



# Effects of Social Assistance Management on Beneficiary Welfare Through Social Assistance Characteristics in Mimika Regency

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** This study aims to analyze the influence of social assistance management and social assistance characteristics on the welfare of beneficiaries, both partially and simultaneously, in Kamoro Jaya Village, Wania District, Mimika Regency, Central Papua Province.

**Research Methodology:** A quantitative path analysis was conducted using data from 40 purposively selected Family Hope Program (PKH) beneficiaries. Data were collected through a five-point Likert-scale questionnaire and analyzed using SPSS and the Sobel Test.

**Results:** Social Assistance Management significantly improved Social Assistance Characteristics ( $\beta = 0.750, p < 0.001$ ). However, it had no significant direct effect on Beneficiary Welfare ( $\beta = 0.087, p = 0.245$ ). Social Assistance Characteristics had a strong positive effect on Beneficiary Welfare ( $\beta = 0.889, p < 0.001$ ). The Sobel test confirmed full mediation ( $t = 6.059, p < 0.001$ ), indicating that management quality affects welfare only through Social Assistance Characteristics.

**Conclusions:** Social Assistance Characteristics, particularly targeting accuracy, timeliness, and adequacy of aid, are the primary determinants of beneficiary welfare. These characteristics fully mediate the relationship between social assistance management and welfare outcomes, highlighting the importance of improving assistance delivery quality to achieve better welfare impacts.

**Limitations:** The study was limited to 40 PKH beneficiaries in a single village and employed a cross-sectional design. The analysis focused exclusively on the PKH program and did not include other social assistance schemes such as BPNT or BST.

**Contributions:** This study provides empirical evidence that social assistance characteristics fully mediate the relationship between social assistance management and beneficiary welfare in Mimika Regency.

**Keywords:** *Beneficiary Welfare, Full Mediation, Path Analysis, Poverty Reduction, Social Assistance*

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## 1. Introduction

Social welfare—the condition in which citizens’ material, spiritual, and social needs are met so that they can live with dignity and fulfill their social functions—is a core mandate of the Indonesian state, operationalized through Law No. 11 of 2009 on Social Welfare. Within this framework, social assistance (*bantuan sosial/bansos*) is the primary government instrument for protecting vulnerable citizens from social risks, reducing expenditure burdens, and improving access to education, health, and food, with the long-term objective of breaking intergenerational poverty cycles [Anisa et al. \(2025\)](#), [Purba et al. \(2025\)](#),

and Sari and Kurniawati (2023). In developing regions, social assistance programs are also positioned as fiscal redistribution tools that aim to reduce inequality and strengthen household resilience against economic shocks.

Mimika Regency, Central Papua Province, faces an acute poverty challenge despite being the location of one of the world's largest copper and gold mining operations (PT Freeport Indonesia). According to the Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Mimika (2025), Mimika's poverty rate is 14.18%, with an extreme poverty rate of 5.37%—substantially above the national average. This condition indicates a structural paradox in resource-rich regions, where high-value extractive industries do not automatically translate into broad-based welfare improvements for local communities (Yewen & Gonsaga, 2025). In response, the regional and central governments have distributed social assistance programs, including the *Program Keluarga Harapan (PKH)*/Family Hope Program, Indonesia's flagship conditional cash transfer program targeting mothers, children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities in poor households registered in the Integrated Social Welfare Data (DTKS). In Wania District, the social assistance program covers 550 beneficiary households (Dinas Sosial Mimika, 2025), highlighting the scale of government intervention in addressing persistent poverty.

However, the effectiveness of social assistance programs remains widely debated in the literature. Prior research on the PKH–welfare relationship has yielded inconsistent findings. Positive significant effects are documented by Nst and Fahlevi (2021), Anisa et al. (2025), Hanung and Atmaja (2021), and Diana and Yustie (2025), who found that social assistance improves household consumption, access to basic services, and overall welfare conditions. In contrast, Dwilaksmi et al. (2025) and Gumanti and Yunita (2022) reported negative or insignificant effects, arguing that program dependency, targeting inaccuracies, and behavioral distortions may reduce long-term welfare outcomes. These mixed findings suggest that the effectiveness of social assistance is not determined solely by program existence or financial transfer size, but is strongly influenced by implementation quality and program design features (Lorenzo-Afable et al., 2020; Saguin, 2020; Scruggs & Ramalho Tafoya, 2022).

From a theoretical perspective, these inconsistencies indicate that social assistance management may not directly translate into improved welfare outcomes. Instead, the impact may operate through intermediate mechanisms, particularly social assistance characteristics such as targeting accuracy, timeliness of distribution, and adequacy of benefit levels (Lolitasari & Marthalena, 2025; Suarni et al., 2022; Sumaryadi & Kusnadi, 2021). These characteristics determine whether assistance is received by the right households at the right time and in sufficient amounts to generate meaningful welfare improvements. Despite this theoretical expectation, empirical evidence on this mediating mechanism remains limited, especially in Eastern Indonesia, where poverty dynamics and administrative capacity differ significantly from other regions (Charkhgard et al., 2022; Layton, 2020; Suyanto et al., 2021).

No quantitative study has specifically examined this mediating mechanism in Kamoro Jaya Village, Wania District, Mimika Regency. This study addresses this gap by employing path analysis to examine the direct and indirect effects of social assistance management and social assistance characteristics on beneficiary welfare. Four hypotheses are tested: (H1) PBS significantly influences KBS; (H2) PBS significantly influences KPM directly; (H3) KBS significantly influences KPM directly; and (H4) PBS and KBS simultaneously significantly influence KPM. In addition, the Sobel Test is applied to determine whether social assistance characteristics act as a full or partial mediator in the PBS→KPM relationship, providing a more detailed understanding of the mechanism through which social assistance programs affect welfare outcomes.

## 2. Literature Review & Hypothesis Development

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### 2.1 Social Welfare Theory

Social welfare is understood as a systematic and organized response to citizens' needs across material, spiritual, and social dimensions. [Friedlander and Apte \(1980\)](#) defined social welfare as an organized system of social services and institutions designed to help individuals and groups achieve satisfactory standards of life and health. [Wilensky and Lebeaux \(1958\)](#) distinguish residual welfare (emergency assistance when market and family fail) from institutional welfare (welfare as a first-line right of all citizens). [Wickenden \(1965\)](#) positions social welfare as an institutionalized function of modern societies—not charity, but a constitutional right grounded in law. Indonesia's Law No. 11 of 2009 operationalizes this through four mechanisms: social rehabilitation, social security, social empowerment, and social protection ([Hafizrianda et al., 2025](#); [Rahayu Indriani & Christya Rahayu, 2025](#); [Syahwanes et al., 2025](#)).

### 2.2 Social Assistance: Concepts and Classifications

Social assistance is defined by Ministry of Finance Regulation No. 181/2012 as government transfer expenditure in money, goods, or services to society; by Ministry of Home Affairs Regulation No. 14/2016 as selective, non-continuous transfers for risk protection; and by Ministry of Social Affairs Regulation No. 1/2019 as assistance for the poor, disadvantaged, and socially vulnerable. PKH, Indonesia's flagship conditional cash transfer, provides assistance to beneficiary families conditional on health and education compliance, targeting mothers, children (aged 0–18 in school), the elderly (70+), and persons with severe disabilities [Anisa et al. \(2025\)](#), [Nunuh and Wulandari \(2021\)](#), and [Purba et al. \(2025\)](#).

### 2.3 Social Assistance Characteristics

The effectiveness of social assistance programs is determined not merely by management quality but by the characteristics of the aid itself—particularly (1) targeting accuracy (whether the right recipients receive the aid), (2) timeliness (whether aid is disbursed when needed), and (3) aid adequacy (whether the amount is sufficient to meaningfully reduce burden). [Suarni et al. \(2022\)](#) specifically demonstrate that these three characteristics jointly explain a very large proportion of welfare variation and that good administrative management does not guarantee welfare improvement if aid characteristics are inadequate. This conceptual distinction between social assistance management (PBS, the administrative input process) and social assistance characteristics (KBS, the aid quality output) is the analytical core of the path model of this study.

### 2.4 Pareto Welfare Theory and Dependency Risk

From the economic welfare perspective, defines a condition in which no individual can be made better off without making another worse off, implying that welfare-improving interventions require careful resource redistribution. Critically, [Sijabat and Lubis \(2024\)](#) and [Yewen and Gonsaga \(2025\)](#) warn that government programs designed as charity (karitatif) or one-off interventions create dependency rather than welfare improvement—contradicting [Friedlander and Apte \(1980\)](#) criterion that effective welfare systems empower recipients toward independence, not sustained reliance. [Diana and Yustie \(2025\)](#) and [Muliana et al. \(2021\)](#) empirically confirm this risk: PKH had a negative welfare effect in Sumenep, where dependency motivation suppressed independent income-seeking. This dependency risk motivates the study's focus on social assistance characteristics (rather than management alone) as a welfare-determining pathway.

### 2.5 Hypothesis Development

The hypotheses of this study are as follows:

- $H_1$ : Social Assistance Management (PBS) has a significant positive effect on Social Assistance Characteristics (KBS) in Kamoro Jaya Village, Mimika Regency.
- $H_2$ : Social Assistance Management (PBS) has a significant positive direct effect on Beneficiary Welfare (KPM) in Kamoro Jaya Village.
- $H_3$ : Social Assistance Characteristics (KBS) has a significant positive effect on Beneficiary Welfare (KPM) in Kamoro Jaya Village.
- $H_4$ : Social Assistance Management and Social Assistance Characteristics simultaneously have a significant positive effect on Beneficiary Welfare in Kamoro Jaya Village.

### 3. Methodology

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#### 3.1 Research Design and Location

A quantitative research design was employed using path analysis to examine the direct and indirect relationships among Social Assistance Management (PBS), Social Assistance Characteristics (KBS), and Beneficiary Welfare (KPM). The research was conducted in Kamoro Jaya Village, Wania District, Mimika Regency, Central Papua Province in 2025–2026. Kamoro Jaya Village is one of the PKH implementation sites in Wania District and represents the study's specific geographic context of an urban-fringe settlement in a resource-rich but poverty-challenged Indonesian regency.

#### 3.2 Population and Sample

The population comprised all active PKH beneficiaries registered in the Kamoro Jaya Village. Purposive sampling was applied based on the criterion of active PKH beneficiary status at the time of the data collection. A sample of 40 respondents was obtained, consistent with Gay and Diehl's (1992) minimum of 30 for correlational research and adequate for path analysis of two structural sub-models. This study is limited to PKH beneficiaries; BPNT, BST, and food basket (sembako/MBG) programs were excluded from the scope.

#### 3.3 Measurement Instruments

All three constructs were measured using structured five-point Likert scale questionnaires (1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree). Social Assistance Management (PBS, X) captured the dimensions of planning, socialization quality, registration mechanisms, inter-agency coordination, budgeting transparency, and complaint-handling responsiveness. Social Assistance Characteristics (KBS, Z/mediator) captured targeting accuracy (whether the right households were selected), timeliness of disbursement, and adequacy of aid amounts relative to household needs. Beneficiary Welfare (KPM, Y) captures food security, children's education access and continuity, healthcare access, savings capacity, and the ability to fulfill social functions.

#### 3.4 Validity, Classical Assumptions, and Analysis

Instrument validity was assessed using Pearson's product-moment correlation; all items with r-count exceeding the r-table threshold were declared valid. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. Classical assumption tests included normality (Kolmogorov-Smirnov;  $p > 0.05$  for normal distribution), multicollinearity (VIF  $< 10$ ; tolerance  $> 0.10$ ), heteroscedasticity (scatterplot; no systematic pattern), and linearity (Deviation from Linearity  $> 0.05$  for both relationships). All four assumptions were confirmed.

Path analysis was conducted in SPSS in two structural sub-models: Sub-model 1 regressed KBS on PBS, and Sub-model 2 regressed KPM on PBS and KBS simultaneously. The Sobel Test assessed the significance of the indirect effect (PBS→KBS→KPM) using:

$$z = \frac{a \times b}{\sqrt{(b^2 \times S_a^2) + (a^2 \times S_b^2)}}$$

with a significance criterion of  $z > 1.96$  ( $= 0.05$ ).

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Results

#### 4.1.1 Respondent Profile

Table 1 presents the demographic profiles of the respondents. The 40 beneficiaries exhibit the profile characteristics of the PKH target population: predominantly female, productive-aged, with large families, lower educational attainment, and limited formal employment.

Table 1. Respondent Demographic Profile (N = 40 PKH Beneficiaries)

Variable	Category	N	%	Note
Gender	Female / Male	26/14	65/35	Female dominant
Age Range	30–60 years (productive age)	32	80	Mean: 45 yrs
Marital Status	Married	29	72.5	–
Family Dependents	5+ members	25	62.5	Heavy burden
Education (dominant)	SMA/Senior High School	15	37.5	–
Main Occupation	Housewife (IRT)	18	45	No formal income
Bansos Types Received	Only 1 type	20	50	–
Disbursement Frequency	Irregular/Non-fixed	13	32.5	Problem: uncertainty

Source: Primary Data, 2026

Based on Table 1, the dominance of women (65%) is consistent with PKH’s design, which registers mothers as primary recipients to ensure that funds are applied to child welfare. The productive age range (80% aged 30–60 years) implies that recipients should theoretically be employable; however, their designation as PKH beneficiaries reflects structural exclusion from formal labor markets, consistent with Mimika’s high poverty rate (14.18%) despite elevated GRDP. The 62.5% with five or more family members confirms the heavy economic burden that PKH assistance must partially address in the future. The 32.5% with irregular disbursement frequency represents a critical implementation failure: disbursement uncertainty undermines household budgeting capacity and erodes the protective function that regular cash transfers are designed to provide.

#### 4.1.2 Classical Assumption Tests

Table 2. Classical Assumption Test Results Summary

Test	Method	Result	Pass?
Normality	Kolmogorov-Smirnov	Residuals normally distributed ( $p > 0.05$ )	✓
Multicollinearity	Tolerance and VIF	No multicollinearity (all VIF $< 10$ ; Tolerance $> 0.10$ )	✓
Heteroscedasticity	Scatterplot (Std. Residual)	No systematic pattern; homoscedastic	✓
Linearity: PBS–KPM	Deviation from Linearity	Sig. = 0.416 $> 0.05$ ; Linear significant ( $p=0.000$ )	✓
Linearity: KBS–KPM	Deviation from Linearity	Sig. = 0.079 $> 0.05$ ; Linear significant ( $p=0.000$ )	✓

Source: SPSS Analysis, 2026

Table 2 shows the results of the classical assumption tests. All four assumptions were satisfied, confirming the statistical validity of the regression and path analysis model.

#### 4.1.3 Path Analysis Sub-Model 1: PBS → KBS (H1)

Table 3. Sub-Model 1: Social Assistance Management → Social Assistance Characteristics

Variable	$\beta$ (Unstd.)	Std. $\beta$	<i>t</i> -stat	<i>p</i> -val.	Result
Social Assistance Mgmt (PBS)	1.139	0.750	6.991	.000	✓ Sig.
Constant	-11.221	–	-1.495	.143	–
R = 0.750   $R^2 = 0.563$   F = 48.87 (p = .000)   $\epsilon_1 = 0.661$   H1 ✓					

Dependent Variable: Social Assistance Characteristics (KBS).

Source: SPSS, 2026

Table 3 shows H1 is supported: Social Assistance Management significantly and positively influences Social Assistance Characteristics ( $\beta = 0.750$ ;  $t = 6.991$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ;  $R^2 = 0.563$ ). A standardized coefficient of 0.750 was classified as having a strong effect. Social Assistance Management explains 56.3% of KBS variance, with the remaining 43.7% explained by factors outside the model ( $\epsilon_1 = 0.661$ ). This confirms that quality management—encompassing transparent planning, accurate data systems, effective socialization, and responsive administration—directly shapes the quality of aid’s characteristics (targeting, timeliness, adequacy). However, management alone explains barely over half of the characteristics quality, indicating that contextual factors—including infrastructure limitations in Papua, DTKS data quality, and local government coordination—independently determine approximately 44% of aid characteristics.

#### 4.1.4 Path Analysis Sub-Model 2: PBS + KBS → KPM (H2, H3, H4)

Table 4. Sub-Model 2: PBS and KBS → Beneficiary Welfare (KPM)

Variable	$\beta$ (Unstd.)	Std. $\beta$	<i>t</i> -stat	<i>p</i> -val.	Result
Social Assistance Mgmt (PBS)	0.156	0.087	1.183	.245	× Not Sig.
Social Assistance Char. (KBS)	1.053	0.889	12.145	.000	✓ Sig. (Dominant)
Constant	-7.140	–	-1.729	.092	–
R = 0.956   $R^2 = 0.913$   F = 194.83 (p = .000)   $\epsilon_2 = 0.294$   H4 ✓					

Dependent Variable: Beneficiary Welfare (KPM).

Source: SPSS, 2026

Table 4 shows H2 is rejected: Social Assistance Management has no significant direct effect on Beneficiary Welfare ( $\beta = 0.087$ ;  $p = 0.245$ ). H3 is supported: Social Assistance Characteristics has a very strong and significant direct effect on Beneficiary Welfare ( $\beta = 0.889$ ;  $t = 12.145$ ;  $p = 0.000$ )—the highest t-statistic in this model. H4 is supported: PBS and KBS simultaneously explain 91.3% of the KPM variance ( $R^2 = 0.913$ ;  $F = 194.83$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ).

#### 4.1.5 Sobel Test: Full Mediation of KBS in PBS→KPM

Table 5. Path Effect Summary and Sobel Test Results

Effect Path	Coefficient	Sobel t / p	Result
Direct: PBS → KBS ( $\beta_1$ )	0.750	–	Sig.
Direct: PBS → KPM ( $\beta_2$ )	0.087	–	Not Sig.
Direct: KBS → KPM ( $\beta_3$ )	0.889	–	Sig. (Dominant)
Indirect: PBS → KBS → KPM ( $\beta_1 \times \beta_3$ )	0.667	t=6.059; p=.000	Sig.
Total PBS → KPM ( $\beta_2 + \beta_1 \times \beta_3$ )	0.753	–	88.5% indirect
Total KBS → KPM ( $\beta_3$ )	0.889	–	Highest total effect
MEDIATION TYPE	FULL MEDIATION	–	H1, H3, H4 ; H2

Source: Path Analysis (SPSS) and Sobel Test, 2026

Based on Table 5, the Sobel Test confirms that Social Assistance Characteristics (KBS) fully mediates the relationship between Social Assistance Management (PBS) and Beneficiary Welfare (KPM) (t=6.059, p=0.000). Full mediation is established because: (1) PBS significantly predicts KBS ( $\beta_1 = 0.750$ ; p=0.000); (2) KBS significantly predicts KPM ( $\beta_3 = 0.889$ ; p=0.000); (3) the indirect effect is significant ( $\beta_1 \times \beta_3 = 0.667$ ; t=6.059; p=0.000); and (4) the direct PBS→KPM path is non-significant ( $\beta_2 = 0.087$ ; p=0.245) when KBS is included in the model. Social Assistance Management does not reach welfare beneficiaries directly; it must first improve aid targeting, timeliness, and adequacy, and these characteristics then produce welfare improvements.

## 4.2 Discussion

### 4.2.1 Why PBS Does Not Directly Affect Welfare

The rejection of H2—Social Assistance Management has no significant direct effect on Beneficiary Welfare—is a critical empirical finding that aligns with [Finkelstein and Hendren \(2020\)](#) and [Hanung and Atmaja \(2021\)](#)'s evidence that even technically well-managed programs fail to improve welfare if targeting accuracy, timeliness, and aid adequacy are lacking. In Kamoro Jaya, the program demonstrates technical management success, as targeting procedures, officer professionalism, and food quality are rated favorably. However, the program fails on socialization of eligibility criteria, recipient participation in evaluation, aid amount adequacy relative to rising prices, and absence of complementary empowerment programming (skills training, credit access, and social counseling). Management improvements—however administratively sound—cannot reach welfare beneficiaries if the aid itself does not arrive at the right households, at the right time, and in the right amounts. This management-welfare dissociation is a structural finding that motivates the study's policy recommendations.

### 4.2.2 Why KBS Has the Dominant Welfare Effect

The Social Assistance Characteristics variable (KBS) achieves the highest direct coefficient ( $\beta = 0.889$ ; t=12.145) in the model, which is the dominant predictor of Beneficiary Welfare. Three dimensions drive this dominance: First, targeting accuracy: Whether aid reaches genuinely eligible households determines whether welfare improvements materialize at the household level. The documented failure of Data Terpadu Kesejahteraan Sosial (DTKS) to reflect actual poverty in remote Papua communities ([Purba et al., 2025](#)) means that targeting errors—both the exclusion of eligible households and the inclusion of ineligible ones—directly reduce the welfare impact of every disbursement. Second, timeliness: 32.5% of Kamoro Jaya respondents received aid at irregular intervals, creating household budget uncertainty that negates the protective function of periodic assistance. Third, aid adequacy: With 62.5% of respondents having five or more family members—and with Mimika's high-cost economy driving living costs above the national average—the standard PKH aid amounts are insufficient to cover the real welfare gap. These

three characteristics collectively accounted for 88.9% of the welfare variation, confirming that they constitute the essential welfare-determining mechanism.

#### 4.2.3 Full Mediation: The Policy Implication

The Sobel Test's confirmation of full mediation (PBS→KBS→KPM;  $t=6.059$ ;  $p=0.000$ ; indirect effect=88.5% of the total PBS effect) delivers a clear policy message: social assistance management investments will not generate welfare returns unless they are first channeled through improvements in social assistance characteristics. This full mediation pattern distinguishes Kamoro Jaya from other contexts (Ahmadun et al., 2023; Akbarzadeh & Katsikas, 2023), where management and characteristics partially and independently predict welfare. Full mediation likely reflects Kamoro Jaya's more extreme context—a remote, resource-poor, infrastructure-limited village where management improvements have no welfare transmission pathway except through the tangible quality of the aid itself. In such contexts, administrative reform without complementary targeting, scheduling, and adequacy improvements is insufficient.

#### 4.2.4 The Charitable Trap: Dependency Without Empowerment

A qualitative dimension of the findings—consistent with Brown et al. (2025) and Charkhgard et al. (2022)—reveals that the current PKH implementation in Kamoro Jaya functions as a charitable (karitatif) intervention: technically efficient in aid delivery but structurally insufficient to build the independence of beneficiaries. The findings show that despite improved food access and healthcare visits, educational conditions remain concerning (children dropping out of school), savings capacity is low, and no complementary empowerment programs (skills training, business credit, psychosocial support) accompany cash transfers. This validates Friedlander and Apte (1980)'s and Dwilaksmi et al. (2025) and Fadhli and Nazila (2023)'s warnings against one-shot, consumption-oriented programs: the program currently improves short-term welfare but does not build the human capital and income-generating capacity that would allow families to exit poverty without continued assistance. The full mediation finding implies that adding empowerment programming as a fourth dimension of social assistance characteristics—alongside targeting accuracy, timeliness, and aid adequacy—would strengthen the PBS→KBS→KPM pathway's long-term effectiveness.

## 5. Conclusions

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This study used path analysis on 40 PKH beneficiaries in Kamoro Jaya Village to examine the effects of Social Assistance Management (PBS) and Social Assistance Characteristics (KBS) on Beneficiary Welfare (KPM). The findings show that beneficiaries are mostly productive-age women with large households, indicating persistent structural poverty. PBS significantly improves KBS (H1 supported), but has no direct effect on KPM (H2 rejected). In contrast, KBS has a strong and significant effect on KPM (H3 supported) and, together with PBS, explains 91.3% of welfare variation (H4 supported). The Sobel Test confirms full mediation, meaning PBS affects welfare only through KBS. Overall, welfare improvements depend entirely on the quality of targeting, timeliness, and adequacy of assistance.

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## **Author Contributions**

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FEW contributed to conceptualization, data collection, data analysis, manuscript drafting, and final approval. YH was responsible for research design, theoretical framework, methodology, manuscript revision, and final approval. MI handled supervision, methodology, manuscript revision, and final approval.

## **Conflicts of Interest**

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The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest that could have influenced, or be perceived to have influenced, the research presented in this article. This study was conducted in an objective and independent manner, and no financial, commercial, or personal relationships exist that may constitute a potential conflict of interest in relation to the design, implementation, analysis, interpretation, or publication of the findings.

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