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An evaluation of individual entrepreneurial orientation and community development in Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper is a review paper that examines the relationship between individual entrepreneurial orientation and community development. Entrepreneurial orientation is conceived as the tendency or openness of a firm or an individual towards innovativeness, risk-taking, pro-activeness and autonomy. On the other hand, Community development relates to the revitalization, improvement and positive changes brought to a Community either through external support or members' contributions and involvement. It was further argued that individual entrepreneurial orientation like Community development is capable of stimulating developments in the areas of education, healthcare, agricultural extension, rural industry as well as the social fabrics of the Community. It was lastly concluded that while business firms within a community can actually initiate ideas and programmes that should benefit the Community as one of its stakeholders, individuals who are considered major stakeholders in the Community in development initiatives are expected to develop their entrepreneurial tendencies, which would stimulate commercial activities and overall development that will make life more meaningful for every dweller and stakeholder.

Keywords: Individual; Entrepreneurial; Orientation; Community; Community development

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship has been succinctly described as the process of seeking and identifying opportunities for the creation of needs - satisfying values that result in starting and running new ventures or improving existing others under conditions of risks (Gabriel, 2022). On the other hand, entrepreneurial orientation (EO) is an embodiment of different kinds of firm related behaviours aimed at introducing new processes, new production techniques, manufacturing new products lines, and exploring newly discovered market opportunities (Olubiyi et al., 2019; Luu and Ngo, 2019; Basco et al., 2020).

Researchers conceptualised EO using different names such as entrepreneurial style, entrepreneurial behaviours, entrepreneurial intensity, corporate entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial posture, strategic posture, and entrepreneurial proclivity ((Wiklund & Shepherd 2003; Griffith et al., 2006; Eniola, 2020). However, Voss, Voss, and Moorman (2005) defined EO as a firm-level disposition to engage in behaviours reflecting risk-taking, innovativeness, proactiveness, autonomy, and competitive aggressiveness that lead to change in the organization or marketplace.

Entrepreneurial orientation has largely been viewed as a corporate behaviour, however, there is also the individual side to it as stated by Robinson and Stubberrud (2014); giving rise to the concept of individual entrepreneurial orientation

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(IEO). Understanding EO at the individual level could be beneficial to future business owners, business breeders and potential investors while EO is characterised in literature as the overall aspect of an organisation (Goktan & Gupta, 2015), IEO is understood to be a comprehensive evaluation of individual tendency towards entrepreneurship (Basso et al., 2009). IEO therefore is defined as an individual's tendency towards market/product innovation, undertaking risky ventures (i.e. risk taking), and pursuit of opportunities proactively (Miller, 1983).

Because entrepreneurial orientation has been linked to economic development and societal well-being at large, there is also that tendency that IEO would boost community development when adequately harnessed. On the other hand, development reflects the state of advancing from height to height in line with relevant measurement indicators (Gabriel & Kobani, 2022). Although the concept of IEO has not been given as much scholarly attention as entrepreneurial orientation, there are however, researches that have considered the impact of IEO on other variables. Some researches on this line of thought have been restricted to the analysis of the determinants of IEO, measures of IEO Ferreira et al., 2017; Gotkan and Gupta, 2015; Kollman, Chistofor and Kuckert, 2007; Kraus, Breier and Hughes, 2019; Mustafa, Gavin and Hughes, 2018), the analysis of EO at the group level (Kollman et al., 2017; Monsen and Boss, 2009), the link between IEO and performance or success (Chien, 2014; Keil, Maula and Syrigos, 2017), and the effect of IEO on competitive strategy (Lechner and Gudmundsson, 2014).

The exploration of IEO outside of the developed economic regions remains extremely limited (Bruton et al., 2015; Wad, 2009; Zainol and Ahyadurai, 2011). Little is known of IEO motivators or triggers in emerging economies, i.e. economies that are increasingly moving to market orientation and seeking to rapidly advance economically using entrepreneurship as a tool (Bruton and Chen, 2016; Zainol and Ayadurai, 2011). Consequent upon these identified lacunae, this paper is purposed to minify this gap by examining individual entrepreneurial orientation and community development. In the light of this purpose, the specific objectives of this paper shall include the following:

- Discuss the concept of entrepreneurial orientation and its dimensions with focus on individual orientation
- Review literature on community development and its proxies
- Relate individual entrepreneurial orientation to community development
- Draw conclusion based on the outcome of the discussions made.
- Make recommendations accordingly.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Concept of Individual Entrepreneurial Orientation (IEO)

The concept of individual entrepreneurial orientation cannot be adequately defined without reference to entrepreneurial orientation itself. Avlonitis and Salavou (2007) explained that entrepreneurial orientation (EO) constitutes an organizational phenomenon that reflects a managerial capability by which firms embark on proactive and aggressive initiatives to alter the competitive scene to their advantage. Cools and Van den Broeck (2007/2008) describe entrepreneurial orientation (EO) as referring to the top management's strategy in relation to innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk taking. Pearce, Fritz, and Davis (2010) "An EO is conceptualized as a set of distinct but related behaviours that have the qualities of innovativeness, proactiveness, competitive aggressiveness, risk taking, and autonomy".

The meaning and dimensions attached to entrepreneurial orientation lacks any significant variation from what individual entrepreneurial orientation represents because the characteristics of an entrepreneurial company also apply to individuals. Covin et al. (2020: 2) define IEO as 'a tendency held by individual employees of the organization towards innovative, proactive, and risk-taking behaviours in the workplace'. Wiklund and Shepherd (2003) describe it as intangible resources; implying that these resources can be a personal asset of the individual just like tacit knowledge. Those individuals who are less risk averse, innovative thinkers, and competitive tend to have a higher EO and greater success at starting a business. For example, starting a lawn care business or a beauty shop are very valid and necessary entrepreneurial ventures, and will have a better chance of success if an entrepreneur possesses a higher EO.

2.2. Dimensions of Individual Entrepreneurial Orientation

Research studies have identified some components of EO to include innovativeness, proactiveness, risk-taking, competitive aggressiveness, and autonomy (Lumpkin and Dess, 1996; Yaro et al., 2020). These dimensions are discussed briefly below-

2.2.1. Innovativeness

Innovativeness is the tendency to pursue creativity and experimentation. Some innovations build on existing skills to create incremental improvements, while more radical innovations require brand-new skills and may make existing skills obsolete. Either way, innovativeness is aimed at developing new products, services, and processes. Those organizations that are successful in their innovation efforts tend to enjoy stronger performance than those that do not. Innovativeness is regarded as a core component required for a business firm to be entrepreneurial (Lumpkin and Dess, 1996; Isichei et al., 2019); and remain competitive too. It connotes the willingness of firms in discovering and applying new ideas or approaches to improve products and services for market delivery (Isichei et al., 2019; Olubiyi et al., 2019). In other words, firm innovativeness is associated to the introduction of new processes, products, services, and technologies within an organization (Cao and Zhang, 2011; Lee et al., 2018).

2.2.2. Proactiveness

Proactiveness is the tendency to anticipate and act on future needs rather than reacting to events after they unfold. A proactive organization is one that adopts an opportunity-seeking perspective. Such organizations act in advance of shifting market demand and are often either the first to enter new markets or “fast followers” that improve on the initial efforts of first movers. By embracing opportunities that others fear, Proactive’s executives have carved out a lucrative niche in a world that is technologically, environmentally, and politically turbulent (Choi, 2008). The concept of proactiveness as a component of EO has received great attention in the entrepreneurship literature (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Leischnig, 2018; Rank and Streng, 2018; Isichei et al., 2019; Olubiyi et al., 2019; Luu and Ngo, 2019; Basco et al., 2020).

2.2.3. Risk Taking

Risk taking refers to the tendency to engage in bold rather than cautious actions. Although a common belief about entrepreneurs is that they are chronic risk takers, research however, suggests that entrepreneurs do not perceive their actions as risky; most take action only after using planning and forecasting to reduce uncertainty (Simon et al., 2000), but uncertainty seldom can be fully eliminated. Venkatraman (1989) defined risk-taking behaviour as “the extent of riskiness reflected in various resource allocation decisions as well as choice of products and markets” (p.949). While some empirical studies have conceptualised risk-taking as an individual trait exhibited by managers to influence business decisions (Sitkin and Weingart, 1995), this project followed research work that applied risk-taking as a firm-level behaviour (Pérez-Luño et al., 2011; Anderson and Eshima, 2013; Boso et al., 2013; Putnins and Sauka, 2019).

2.2.4. Competitive Aggressiveness

Competitive Aggressiveness is a firm's propensity to directly and intensely challenge its competitors to achieve entry or improve position, that is, to outperform industry rivals in the marketplace (Lumpkin and Dess, 1996). A strong offensive posture directed at overcoming competitors and can be part of a reaction patterns firms adopt to defend its market position or aggressively enters a market that a rival has identified (Lumpkin and Dess, 2001). Venkatraman (1989) suggested that competitive aggressiveness is accomplished by setting ambitious market share goals and taking bold steps to achieve them, such as cutting prices and sacrificing profitability.

2.2.5. Autonomy

In the opinion of Felício, et al, (2012); Lumpkin and Dess (2001), autonomy explains the ability of an individual or a group to independently implement an idea or a vision to its full completion stage. A firm that exhibits autonomous behaviour embraces individual creativity by promoting new ideas (Yaro et al., 2020). Autonomy is seen as a self-driven behaviour geared towards achieving set goals (Awang et al., 2009). Individuals who exhibit autonomy prefer to take decisions with less regard to the opinion of others (Lee, 1997). Ndubisi and Argawal (2014) see autonomy as the “authority to stick to one’s conviction” (p.457). Researchers has defined autonomy based on the leadership style and ownership structure (i.e., centralised nature of the leadership of the firm and how often the leaders delegate duties to subordinates) (Lumpkin and Dess, 1996).

2.2.6. Conceptualizing Community Development

Alozie (2012) sees 'Community development as a structured intervention that gives communities control over the conditions that affect their lives.' Anyanwu (1999) said it is 'the process of life in the community, by which the people plan and act together for the satisfaction of their felt needs.' A careful consideration of the definitions above, given by organizations and individuals, shows that Community development has been described as a movement, a method and a process. The implication is that Community development as a development tool manifests in different forms depending on the Practitioner.

It needs be noted, however, that Community development in contemporary times has gone beyond the traditional role of improving the social, economic and physical conditions of individuals to include improvement in their emotional and psychological dispositions. Based on this, Community development can be defined as a process by which the people with or without external help take steps to improve on the social, economic and physical standards as well as the emotional and psychological dispositions of Community members relying mostly on local initiative, leadership and resources (Kobani and Alozie, 2019).

To Ezimah (2004) Community development is the economic, physical and social revitalization of communities led by the people who live in that Community. To this end, Community development can be described as a process by which the efforts of members of a community are united with those of governmental and non-governmental bodies for a gradual and positive reconditioning process with which reliance is on local initiative, leadership and resource for development in the physical and social structures of the community and general well-being of the inhabitants (Kobani, 2014). Community Development was first mentioned internationally at the 1948 Cambridge Summer Conference. There it was agreed that the compound word 'Community development' should be used in place of 'Mass education' and defined as:

A movement designed to promote better living with the active participation and if possible on the initiative of the community but if this initiative is not forth coming spontaneously, by the use of techniques for arousing and stimulating it in order to ensure its active and enthusiastic response to the movement (in Kobani and Alozie, 2019:28).

Based on the consideration of the various views about community development, the following basic characteristics of community development can be identified:

- Community development is concerned with the people rather than with any group or segments of the population. Even though, all the people will not necessarily participate in community development projects.
- Community development is always concerned with bringing about social change in the community.
- Community development usually involves technical assistance in the form of personnel, equipment, supplies, and finance or consultancy services. This assistance could come from government and inter- governmental sources or voluntary organizations and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs).
- Community development is essentially inter-disciplinary. It implies integrated attempts to make available for the service of the community's various specialties such as the social agencies, agriculture, education, public administration, public health, adult education, town planning and social work.
- Community development is an educational process designed to create conditions favorable to economic and social change, if possible, on the initiative of the community, but if that initiative is not forth coming spontaneously, by using the technique for arousing and stimulating it.
- It is sustainable and based on felt needs of the people.
- It is democratic in philosophy and encourages popular participation by individuals and groups.

Amirize (1998) noted the following vital elements as necessary accompaniment in community development programmes:

- The *need for change*: since life is never static, motion and change are always necessary and inevitable, and it is better to initiate changes rather than wait for them to come in a disruptive and painful way.
- The *unit of action* in community development process should be the community itself, taking into consideration its peculiar local characters.
- Expressed *felt needs* of the people should be the focus of community development activities, i.e. *needs and people-centred* process.
- *Local participation, involvement and commitment* of the people in their self-chosen programmes and activities that enhance the success of community development.
- *A genuine change begins from inside*, in the attitude, thinking and perception of the people, and then manifests outwardly in the environment.
- *Effective local leadership* is called for in community development and this must be established at the earliest stage, based on ability.
- *Community self-help projects should be supplemented* by the government and other external agencies as an encouragement to promote development.
- Development of awareness of need and an awakening from a state of lethargy in a people should precede physical development for a community that is asleep.

It is apparent then, that, Community employs the same identified components of EO which are innovativeness, proactiveness, risk-taking, competitive aggressiveness, and autonomy. One of the principles of Community development is hinged on the premise that all its programmes/projects must be founded on the initiative of the locals at the grassroots who are the major stakeholders/beneficiaries of such projects. This initiative may also be viewed as the innovativeness on the part of community members. Onyeozu (2007) points out that the element of participation is a sine qua-non in Community Development. He noted that in any group activity which does not include an aspect of human participation by members of the group, cannot be regarded legitimately as community development.

The concept of Participation which is not just a basic principle but a philosophical basis of Community development implies proactiveness on the part of Community members to take their destiny into their own hands without unnecessary interference from external agencies outside the Community. This process is what is referred to as indigenization (Gabriel and Kobani, 2022). This also goes in line with the autonomous nature of the adult that is self-directed. The World Bank's Learning Group on Participatory Development defines participation as a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources which affect them (World Bank, 1996).

On risk-taking in Community development, Amirize (1998) stated that any step that is jumped or any gap left in the development process would otherwise, lead to an eventual collapse as its end result. Like a building process, development should be systematic and thorough ensuring that nothing which should be experienced or done should be swept aside, pointing out that Community development involved both the weird and wonderful. Where this happens, the gap or hollowness created would undermine the stability of the structure or process and thus, lead to many problems. He also noted that past experiences, however bitter, should serve and be used as valuable and inevitable steps in the ladder of a continuous process of growth.

One of the characteristics of the adult is autonomy. Adults are the ones obviously making today's decisions, running the communities, identifying needs and acquiring skills to improve living conditions while humanity waits on the children and youths who are the future. Autonomy is derived from the Greek words, auto meaning self and nomos meaning law. Together, this means one giving his own self in to his own laws. Adults typically prefer a sense of control and self-direction. They like options and choice in their environment. Even adults who feel anxiety from self-direction may learn to appreciate this approach if they are given proper initial support. Autonomy in Community development can be likened to the concepts of self-help and self-reliance (Kobani and Alozie, 2016).

The major issue in self help is the desire of the people to achieve improvement through their own efforts and resources. Self help enables the local people to exploit their resources - human and material - which otherwise would have remained latent - to solve their problems. It increases the people's confidence in handling their affairs and generally secure the peoples' active participation in programmes designed to improve their living standards. The community learns to depend less on external agencies for assistance and only sees external assistance as a supplement to community efforts. Self help creates a platform where people in a community can take part in the planning, implantation and evaluation of projects aimed at development. This fosters the spirit of ownership of the projects and enhances sustainability of community development projects and programmes (Kobani and Alozie, 2019).

3. Scope of Community Development

Community development is as wide as community life itself. Barikor (1984) observed that 'community development by contemporary standard is a polymorphous product, an amalgam of many dynamic and complementary factors including educational, economic, social, political and cultural transformation of the community and subsequent emancipation...' It therefore follows that all programmes seeking improved ways by which a community is educated and motivated; promote the quality of individual and communal life and enhance their capacity to contribute to nation building falls within the scope of community development. The list below is in no way exhaustive.

3.1. Agricultural Extension

Agricultural extension provides a veritable base community development. Extension is a continuous education process to develop individuals, village leaders and the community as a whole. In agricultural extension the people are motivated through a proper and organized approach to help themselves by applying science and technology in farming, home making and community living. With adequate orientation towards entrepreneurship, individuals would be able to apply their agricultural knowledge meaningfully to enhance productivity, and marketing success.

3.2. Health

Diseases may affect rural populations due to their unhygienic conditions of living through ignorance or absence of better alternatives such as in the lack of portable drinking and bathing water facilities. Elementary health education can be introduced by a community development officer to arouse people's interest and to ensure better health for all. Such education will focus on general cleanliness, both personal and communal, waste disposal, and removal of possible causes of water pollution. Entrepreneurs also have a lot to do regarding cleanliness in the community. With entrepreneurial mindset, individual would be able to take advantage of investment opportunities in waste management and that would reduce unemployment and engage young people meaningfully.

3.3. Home Economics

This programme promotes improved ways of keeping a home, cooking food, decorating a house, raising children, keeping the house clean from insects, gardening and nutrition. The target in this programme is the family as the basic unit of the community. Children through this programme imbibe the spirit of initiative, responsibility and service as preparation for their future leadership roles. Investment opportunities avail in this area of a community life also. Catherine services are in high demand because eating food is a necessity that no one outgrows.

3.4. Cooperatives

Cooperatives are very important means for transforming rural economy. It is a means of strengthening small producers and consumers. Cooperatives encourage the pooling together of resources by farmers and other individuals to gain the advantage of bulk purchases. Members are able to enjoy the benefits of thrift and credit facilities available to cooperative societies. Also, the rural people may set up consumers' cooperatives as a means of getting goods at lower or subsidized prices. This increases their disposable income and improves living standards in the community. Entrepreneurial orientation becomes very useful here because it provides the individual relevant skills and knowledge of how to function as members of cooperative societies and also take full advantage of the advantages they offer.

3.5. Rural Industries

These industries are usually in small scale. Some of them are agro-based since their raw materials can be obtained from agriculture, and these would include bakery, pottery, soap-making, carving and weaving, metal working, fishery and poultry. These industries are not capital intensive and are adapted to local conditions as there is a guarantee of the availability of raw materials, the existence of local demand and the supply of local labour. They provide alternative types of employment and thus curb rural-urban drift. They also improve the quality of rural life by supplying a wide range of goods to the market. The well-being of any community has much to do with the effectiveness of these industries. And such effectiveness is also dependent on individuals' entrepreneurial orientation. The more entrepreneurial members of a community there are the more involvement that will be also put into these industries.

3.6. Housing

Programmes in housing as part of community development should educate the people about house ventilation, roofing, designing and location of cooking stores and latrines. This is to ensure that convenient and hygienic measures are taken in setting up houses.

3.7. Public Amenities

The availability of public amenities such as safe water, safer roads, health facilities, public conveniences etc. Generally, the better improved the living standards of the people. Educating the people on these vital aspects of community development will stir in them the- interest and consciousness to complement government efforts by embarking on self-help developmental projects.

3.8. Recreation and use of Leisure

The absence of recreation will make rural life dull, and lead to an increase in social problems as idle gossip, alcoholism, quarrels, litigation and waste of money. Consequently, sports and entertainment should form part of community development. Team games may be used to arouse community spirit; and public entertainment, through storytelling, masquerade, dance and drama will serve to enliven community life. Recreation and entertainment are useful ingredients for any integrated community development programme, not only as an ideal force of keeping the community united and strong, but also to preserve the people's cultural identity.

4. Building entrepreneurial orientation for Community development

Role of Entrepreneurship in contribution to Community Development comes through either citizen participation in Corporate Social Responsibility practices in the community or direct involvement of individuals in entrepreneurship as source of economic liberation. The former comprises organisations actions that are aimed at doing business without causing harm or deliberately implementing policies and actions that benefit the society in ways that also create good atmosphere for her operations. The basic idea of CSR is that business and society are interwoven rather than separate entities; as such, the healthiness of businesses cannot be at the detriment of the society, rather, a healthy society can groom healthy businesses (Gabriel and Kobani, 2022).

Entrepreneurs are able to contribute to and support Community development by providing infrastructure for education, healthcare, business training, agricultural activities and mentoring; and other social needs at community level. Within the context of a developmental approach, entrepreneurship provides an avenue to engage communities in their own development. This requires a refocus of Community development agents, members of the community including the local leaders, interest groups and opinion leaders on their role in poverty reduction and social, economic and political development, and hence in direct and indirect socio-economic activities. This is where individual entrepreneurial orientation becomes important. When majority of community players become creative, become aggressive in what they pursue, think autonomously and get cool with risk, the tendency is that more businesses will erupt and the social fabrics of such society will turn around for positive developments. The overriding objective of a community development programme is to improve the living standard of individuals in a community to the extent that the community's resources - human and material - can accommodate.

Apart from this, other objectives of community development include:

- To ensure that all aspects of community living are developed equitably so as to avoid imbalance or neglect in any area.
- To achieve increase in productivity and to raise the production potentials by stimulating the human and physical processes of change.
- To reduce poverty and unemployment in the communities.
- To enhance self-reliance and increase the economic viability of families.
- To explore and use technical assistance from outside the community.
- To cooperate with and coordinate state and national development plans

Community development aims at agricultural extension and development, rural industrial development, sanitation, disease control and health programmes, education, cooperatives, development of communication and other recreational activities. From the above, we can conclude that the main objective of community development is to bring out the best in individuals to meet personal and communal needs. However, we agree with Oyebamiji and Adekola (2008) who noted that the dynamics of society has resulted to the expansion of the objectives of community development to include fight against ignorance, poverty, diseases, harmful and obnoxious cultural practices and social apathy among people regardless of age, sex, class or religion.

According to Amirize (2009) in designing an effective Community development Programme it is highly pertinent to ensure that the following guiding principles are considered.

- **Educability:** The ultimate good or end of learning is not knowledge for its own sake, but knowledge transferred into positive actions and attitude. This may also be called the principle of transfer of learning. Learning does not take place in the school alone but in life through personal experience. Application of knowledge.
- **Humanism:** The essence of a sound education is to produce the ideal human being with a human face and a sound conscience.
- **Personal responsibility:** Recognition of the fact that the educated person is one who can fulfill personal responsibilities in all ramifications. This includes personal integrity and accountability.
- **Functionalism:** Education that enables an individual to be truly functional, i.e. able to work diligently with the hands and to reason and think critically and logically with the brain, as opposed to complacency. This includes the ability to develop and utilize one's talents.
- **Productivity:** Diligent and dignified attitude towards human endeavours and the desire to create lasting values through personal activities. This includes using personal abilities to enhance the common good of humanity, as a joyful activity.

- Creative self-engagement: Ability to be innovative, creative, resourceful and imaginative. This includes engaging oneself in such useful and challenging hobbies which can add value and joy to life, such that leisure hours become useful and gainful moments.
- Patriotism and good citizenship: Inculcation of true nationalism, willingness to make personal sacrifices for the good of the nation, as opposed to greed, selfishness and unpatriotic attitude.
- Self-reliance and self-actualization: This includes building up of a positive work culture which seeks to explore and employ every ability to improve human conditions and finding inner personal satisfaction through such orientation.

5. Conclusion

The development of any community cannot be successful without the permission, support and direct/indirect involvement of the germinal or adopted members of such community. That is to say that no amount of external magnanimity towards any community can bring desirable outcomes when the people who own the community are not supportive. The most sustainable development is the one that has originality from the community and also enjoys the approval of the community. This is where individual entrepreneurial orientation becomes an essential vehicle for driving social and economic changes and growth in any community. According to Gabriel and Kobani (2022) ideally, every community would seek to enhance the general well being of its people through education, training, empowerment, healthcare services and so on. Such strategies enhance development within the community. Although there are different stakeholders in every community, both internal and external, but the role of the internal stakeholders remain vital for development. While business firms within a Community can actually initiate ideas and programmes that should benefit the community as one of its stakeholders, individuals are expected to develop their entrepreneurial tendencies, in so doing the community will experience development that will make life more meaningful for every dwellers and stakeholders.

Compliance with ethical standards

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Disclosure of conflict of interest

We, the authors have no conflicts of interest to declare. All co-authors have seen and agree with the contents of the manuscript. We certify that the submission is original work and is not under review at any other publication.

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