, knowledge sharing, job satisfaction, and performance.

Additionally, Table 1 indicates that most staff members exhibit high cultural intelligence, knowledge sharing, job satisfaction, and performance. Among managers, all individuals possess high levels of cultural intelligence, knowledge sharing, and job satisfaction, yet their performance tends to be moderate. All directors demonstrate high levels of cultural intelligence, knowledge sharing, and job satisfaction, but their performance also trends toward a moderate level.

Most bachelor's degree graduates exhibit high levels of cultural intelligence, knowledge sharing, job satisfaction, and performance. For master's degree holders, all individuals exhibit high levels in all assessed areas, including cultural intelligence, knowledge sharing, job satisfaction, and performance. All PhD graduates reflect similar characteristics, as they also possess high levels of cultural intelligence, knowledge sharing, job satisfaction, and performance across the board.

Table 2 presents a descriptive analysis regarding the variables under investigation, specifically cultural intelligence, job satisfaction, knowledge sharing, and performance. This table includes the mean, median, minimum, and maximum values and the standard deviation for each variable. These statistics provide a comprehensive overview of the data distribution for each research variable, highlighting their respective levels.

The analysis aims to furnish an initial understanding of the characteristics and variations present in the data, thus serving as a foundation for evaluating the relationships and influences among the variables in further research. Such data provides the necessary context and background for thoroughly interpreting the research findings. By examining these descriptive statistics, researchers can better

appreciate each variable's range and central tendencies, facilitating more detailed analyses and interpretations of their interconnections.

**Table 2.** Univariate test on research variables

	Mean	Median	Min	Max	SD
Cultural intelligence	.000	.185	-3.828	1.765	1.000
Job satisfaction	-.000	.170	-4.376	2.417	1.000
Knowledge sharing	-.000	.072	-4.068	2.070	1.000
Performance	-.000	.131	-3.943	2.621	1.000

Based on the results of the descriptive analysis of the investigated variables, it was found that cultural intelligence, knowledge sharing, job satisfaction, and performance exhibit similar distribution characteristics. The average score for the cultural intelligence variable is 0.0, with a median of 0.185, indicating that most of the data is skewed towards the positive side of the distribution. However, the low minimum value of -3.828, the maximum value of 1.765, and a high standard deviation of 1.000 suggest significant variation within the data.

The knowledge-sharing variable also shows similar results, with an average of 0.0 and a median of 0.170. The low minimum value of -4.376 and the maximum value of 2.417, coupled with a high standard deviation of 1.000, indicate considerable variability in knowledge-sharing behavior among the respondents. Job satisfaction averages 0.0 and a median of 0.072, suggesting a positively skewed data distribution. With a minimum value of -4.068, a maximum of 2.070, and a high standard deviation of 1.000, there is significant variation in job satisfaction among the respondents.

Lastly, the performance variable has an average of 0.0 and a median of 0.131, illustrating a tendency towards a favorable distribution. The minimum value of -3.943 and the maximum of 2.621, along with a high standard deviation of 1.000, reveal substantial variation in performance levels among respondents.

These results indicate substantial differences in the levels of cultural intelligence, job satisfaction, knowledge sharing, and performance among respondents. Such variation is crucial in further analyses, as it can influence the interpretation of relationships among variables in this research. Variables with a wide range of values suggest that other factors may affect the outcomes, which should be considered when developing more effective management strategies.

The assessment of model fit in statistical data analysis necessitates an evaluation based on various model fit criteria that provide insights into the extent to which the employed model accurately represents the observed data structure. In this study, several key indicators utilized to evaluate model fit include the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), the Chi-square statistic, and the Normed Fit Index (NFI).

Table 3 presents the results of the model fit evaluation for the study of the observed data. This table includes several primary indicators, such as the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), the Chi-square statistic, and the Normed Fit Index (NFI). These indicators provide a comprehensive understanding of how well the estimated model conforms to the obtained data and aid in assessing the validity and reliability of the model employed in this research. This model fit evaluation is crucial to ensure that the model accurately and reliably depicts the relationships among the variables under investigation.

**Table 3.** Fit model test

	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	.090	.090
Chi-square	3970.87	3970.87

Based on the results presented in Table 3, the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) value is 0.090. SRMR is a measure of the discrepancy between the observed covariance matrix and the one predicted by the model. An SRMR value below 0.08 to 0.10 is generally regarded as a favorable indicator of model fit, according to Hu and Bentler (1999). Therefore, it can be concluded that the model utilized in this analysis demonstrates a good level of fit with the observed data.

Furthermore, a Chi-square value of 3970.87 was also obtained from this analysis. The Chi-square statistic is employed to test the hypothesis of model fit, where a p-value greater than 0.05 indicates that the model fits the observed data well. This result suggests that the model in question exhibits a good fit. The Normed Fit Index (NFI) is another critical indicator for assessing model fit. In this study, an NFI value of 0.172 was obtained. According to Bentler and Bonett (1980), an NFI value greater than 0.90 indicates a good fit, while an NFI value below 0.90 is considered a marginal fit. Consequently, the obtained NFI value suggests that the model falls within the marginal fit category. The SRMR indicates that the model aligns well with the observed data. Although the obtained Chi-square value is high, this does not diminish the validity of the tested model. Meanwhile, the NFI value, which falls within the marginal fit range, provides additional insight into the model's fit quality. Considering all these indicators, it can be concluded that the model employed in this research exhibits a sufficient level of fit with the observed data.

Table 4 presents the path coefficients analysis and specific direct effects among cultural intelligence, knowledge sharing, job satisfaction, and performance variables. This table includes critical information such as the original path coefficients, sample means, standard deviations, T-statistics, and p-values, which are utilized to evaluate the significance of the direct relationships between the variables. The data provided in this table elucidates the extent of influence each variable exerts on the others, contributing to an understanding of the dynamics and interrelationships among factors within the context of this research.

Through the insights offered by this table, one can delineate how these variables interact and influence one another, ultimately aiding in formulating more effective management strategies. The analysis presented in Table 4 is essential for comprehending the intricate relationships among cultural intelligence, knowledge sharing, job satisfaction, and performance, facilitating informed decision-making in organizational contexts.

**Table 4.** Path coefficients and specific direct effects

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	SD	tStatistics	p
Cultural intelligence—Job satisfaction	.781	.799	.080	9.820	<.001
Cultural intelligence—Performance	.142	.157	.124	1.138	.256
Job satisfaction —Performance	.920	.917	.118	7.790	<.001
Knowledge sharing—Job satisfaction	.177	.158	.089	1.989	.047
Knowledge sharing—Performance	-.201	-.213	.123	1.641	.101

The data presented in Table 4 indicates that all direct effects between the variables of cultural intelligence and job satisfaction, knowledge sharing and job satisfaction, and job satisfaction and performance exhibit p-values less than the significance level of 0.05, signifying statistical significance. However, the p-values for the relationships between knowledge sharing and performance and cultural intelligence and performance are more significant than the significance level of 0.05, indicating that these relationships are not statistically significant.

Cohen (1988) posits that a p-value less than 0.05 signifies that the relationship between variables is significant at the 95% confidence level. The findings of this study reveal that the direct effects of cultural intelligence on performance and knowledge sharing on performance are not significant, with

p-values of 0.256 for cultural intelligence and performance and 0.101 for knowledge sharing and performance. In contrast, the direct effects of cultural intelligence on job satisfaction, knowledge sharing on job satisfaction, and job satisfaction on performance demonstrate significant roles, with p-values reported at 0.000 for cultural intelligence on job satisfaction, 0.047 for knowledge sharing on job satisfaction, and less than 0.001 for job satisfaction on performance. These results underline the importance of cultural intelligence and knowledge sharing in enhancing job satisfaction, which, in turn, significantly impacts performance outcomes.

**Table 5.** Specific indirect effects

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	SD	tStatistics	p
Cultural intelligence—Job satisfaction—Performance	.703	.723	.073	9.644	<.001
Knowledge sharing— Job satisfaction—Performance	.140	.119	.089	1.571	0.117

The results presented in Table 5 further clarify that the indirect relationship between cultural intelligence and performance, mediated by job satisfaction, has a p-value of < .001, below the significance level of 0.05, indicating that it is statistically significant. Conversely, the relationship between knowledge sharing and performance, mediated by job satisfaction, yields a p-value of 0.117, rendering it statistically insignificant. Therefore, job satisfaction significantly mediates the relationship between cultural intelligence and performance, whereas job satisfaction does not mediate the relationship between knowledge sharing and performance.

Based on the research, the first hypothesis test demonstrates that cultural intelligence significantly influences employee performance by mediating job satisfaction. This result affirms that the first hypothesis is accepted, suggesting that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between cultural intelligence and employee performance. This finding aligns with the research of Groves et al. (2015), which indicates that high cultural intelligence can enhance cultural adaptation and task performance among employees with elevated job satisfaction. High cultural intelligence allows employees to more readily adjust to varying norms, values, and cultural practices, enabling them to function more efficiently and harmoniously in diverse work environments.

Conversely, the results of the second hypothesis testing reveal that knowledge sharing does not significantly impact employee performance when mediated by job satisfaction, leading to the rejection of the second hypothesis. This finding contrasts with previous studies suggesting that knowledge sharing can enhance employee performance by facilitating job satisfaction. In this study, while knowledge sharing plays a significant role in influencing individual job satisfaction within organizations—encompassing aspects such as work environment and positive organizational culture—this influence is insufficient to enhance employee performance significantly. Factors such as improper implementation of knowledge sharing, excessive information, or misalignment with organizational culture may negatively affect performance, even when job satisfaction levels are high.

## DISCUSSION

This study aims to comprehensively analyze the relationship between cultural intelligence and knowledge sharing on employee performance, with job satisfaction as a mediator. The demographic analysis results regarding age criteria indicate that respondents across various age ranges exhibit differing perceptions and responses to the research variables. Specifically, respondents in the younger age range (23-30 years) tend to demonstrate high enthusiasm and motivation, as evidenced by a significant number of respondents achieving high scores across all variables. In contrast, older respondents (41-50 years) tend to have more significant experience but show a decline in motivation, as reflected in lower performance metrics. This difference is statistically significant and underscores

the importance of age as a factor in further analysis, particularly concerning performance and work motivation.

The criteria related to job position also demonstrate significant differences in perceptions and responses to the research variables. Respondents in higher positions, such as managers and executives, tend to hold different views than staff members. This finding may be attributed to disparities in performance perception, as individuals in higher positions often report lower performance levels. Despite possessing higher experience and knowledge, this does not affect their performance levels significantly. This may suggest that other factors, such as task complexity or more significant responsibilities, shape their performance perceptions and evaluations.

Regarding educational criteria, the demographic analysis reveals that the respondents' educational levels do not significantly differ regarding the research variables. This indicates that respondents with varying educational backgrounds understand the studied variables similarly. The absence of a significant influence from the educational background may be attributed to the homogeneity of the work environment, where operational skills and knowledge are deemed more crucial than formal education.

The results of the first hypothesis testing indicate that cultural intelligence plays a significant role in employee performance, mediated by job satisfaction. This hypothesis aligns with previous studies by Bücken et al. (2014) and Ang et al. (2007), demonstrating that cultural intelligence positively impacts job satisfaction, thus enhancing employee performance. Cultural intelligence enables employees to adapt to multicultural work environments and effectively interact with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. In the context of globalization, cultural intelligence has become a critical competency for ensuring the success of collaboration within cross-cultural teams.

This study reaffirms that cultural intelligence not only aids employees in adjusting to diverse work settings but also enhances their job satisfaction. Employees with high cultural intelligence feel more valued and accepted, which increases their motivation to perform better and be more productive. Ang et al. (2007) found that cultural intelligence can enhance cultural adaptation and task performance among employees, aligning with the findings of this research.

Job satisfaction is also identified as a crucial factor contributing to improved performance. Employees who are satisfied with their jobs tend to exhibit higher productivity and quality of work. Therefore, organizations should consider developing cultural intelligence training programs to enhance job satisfaction and employee performance.

The results of the second hypothesis testing reveal that knowledge sharing does not significantly influence employee performance when mediated by job satisfaction, leading to the acceptance of the null hypothesis. This finding contradicts prior research by Lin (2007), which states that knowledge sharing can enhance employee performance through job satisfaction. This study indicates that while knowledge sharing is important in fostering a collaborative work environment, such practices do not always positively impact performance. This could suggest the need for organizations to carefully assess the implementation and effectiveness of knowledge-sharing initiatives to ensure they contribute positively to employee performance outcomes.

This research supports the findings of Usmanova et al. (2021), which indicate that knowledge sharing can negatively affect performance, even when employee job satisfaction is high. Factors such as inadequate implementation, information overload, or misalignment with organizational culture can lead to detrimental outcomes. Therefore, organizations must pay attention to how knowledge sharing

is implemented, ensuring that the processes are structured and aligned with the needs of employees and the organizational culture.

One limitation of this study is the lack of exploration of other factors that may influence employee performance, such as intrinsic motivation, management support, and organizational culture. Another limitation is the use of a cross-sectional research design, which captures conditions at a single point in time and does not allow for the analysis of changes over the long term. Hence, future research should adopt a longitudinal approach to understand better the dynamics of the relationships among variables over an extended period. Cross-cultural studies could also be conducted to enhance the generalizability of findings, especially in a multinational context.

Furthermore, qualitative research methods, such as in-depth interviews, could provide richer insights into employee perceptions regarding the variables under investigation. Practically, organizations should not only focus on knowledge sharing but also on training cultural intelligence through mentoring programs and information platforms. Regular evaluation of the effectiveness of these programs is also essential to ensure the sustained improvement of employee performance.

## CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that cultural intelligence and knowledge sharing significantly contribute to job satisfaction but do not directly affect employee performance. These findings underscore that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between cultural intelligence and performance, indicating that employees who feel more capable of adapting to multicultural work environments tend to have higher levels of job satisfaction, which enhances their performance. Conversely, knowledge-sharing does not significantly impact performance, highlighting the importance of implementing knowledge-sharing practices that align with the organizational culture. This research contributes to psychology, particularly in understanding the roles of cultural intelligence and job satisfaction within multicultural organizational contexts. The practical implications suggest that organizations should focus their human resource development strategies on enhancing cultural intelligence through training and development and creating supportive work environments to foster higher employee job satisfaction. Thus, while knowledge sharing is important, greater attention should be directed toward managing factors that affect job satisfaction to achieve optimal performance. Recommendations for future research include a further exploration of the role of job satisfaction as a mediator, as well as the adoption of longitudinal approaches to measure the impact of these variables over time. This would provide deeper insights into cultural intelligence and knowledge-sharing dynamics and their effects on employee performance in varying contexts.

## DECLARATION

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#### Author contribution statement

Luthfi Ibnu Yusuf took full responsibility for the preparation of the manuscript, execution of the research, data collection and analysis, and coordination with other authors to ensure the quality of the research. Rostiana provided primary guidance in developing the research concept, formulation of the theoretical framework, hypothesis testing, and data analysis. I Made Budiana offer guidance on the research's techno-statistical methodology and result validation.

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The data described in this article can be accessed by contacting the first author.

#### Declaration of Interest's statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

#### Additional information

No additional information is available for this article.

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