

# Exploring the Influence of Work-Family Balance and Burnout on Working Mothers' Character-Building Efforts in a Post-Pandemic World

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## Abstract

Even though the pandemic has ended, working mothers face challenges in achieving work-family balance so that children's character education goes well. This paper looks at the effect of Work-Family Balance (WFB) and burnout on working mothers in carrying out character education for children after the COVID-19 pandemic. The method used is a quantitative method with a survey design. Data was collected from distributing questionnaires on the Google form filled in by female lecturers at the Islamic University in Indonesia. The findings of this study indicate that there is an effect of WFB and burnout on post-pandemic children's character education. Female lecturers at Islamic universities can be categorized as working mothers who can achieve WFB and educate their children well so there are no burn-outs. This research shows that even as working mothers, lecturers at an Islamic university can carry out their role in children's education well.

## INTRODUCTION

Working mothers all over the world, have struggled quite hard during the pandemic. In the US, they reported psychological distress (moderate mental illness and serious mental illness) (Kirwin & Ettinger, 2022). In Ireland, they have experienced negative emotions, and the redefinition of family dynamics, and adopted additional and disproportionate care burdens (Clark et al., 2020). The big impact of the Covid pandemic on a mother, especially because of the transition to activities that are centered at home, both work and education (Hoofman & Secord, 2021). In Indonesia, high-stress levels often occur at the start of implementing study from home (Susilowati & Azzasofia, 2020). How could it not be, during a pandemic, school activities and office work were centered at home? This makes working mothers who work from home take on the role of teacher at home even more actively. Even though usually, children's education will be directly assisted by a teacher at school. So this places mothers who work during a pandemic have many roles, and are prone to burnout. Indeed, the distance education model even this do not have readiness from teachers, parents, and students (Sari & Nayir, 2020). Likewise in Indonesia, many problems arose in distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The piling up of roles for working mothers that occurred during the pandemic, especially for women who are often attached to domestic roles, so that when they work in the public, they will bear a lot of burdens. This certainly can affect the balance of work (Muafiah & Sofiana, 2022; Adisa et al., 2021a). The challenge of the work-family balance is very complex, such as

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issues combining social, work, family, and educational dimensions thus requiring integrated coping of individual, family, and political strategies (Cantera et al., 2009). Several previous studies confirmed the existence of a relationship between work and family that can influence each other (Fisher, 2001; Muafiah & Sofiana, 2022) because it is a different domain (Clark, 2000; Muafiah & Sofiana, 2022).

On the other hand, the problems during this pandemic left a lot of other homework. Re-adjustment of education and character-building for children who were centered at home and underwent distance learning for quite a long time (around 2-3 years, from 10th of March 2020 to 2022) to be able to return to study at school. The existence of a pandemic by utilizing virtual world features as a medium for children's learning has had various impacts. This is like optimizing teaching and learning activities during a pandemic which is mostly done by giving assignments or homework to children through applications (Syarifuddin, 2022), and this tends to make students feel bored, causing a feeling of laziness and a lack of interest in learning (Yunitasari & Hanifah, 2020). In addition, giving this assignment is considered less effective in understanding concepts, reflecting, and cultivating character in children (Ashari & Nugrahanti, 2022), even become a learning loss (Budi et al., 2021), because certain values cannot be conveyed directly if learning is only through internet media. Not only that, children tend to try less because it is too instant or easy to find answers through search engines compared to trying to find answers in textbooks or reading books, and children also become addicted to the internet. In another study, it was found that there were students who were sick because they were tired of busy assignments during the pandemic, besides that, they also could not help their parents because of the busy study hours (Ulfa & Mutiah, 2021).

This phenomenon is a challenge for children's development, meanwhile, Work-Family Balance itself is a barometer of work and family life that can run harmoniously and be well integrated (Frone, 2003; Hirschi et al., 2019; Greenhaus et al., 2003; Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007; SC Clark, 2000; Fagan, 2008; Lambert et al., 2006). A working mother who has children who are in school certainly has more family demands. Looking at WFB in working moms post-pandemic is something that needs further research, especially its relationship with character education which has been affected by the pandemic.

Character education itself is part of Islamic education which aims to achieve harmony, harmony, and balance in various aspects, namely the relationship with Allah SWT, himself, fellow human beings, other creatures, and the environment (Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, 2004). The application of education is not only carried out at school but also at home or in the family. The main task of the family for children's education is to lay the foundation for moral education and a religious outlook on life (Setiawan, 2021). The nature and character of children are mostly taken from their parents and other family members (Hasbullah, 2009). The character education referred to in this study is religious character, honesty, discipline, responsibility, caring for others, and caring for the environment. These six characters are characters that can help harmonize life between all aspects of life under the goals of Islamic education with the process, habituation, and exemplary (Ngatiman & Ibrahim, 2018), as well as the foundational characteristics that a child must have. This is important because the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the implementation of character education and Islamic education (Abdusshomad, 2020).

Furthermore, when working mothers try to achieve WFB by balancing the demands of work and family, they can experience burnout, because burnout is one of the factors that can affect work-life balance or work-family balance (Prabowo et al., 2020; Mahmudah et al., 2022). Moira emphasized that being a parent can be stressful (Mikolajczak et al., 2019), let alone being a parent who also works. Rakhmawati stated that the experience of several working mothers in Indonesia in various sectors felt an increased workload, felt boredom, and physical and emotional exhaustion during the Covid-19 pandemic (Rakhmawati, 2022), as well as female

teachers in Turkey who experienced emotional exhaustion, stress, low motivation and job satisfaction, and balance problems between home and work(Kara et al., 2021). So, this article is here to see how working mothers achieve WFB with the challenges of post-pandemic character education and the threat of burnout.

### The Rationale of The Current Study

There have been many studies discussing aspects of WFB in working mothers during a pandemic (Kirwin & Ettinger, 2022; Adisa et al., 2021b; Chung et al., 2022; Martucci, 2021) or character education in families during a pandemic (Batubara et al., 2020; Suherman & Wathan, 2021; Jannah & Umam, 2021; Prabowo et al., 2020; Setiawan, 2021). Likewise with post-pandemic children's character education (Nugroho, 2022; Prabowo et al., 2020) but the discussion related to the character education of children affected during the pandemic and its relation to work-family balance and burnout of the mother has not been found much. Only found the effect of work-family conflict on the burnout of female lecturers who work from home (Fitriasari et al., 2022). So, this article is here to fill that void. This was done because when the COVID-19 pandemic hit the earth which had an impact on limited movement or mobility, even the centralization of activities at home, such as teaching and learning activities and office work was certainly a challenge for a working mother. Muafiah et al. (2023) has summarized the experiences and roles of female lecturers at the Ponorogo State Islamic Institute who experienced a buildup of burdens and responsibilities a working mothers during a pandemic. Furthermore, this research will look at the challenges of working mothers in educating children's character and achieving Work-Family Balance, so that it will give an overview of how the context occurs in working mothers to achieve harmony.

### Purpose and Hypothesis

The purpose of this research is to look at the effect of WFB on character education and burnout among working mothers after the pandemic. The conceptual model in this study is shown in Figure 1. Based on this conceptual model, the hypothesis used is as follows:

- H1: Work-family balance positive and significant effect on character-building
- H2: Burnout positive and significant effect on work-family balance
- H3: Burnout positive and significant effects on character-building
- H4: Work-family balance mediates the relationship between burnout and character-building

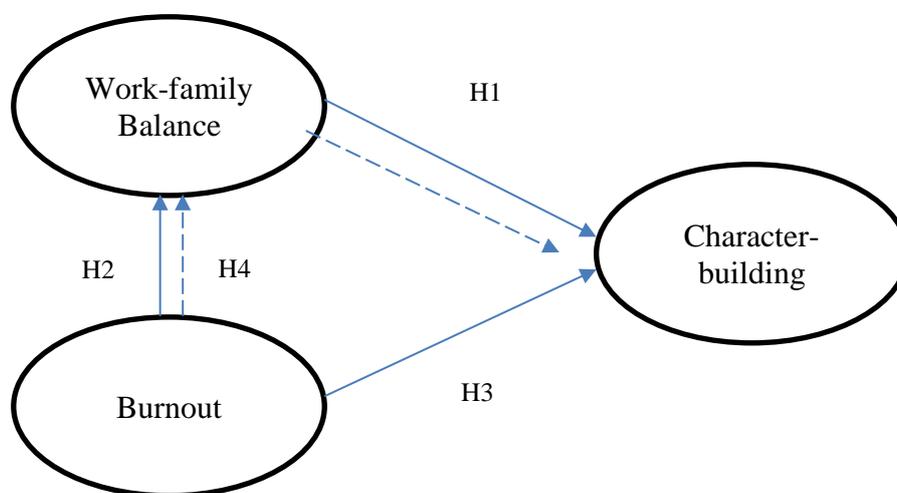


Figure 1. Conceptual model

Tabel 1. Research Instruments

No	Variable	Indicator	Operational Definition
1	Work-Family Balance	job satisfaction	The condition of working mothers who are satisfied with their work. This can be marked by a sense of pride, enthusiasm, persistence, and good work results, unaffected by demands in the family.
		organizational commitment	The condition of working mothers who have the support of a good working environment. This can be characterized by good relationships with coworkers, then coworkers who can be invited to work together, he helps provide solutions when in trouble.
		family satisfaction	The condition of working mothers who are satisfied with the condition of the house. This is marked by family members helping to do household chores, then working mothers can adjust their time and work and family responsibilities.
		family performance	A state of family role or performance that provides a good mood for working mothers when they are at home, even though they have a lot of work demands, provides energy and support to do the job.
		role conflicts	The condition of working mothers who can do work according to their position, and accept jobs without any conflicts or other problems.
2	Burnout	Burnout	State of burnout in terms of mental, physical, and emotional characterized by feelings of frustration because they cannot balance time between family and work, a lack of productivity, and a feeling of being the one to blame for the problems that occur.
3	Character Building	Religious	Religious characteristics bring children closer to God, such as praying in every activity, reciting the Koran, praying 5 times on time, and being grateful for what happened.
		honest	Honest character by ensuring children do assignments without cheating, speak according to facts and can admit their mistakes.
		disciplined	Discipline character by ensuring children get up early, comply with school rules properly and collect assignments on time.
		responsible	Responsible character by making sure the child does the job well invites the child to do homework, and is serious about doing anything.
		caring for others	The character of caring for others by teaching children to assist those in need, and sharing food or toys with other family members.
		caring for the environment	Characters care about the environment by teaching children to garden or plant trees, save electricity, and maintain cleanliness.

## METHODS

### Design

This research is included in survey research because researchers collect data through samples that represent the population. This study was designed to analyze the causal relationship between one variable and another.

### Participants

The population in this study are female lecturers in the Islamic university environment who have children over 4 years old. The sample in this study was 200 people and were female lecturers from various Islamic campuses in Indonesia. The sampling technique is carried out

using purposive sampling or sampling techniques with certain considerations. In this study, the considerations were female lecturers in the Islamic university environment who had children over the age of 4 years. This age limit was chosen because, at this age, children in Indonesia can already enter playgroup educational institutions.

### **Instruments**

Data collection in this study was carried out by distributing questionnaires to respondents. This technique is carried out by giving a set of written statements to the respondent to answer. The questionnaire given was a type of closed questionnaire in which the respondent was asked to choose an answer according to the conditions felt. The answer for each statement uses a Likert scale with four answer choices, namely Often, Often, Rarely, and Never with a scoring rule of 4-3-2-1 for positive statements and a scoring of 1-2-3-4 for negative statements. The distribution of the questionnaire was carried out using the Google form to respondents who met predetermined criteria.

The research instrument was prepared using several theories from experts by making several modifications. The questionnaire is prepared based on the indicators that build each construct, namely:

#### ***Work-Family Balance***

Work-family balance is a situation where working parents can balance the demands of family and work, they have good time management, conflict management, and parenting (Muafiah & Sofiana, 2022). There are 5 indicators of the work-family balance instrument, namely job satisfaction, organizational commitment, family satisfaction, family performance, and role conflict (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007).

#### ***Burnout***

The indicator is who feels frustrated or mentally, physically, and emotionally exhausted, then cynicism or guilt, being cynical, and tends to be alone and unproductive or ineffective in acting and behaving (Leiter & Masclah, 2017).

#### ***Character-Building***

There are 18 indicators of the value of character education according to the Ministry of National Education of Republic of Indonesia (Nurfalah, 2016), but only 6 character education values are used in this paper as the most core characters or are felt to be most affected by the pandemic, including being religious, honest, disciplined, responsible, caring for others, and caring for the environment.

The instruments are structured in several stages, namely determining the variables studied, formulating conceptual definitions (obtained based on existing theory), compiling operational definitions, compiling instrument grids, and compiling instrument items. Before distribution, construct validity was tested by involving 3 experts to provide opinions about the suitability of the questionnaire with the theory used. Then the instruments trials were carried out in the field involving 30 people to see the validity of the factors and the validity of the instrument items and the reliability of the compiled instruments.

The results of testing the instruments on 30 respondents showed that the instrument was valid because the correlation value of all instrument items was more than a critical  $r$ , namely .361, and reliable. After all, it had a Cronbach's alpha value of more than .7. These results indicate that the developed instrument is feasible to be used as a data collection tool for 200 respondents.

## Procedures

The method used in this research is the quantitative method. The data used in this study were obtained from the results of a questionnaire that had been filled out by female lecturers at Islamic universities who had children over 4 years old. The distribution of the questionnaire was carried out using the Google form. In addition to containing statements related to indicators of work-family balance, burnout, and character-building, the Google form that was created also asked for information about the demographics of the respondents, such as age, number of children, and employment status (civil servant or non-civil servant).

## Data analysis

Before analysis, the data obtained was first checked to ensure that the respondents who filled out the questionnaire were lecturers who had children over 4 years of age and checked the respondents' answers to ensure that the answers given were complete without any blank answers. If there are respondents who do not fulfill one or both then these respondents are not included in the analysis. Then scoring the respondent's answers is 4-3-2-1 for positive statements and 1-2-3-4 for negative statements. After the scoring process is complete, proceed with data tabulation.

To analyze causal relationships and conceptual models, this study uses the Partial Least Square Structure Equation Model (PLS-SEM). The PLS-SEM model was chosen because it can be applied to develop a theory or build a theory (predictive orientation). In addition, PLS-SEM can also work very well with large sample sizes and requires latent variable scores for follow-up analysis (Chin, 1998; Hair Jr et al., 2021). To achieve the research objectives, the analytical steps are the evaluation of the measurement model to measure convergent validity, discriminant validity, and construct reliability and followed by an evaluation of the structural model.

Convergent validity is measured using scores average variance extracted (AVE) where the AVE value for each construct must be more than .5 (Chin, 1998; Hair et al., 2009; Henseler et al., 2009). The discriminant validity value requires that the AVE square root value must be greater than the correlation value between latent constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The last test on the evaluation of the measurement model is the reliability of the composite reliability (CR) where each construct must have a value above .7 (Henseler et al., 2009).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

Table 2 shows the characteristics of the respondents in this study. This study involved 200 respondents who were female lecturers in the Islamic university environment who had children over 4 years of age. From Table 2 it is known that the lecturers who were respondents in this study were mostly in the age range of 38 to 47 years, namely 43%, the rest were in the range of 28-37 years (41.5%) and above 48 years (15.5%). The number of children owned by lecturers is 1 to 5 children with the highest number being lecturers with 1 child namely by 45%. As for the status, 78.5% are civil servant lecturers and the rest are non-civil servant lecturers.

Evaluating the measurement model is done by measuring convergent validity, discriminant validity, and construct reliability. The results of the measurement model evaluation are shown in Table 3. Table 3 shows that the work-family balance has an average of 3.43 with a standard deviation of .56 which shows that most lecturers agree with the statements given and have almost the same rating range. This also applies to burnout which has a mean value of 3.46 and a standard deviation of .57. Character-building has a mean value of 3.51 and a standard deviation of .56. The results of convergent validity testing for each of the work-family balance, burnout, and character-building constructs were .555, .730, and .552 which were more than .5, meaning that all constructs met convergent validity. Discriminant validity

Table 2. Survey of respondent's demographic characteristics

Measures	Items	N	(%)
age	28-37 years	83	41.5
	38-47 years	86	43
	over 48 years	31	15.5
Number of children	1	90	45
	2	77	38.5
	3	19	9.5
	4	10	5
	5	4	2
Status	civil servant	153	76.5
	Non civil servants	47	23.5

Table 3. Descriptive statistics, alphas, and discriminant validity

Constructs	Convergent reliability and validity					Discriminant validity		
	M	SD	Alpha	CR	AVE	1	2	3
Work-Family Balance	3.43	.56	.862	.862	.555	.745		
Burnout	3.46	.57	.844	.844	.730	.680	.854	
Character-building	3.51	.56	.881	.881	.552	.726	.63	.743

Notes: M = mean; SD = standard deviation; Alpha = Cronbach's alpha; CR = composite reliability; AVE = Average variance extracted.

Table 4. Direct and indirect effects

Hypothesis	Relationships	Direct effects		Indirect effects	
		$\beta$	P	B	P
H1	Work-Family Balance → Character-building	.554	.00		
H2	Burnout → Work-Family Balance	.680	.00		
H3	Burnout → Character-building	.253	.00		
H4	Burnout → Work-Family Balance → Character building			.377	.00

is fulfilled because all the AVE roots of each construct are more than the correlation between the latent constructs.

Reliability testing was carried out using a composite reliability (CR) measure. The CR value is more than .7 which indicates that reliability is fulfilled. Evaluation of the measurement model shows that convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability have been met according to the established criteria so that all constructs can be used for structural model testing.

This study uses bootstrapping of 1000 repeat samples to estimate the statistical significance of the path coefficients. Structural models are assessed through the coefficient of determination and predictive relevance. The results of the analysis show that the coefficient of determination for character-building is 56.2% which is included in the strong model criteria. The Q square result for character-building is .298 which is positive, indicating that the model has predictive relevance. Based on these two results indicate that the model for character-building is appropriate. The same thing applies to the work-family balance which shows a coefficient of determination of 46.2% which is included in the moderate model criteria and a Q square value of .249 which is positive indicates a predictive relevance model.

The results of testing the direct effect, indirect effect, and total effect for each construct are shown in Table 4. The test results show that work-family balance has a positive and significant influence on character-building because the p-value = .00 < .05 and the value  $\beta$  = .554 which means it means that these results support H1.

For the direct effect of burnout on work-family balance, it shows a p-value = .00 < .05 and a value of  $\beta$  = .680 which supports H2, which means that burnout has a positive and significant effect on work-family balance. For the direct effect of burnout on character-building,

it shows a  $p$ -value =  $.00 < .05$  and a value of  $\beta = .253$  which supports H3, which means that burnout has a positive and significant effect on character-building.

For the indirect effect of burnout on character-building through work-family balance, it shows a  $p$ -value =  $.00 < .05$  and a value of  $\beta = .377$  which supports H4, which means that work-family balance mediates the relationship between burnout and Islamic education. The results of the direct and indirect effects (total effect) given by burnout on character-building are  $\beta = .630$ .

## Discussion

The test results show that work-family balance has a positive and significant influence on character-building because the  $p$ -value =  $.00 < .05$  and the value  $\beta = .554$ , which means that these results support H1. When work-family balance can be achieved, children's education will be carried out properly. This is because a working mother who has been able to achieve work-family balance, can place herself in terms of time, and involvement, and produce balanced satisfaction between life or family demands and life or work demands. In achieving work-family balance, proportional time and good involvement will be able to encourage the birth of balanced satisfaction (Hijriyani et al., 2022). The education of a child is of course not only the responsibility of a mother, but the figure of a mother has a very large influence and contribution to the growth and development of a child. This is because, in Islam, a mother acts as the first school for her children. Like a new white sheet of paper that doesn't have any writing, that's how the image of a child is born (Sofiana, 2020). The first school for children is carried by a mother because mothers have a different touch, Ailwood (2007) said that motherhood is very influential on children's education. This is different from maternalism which is formed by cultural understanding that places the parenting role only on a single mother.

On the other hand, it is more difficult for working mothers to reach WFB than men (Adisa et al., 2021a). A patriarchal culture that places women closely with childcare and household matters such as cooking, cleaning, and other household needs makes women carry out multiple roles, so women have to make a bigger effort to be able to achieve WFB. Especially during the pandemic, work and education were centered at home due to restrictions on activities outside the home. WFB is an important contribution to achieving well-being and a healthy and well-functioning society (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007).

In some respondents, in short interviews, children's education which is carried out at home is carried out alone or by the mother directly on the sidelines of online teaching, but in several other lecturers using the services of a child's study companion, sharing roles with the child's father, or assisted by members other family members (grandmothers, cousins, others). Likewise, when the pandemic ended, the patterns of working hours and children's school hours were still undergoing many adjustments, so it became a challenge in itself to be able to achieve WFB.

For the direct effect of burnout on work-family balance, it shows a  $p$ -value =  $.00 < .05$  and a value of  $\beta = .680$  which supports H2, which means that burnout has a positive and significant effect on work-family balance. Burnout is one of the things that affects the work-family balance. When someone experiences burnout, work-family balance is not achieved. This is because burnout is one of the benchmarks for achieving WFB. The burnout that occurs will create instability and imbalance between work and family demands. The higher the demands of work and family, will trigger conflict. This work-family conflict occurs because the family affects work or work affects the family (Soelton et al., 2020).

For the direct effect of burnout on character-building, it shows a  $p$ -value =  $.01 < .05$  and a value of  $\beta = .253$  which supports H3, which means that burnout has a positive and significant effect on character-building. This means that when working mothers experience burnout, their children's education will be disrupted. Burnout occurs when a working mother experiences stress because of her job, both physically, mentally, and emotionally. According to the Ministry

of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, burnout syndrome in terms of physical fatigue is characterized by a lack of energy and feeling tired all the time, while emotional exhaustion is characterized by depression, feeling helpless, and feeling trapped at work. Meanwhile, mental fatigue is characterized by a cynical and negative attitude towards others, harming oneself, work, life, and other aspects of life. These three signs of burnout will certainly greatly affect the success of children's education in the family. Especially during a pandemic, the boundaries between work and family become difficult to distinguish, because they are deep in one time, circumstance, and place, it home. Likewise, during the post-pandemic period, there have been adjustments to various life patterns towards post-pandemic life.

For the indirect effect of burnout on character-building through work-family balance, it shows a  $p$ -value =  $.04 < .05$  and a value of  $\beta = .377$  which supports H4, which means that work-family balance mediates the relationship between burnout and character-building. The results of the direct and indirect effects (total effect) given by burnout on character-building are  $\beta = .630$  with  $p$ -value =  $.00 < .05$ . Burnout is different from ordinary fatigue, it is related to work demands, but in reality, it will affect every aspect of a person's life.

In this study, female Islamic Higher Education lecturers were able to balance work and family demands, even during the post-pandemic period, so that WFB could be achieved, and children's education could be carried out properly. This is because there is no burnout effect. Burnout itself is very influential in achieving WFB. The percentage of influence given is 46.2%, which means moderate influence, which indicates that other factors affect WFB. Likewise, the education of children affected by WFB and burnout shows the magnitude of the effect on both variables of 56.2%, meaning that most of the education of children during the pandemic was affected by WFB and burnout experienced by mothers.

### **Implications**

The results of this study found that work-family balance and burnout of working mothers affected children's education after the COVID-19 pandemic. The achievement of WFB is one of the important things that can support the implementation of good children's education, and avoid the burnout of a working mother, especially after the pandemic. When all educational and work activities are re-adjusted after previously being centered at home.

### **Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research**

The author realizes that the respondents in this article are limited to female lecturers at several Islamic state campuses in several cities in Indonesia which cannot be generalized to all existing working women or mothers, but this can be an illustration and consideration for further research. This research does not cover the role of lecturers in several other structural activities. Assuming there is no difference between lecturers who have additional tasks in the campus structure and lecturers who do not have these additional responsibilities.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

This study concludes that there is an effect of WFB and burnout on the education of working mothers after the COVID-19 pandemic, but in the case of Islamic university female lecturers, it can be said that they are still able to educate their children well so that they can achieve work-family balance and there is no influence or symptoms burnout.

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## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

The Authors of this research played a role in writing this article and agreed with the final version of it.

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