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Building Human Capital for Rural MSMEs through Simplified Financial Reporting Training in Margorejo Village, Indonesia

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Abstract

Purpose— This community-service program addressed limited financial record-keeping among micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME) owners in Margorejo Village, South Lampung, and described immediate changes in responses to a basic financial-reporting questionnaire.

Implementation Method— On 10 June 2025, the Margorejo Village Government and a university team delivered a one-day program for 20 local MSME actors. The activities combined explanation, discussion, transaction simulations, and guided bookkeeping practice; a ten-item pre-test and immediate post-test provided descriptive evaluation.

Results and Discussion— Across 200 item-responses, answers coded correct increased from 80 (40.0%) to 167 (83.5%); one item concerned reporting readiness. Purpose and transaction-recording items showed the largest score differences, while statement components, current assets, and profitability remained relatively difficult. Participants also discussed practical barriers to maintaining accounts.

Implications— The one-group assessment showed higher immediate questionnaire scores, not established durable learning or changes in financial behavior. Progressive training, simple record templates, and follow-up mentoring are recommended, subject to partner capacity and further evaluation.

Keywords: Financial reporting; Financial literacy; MSMEs; SAK EMKM; Community Services.
Paper type: Community Partnerships and Impacts

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1. Introduction

Micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) sustain household livelihoods and local trade in Indonesia, yet many owner-managed enterprises operate without consistent financial records. Without a regular transaction book, owners may find it difficult to separate household and business expenses, assess margins, and prepare information for financing decisions. Research on the use of accounting information by smaller firms identifies education and practical support as important factors (Santos et al., 2023). Evidence from Chile also links microenterprises' adoption of accounting systems to access to finance, firm size, and technology use (Najera Ruiz & Collazzo, 2021). These findings support training that begins with manageable recording routines rather than complex reporting software.

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Indonesia's 2022 National Financial Literacy and Inclusion Survey reported a financial literacy index of 49.68% (Otoritas Jasa Keuangan [OJK], 2022). This national indicator provides context but does not represent a measurement of Margorejo participants. At the enterprise level, financial knowledge, actual recording practices, and financing outcomes are related but different concepts (Graña-Alvarez et al., 2024; Molina-García et al., 2023). A study of Indonesian market-based SMEs further associates financial literacy with access to finance and technology adoption, without establishing that basic literacy instruction alone produces better business performance (Kurniasari et al., 2025).

Margorejo Village is located in Jati Agung District, South Lampung Regency, Lampung Province. Businesses identified during preliminary observation and conversations included agricultural and food-related activities, sales of vegetables and daily necessities, and small-scale processing. The program team observed that business actors encountered during preliminary visits sometimes relied on memory or scattered notes rather than a systematic transaction book. Such practices may complicate expense identification, the distinction between receipts and profit, and working-capital planning. The locality was therefore a relevant partner setting for introductory bookkeeping instruction; the observations were diagnostic rather than a population-wide survey.

The Margorejo Village Government collaborated with the team by hosting the program, circulating invitations, and accompanying participants. The initiative formed part of the university's community-service role within the Tridharma obligations established by Indonesian higher-education law (Republic of Indonesia, 2012). Its immediate community benefit was intended to be practical: introducing a cash book and a comprehensible route from daily transactions to simplified financial reports. For the university and its partners, the program also offered a setting for adapting technical instruction to the needs and learning pace of rural entrepreneurs.

Studies of small-enterprise training offer different lessons about implementation. A randomized evaluation across 12 financial-service providers in Indonesia reported mostly null business outcomes, with stronger behavioral change among clients of one implementing partner (Avdeenko et al., 2024). In Ethiopia, business training improved business practices, while a mentoring component produced a more limited pattern of additional outcomes (Bakhtiar et al., 2022). These contrasts make it important to distinguish immediate learning in one session from continued adoption of record-keeping routines. The Margorejo activity therefore focused on introductory reporting tasks and documented immediate questionnaire responses.

The program had two connected objectives: to introduce simplified, SAK EMKM-referenced financial reporting to participating MSME actors and to describe which questionnaire topics showed the largest and smallest immediate score differences from the beginning to the end of the one-day activity. Its contribution lies in a community-focused account of an actual intervention together with a transparent descriptive account of learning indicators and their practical implications for follow-up empowerment.

2. Implementation Method

Community service in Indonesian higher education connects disciplinary knowledge and institutional resources with problems identified by community partners. Indonesian Law No. 12 of 2012 identifies education, research, and community service as Tridharma obligations and frames community service as an application of knowledge for public benefit (Republic of Indonesia, 2012). For a financial-capability program, this implies attention to the partner's initial practices, opportunities for participation, and the feasibility of continuing the activity after the university team leaves. In Margorejo, the village government hosted the activity and distributed invitations, while participating MSME owners supplied the business contexts used in explanation, discussion, and guided recording exercises.

Financial literacy for enterprise owners spans knowledge of income, costs, cash flows, statements, financing, and the ability to apply these concepts in decisions. Reviews of the SME literature distinguish knowledge and awareness from financial behavior and

organizational capability (Graña-Alvarez et al., 2024; Molina-García et al., 2023). Regular use of accounting records is a further practice, not an automatic consequence of learning terminology. Research on accounting systems in microenterprises identifies external finance and technology as correlates of adoption (Najera Ruiz & Collazzo, 2021), while empirical findings from Indonesian SMEs connect literacy with financing opportunities in a broader setting (Kurniasari et al., 2025). Thus, a brief training session can reasonably assess basic understanding without claiming to measure comprehensive business capability.

The Financial Accounting Standards for Micro, Small and Medium Entities (SAK EMKM) provide the Indonesian framework for introducing simplified reporting (Ikatan Akuntan Indonesia [IAI], 2016). Effective from 1 January 2018, the framework includes a statement of financial position, an income statement, and notes. The training used these components to explain the transition from daily transactions to financial statements; it did not ask participants to produce a complete set of compliant statements as the principal evaluation outcome. Research on SAK EMKM adoption emphasizes accounting understanding, socialization, and readiness (Patmawati et al., 2024). Related SME research associates staff training and internal-control arrangements with financial management, indicating that implementation involves organizational routines beyond conceptual awareness (Oyelakin & Abdullahi, 2022).

Experiential learning offers a rationale for combining short explanations with transaction simulation and guided cash-book practice. Morris (2020) emphasizes concrete experience, reflection, and application; a conceptual analysis of entrepreneurship training similarly identifies the transfer of learning into real activities as a separate process (Santana-Domínguez et al., 2022). Connecting terms such as current assets, revenue, and expenses to transactions familiar to participants may make introductory concepts easier to approach than statement construction. However, research synthesizing financial-education and business-training interventions distinguishes learning from sustained behavior and financial outcomes (Kaiser et al., 2022; McKenzie, 2021).

Comparable interventions help place the Margorejo program in context. Siregar et al. (2025) reported a one-day bookkeeping introduction for MSMEs in East Jakarta. In rural Mexico, a randomized business-literacy course increased the use of formal accounting practices among participating entrepreneurs (Calderon et al., 2020). Business training and mentoring in Ethiopia produced improvements in several business practices but did not yield uniform additional profit gains from mentoring (Bakhtiar et al., 2022). In Uganda, personalized financial feedback was evaluated over six months rather than immediately after one class (Grohmann et al., 2022). An Indonesian multicenter evaluation showed that implementation quality varied across partner institutions (Avdeenko et al., 2024). These studies differ in duration, participants, evaluation design, and follow-up; none provides a direct counterfactual for Margorejo.

The Margorejo activity was deliberately introductory: it lasted one day and emphasized cash-book fundamentals alongside the purposes and basic components of SAK EMKM reports. Its ten questionnaire items describe immediate responses to specific topics, with the readiness-related item considered separately from factual accounting questions. The practical contribution is to identify topics that participants answered more easily and topics that could benefit from repeated guided exercises. Questions about sustained record use, report accuracy, or business performance require follow-up observations rather than extrapolation from same-day scores.

3. Results and Discussion

The community-service activity took place on 10 June 2025 in the meeting hall of the Margorejo Village Office, Jati Agung District, South Lampung Regency, from 09:00 to 15:45, including a midday break. The village government provided the venue, circulated invitations approximately one week before the event, and accompanied participants during delivery. Preliminary conversations and visits had identified irregular financial

recording among local microenterprise owners, which motivated the choice of a basic bookkeeping program.

Twenty local MSME actors took part in the assessment and contributed the pre-test and post-test item totals. Village officials, community leaders, and other residents attended parts of the event but were not counted in the analytical denominator. The analysis refers to these 20 participating business actors and was not stratified by age, sex, education, enterprise subsector, or previous accounting experience. Consequently, its findings describe the attending group rather than the population of MSMEs in the village.

Activities followed three stages (Figure 1). Situation analysis involved preparatory observation of local business practices and conversations about transaction recording and financial reporting. The intervention combined presentations, question-and-answer exchanges, transaction simulation, and individual guidance using a simple cash book. Evaluation consisted of the same ten questionnaire items administered before and immediately after training, complemented by observation and informal participant feedback during the event.

The training addressed four partner needs: understanding the role of reports, recording daily transactions, assembling basic statements, and recognizing the importance of financial documents when seeking financing. Table 1 connects these needs with the exercises and intended learning outputs. These outputs guided delivery; whether participants subsequently maintained accurate records or obtained finance was beyond the same-day evaluation. The sequence and evaluation design are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Stages of the community-service program (program design, 2025)

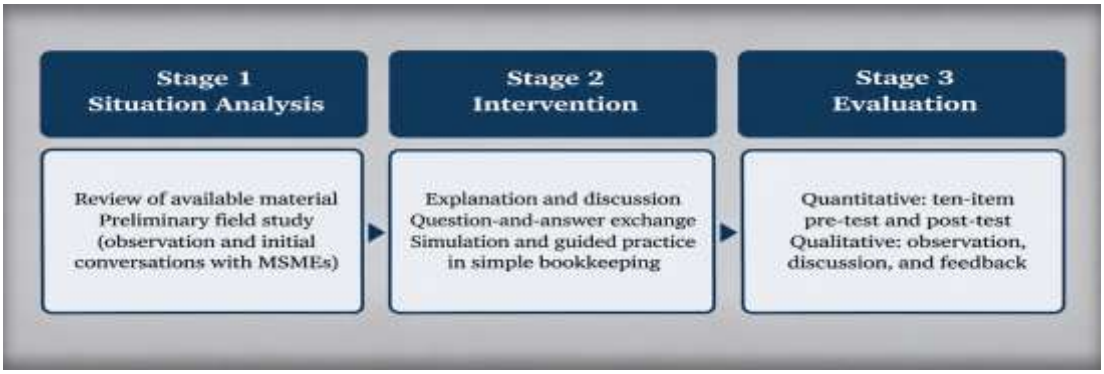


Table 1. Partner problems, interventions, and intended outputs

Partner problem	Program intervention	Targeted output
Limited understanding of why financial reports matter	Interactive explanation of reporting functions for business decisions and access to finance	Awareness of the uses and benefits of reports
Irregular recording of transactions	Practice with a simple cash book or spreadsheet cash template	Ability to begin documenting cash inflows and outflows
Difficulty preparing basic statements	Business simulations and individual guidance with simplified reporting formats	Introductory understanding of how statements are assembled
Limited financial documentation for financing	Explanation and exercises concerning basic information used by financing institutions	Greater awareness of the role of documentation in finance

Note. The final column describes intended learning outputs, not measured post-training business outcomes.

The session sequence is reproduced in Table 2. The team introduced MSME empowerment and elementary financial reporting, explained why daily receipts and expenses should be documented, and used familiar business examples to illustrate SAK EMKM concepts. Simulations and guided cash-book practice were intended to reduce reliance on accounting jargon. Participants also discussed social-media marketing in response to local interests, although the agenda did not allocate a separate time slot to this

ancillary topic. It was not measured by the financial-reporting questionnaire. Participants received printed and digital learning material.

Table 2. Training session schedule

Time	Session	Method
09.00–09.30	Opening (village government and program team)	–
09.30–09.45	Pre-test	Questionnaire
09.45–10.45	MSME empowerment	Explanation and Q&A
10.45–12.00	Financial reporting for MSMEs	Explanation, Q&A, and simulation
12.00–13.00	Break	–
13.00–15.00	Village–academic synergy	Explanation and Q&A
15.00–15.15	Post-test	Questionnaire
15.15–15.45	Closing	–

Note. The schedule follows the program agenda (2025). Guided cash-book exercises and the additional marketing discussion had no separate time allocations.

The evaluation used a descriptive one-group pre-test/post-test design. Before instruction and immediately afterward, the same 20 MSME participants responded to ten questions. The assessment summary recorded, for each item, numbers classified as correct and incorrect using the program's scoring convention; the analysis was based on these aggregated item counts rather than matched individual response histories. One item addressed participants' readiness to prepare SAK EMKM reports, which is conceptually distinct from objective knowledge questions and is interpreted separately. Questions, explanations, and observations during the event provided context for the scores but were not treated as a separate validated qualitative dataset. Using identical items twice also allows recall and testing-familiarity effects.

For each question, the correct-response count was divided by 20 to obtain a percentage, and pre/post differences were reported in percentage points. A descriptive normalized gain was calculated as $g = (\text{post-test percentage} - \text{pre-test percentage})/(100 - \text{pre-test percentage})$, following the transformation presented by Hake (1998). This quantity indicates the fraction of the possible percentage-point increase attained in the aggregated responses; it is not used as a causal effect estimate. For descriptive interpretation, the items were grouped into purpose and recording fundamentals (items 1, 4, 8, and 10), reporting-standard awareness (item 2), statement components and analysis (items 3, 5, 6, and 9), and perceived reporting readiness (item 7). The group summaries pool repeated item-responses rather than measure individual mastery. No significance tests or psychometric validation were undertaken.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Research Result

During initial conversations, participating owners described difficulties distinguishing household and enterprise money, determining whether sales covered costs, and organizing documentation. Their baseline test responses reflected limited familiarity with parts of the material: 80 of 200 item-responses (40.0%) were coded correct, including the readiness-related question. The lowest baseline percentage was 25% for the main components of SAK EMKM statements, while two recording-related questions reached 50%. These are results of the program questionnaire rather than a general financial-literacy score.

The training was delivered through the planned explanation, discussion, simulation, and guided-practice activities. Village representatives supported participation, and attendees asked how reporting concepts related to their own businesses. The guided cash-book session allowed participants to work through transaction examples with assistance. These observations indicate engagement during the event, but they do not establish that the same practices continued after participants returned to their enterprises.

Correct-coded responses increased on all ten questions immediately after training. The pooled total rose from 80/200 (40.0%) to 167/200 (83.5%), a descriptive increase of 43.5 percentage points and a normalized gain of 0.73 under the program scoring convention. The purpose-of-reports item rose from 7/20 to 20/20, understanding of a cash book from 9/20 to 19/20, and SAK EMKM awareness from 7/20 to 18/20. Lower post-test percentages remained for profitability assessment (13/20), statement components (14/20), and current assets (14/20). Table 3 reports each item; the aggregate total does not represent a validated financial-literacy scale.

Table 3. Pre-test and post-test responses coded correct by item (n = 20)

No.	Questionnaire item	Pre-test n (%)	Post-test n (%)	Change (pp)	Gain g
1	Purpose of financial reports	7 (35)	20 (100)	65	1.00
2	Awareness of SAK EMKM-based reporting	7 (35)	18 (90)	55	0.85
3	Main components of SAK EMKM statements	5 (25)	14 (70)	45	0.60
4	Meaning of a cash book	9 (45)	19 (95)	50	0.91
5	Current assets in the statement of financial position	8 (40)	14 (70)	30	0.50
6	Information in the income statement	8 (40)	17 (85)	45	0.75
7	Readiness to prepare SAK EMKM-based reports	9 (45)	16 (80)	35	0.64
8	First step in recording business transactions	10 (50)	18 (90)	40	0.80
9	Simple business profitability assessment	7 (35)	13 (65)	30	0.46
10	Meaning of systematic recording	10 (50)	18 (90)	40	0.80
	All items (200 responses)	80 (40.0)	167 (83.5)	43.5	0.73

Note. pp = percentage points; g = (post-test % − pre-test %)/(100 − pre-test %). Counts are descriptive item summaries. Item 7 concerns perceived reporting readiness and is interpreted separately from factual knowledge.

An arithmetic sensitivity check excluding the readiness item yields 71 of 180 responses coded correct before training (39.4%) and 151 of 180 afterward (83.9%), an increase of 44.4 percentage points. This nine-item calculation describes performance on the remaining questions; it does not transform the instrument into a validated knowledge scale.

Table 4. Descriptive pre-test and post-test item-group summaries.

Topic group	Items	Pre-test correct (%)	Post-test correct (%)	Gain g
Purpose and recording fundamentals	1, 4, 8, 10	45.0	93.8	0.89
Reporting-standard awareness	2	35.0	90.0	0.85
Statement components and analysis	3, 5, 6, 9	35.0	72.5	0.58
Reporting readiness (item 7)	7	45.0	80.0	0.64

Note. Percentages pool responses to the listed items (20 participants multiplied by the number of items). Readiness is shown separately because it is not equivalent to factual knowledge; normalized gain is a descriptive transformation.

Table 4 presents descriptive topic groupings rather than validated competence domains. Purpose and recording fundamentals moved from 45.0% to 93.8% of pooled coded responses; reporting-standard awareness (item 2) from 35.0% to 90.0%; and statement components and analysis from 35.0% to 72.5%. The readiness-labeled item (item 7) is displayed separately, moving from 45.0% to 80.0% under the original scoring convention. Differences among these grouped item proportions cannot establish a hierarchy of person-level skills or equivalent difficulty across constructs.

The program's tangible documented outputs included delivery of the training, distribution of instructional materials, guided exercises, and pre- and post-test item totals from the same twenty attendees at the event level. The results do not establish that each participant subsequently maintained a cash book, produced accurate financial statements, obtained financing, or changed business performance. The intended outputs in Table 1 and observed immediate test outcomes must therefore remain analytically separate.

4.2 Discussion

The largest changes concerned the introductory tasks closest to participants' daily experience: the purpose of records and the first steps in cash-book recording. Statement preparation, by contrast, requires distinguishing assets, expenses, and income and organizing transactions into reporting categories. Research on small-firm accounting shows that daily recognition of a useful record is not the same as regularly adopting an accounting system (Najera Ruiz & Collazzo, 2021; Santos et al., 2023). The association between more structured accounting and access to external finance found in another small-business context also concerns a more advanced practice than this one-day intervention assessed (Hong et al., 2025).

Guided practice may have made cash-book concepts more approachable by allowing participants to work through familiar transactions rather than listen to definitions alone. This interpretation is consistent with experiential learning (Morris, 2020) and the distinction between attending training and transferring learning to enterprise routines (Santana-Domínguez et al., 2022). Evidence from a Ugandan trial suggests that personalized feedback can matter for later financial outcomes, although neither its intervention nor its six-month evaluation matches the Margorejo activity (Grohmann et al., 2022). The present scores cannot isolate the effects of explanation, feedback, simulation, or repeated exposure to the same questions.

The residual difficulty in identifying current assets, understanding statement components, and estimating simple profitability indicates that those topics remained relatively difficult on the immediate assessment and may benefit from repeated guided exercises. These topics require linking successive transactions to a coherent classification system. The 65% correct-response rate on profitability and 70% on several statement-related items indicate where follow-up practical exercises may be most useful. The findings do not prove that participants were incapable of these tasks; rather, some answers remained incorrect at the conclusion of the event.

The findings can be compared cautiously with other training programs. The one-day bookkeeping activity described by Siregar et al. (2025) also emphasized basic records, whereas a rural Mexican experiment assessed later adoption of formal accounting methods (Calderon et al., 2020). In Ethiopia, business training and mentoring had different effects on practices and profits (Bakhtiar et al., 2022). Money-management instruction in an Indian microfinance setting was evaluated through changes in financial-management skills and related outcomes (Dalla Pellegrina et al., 2021). These programs illustrate approaches to developing practical ability but cannot be used to infer unobserved Margorejo outcomes.

Other evidence illustrates why initial learning should not be equated with later business results. An Indonesian randomized study found mostly null outcomes across implementing partners (Avdeenko et al., 2024). A Liberian experiment did not find additional profit and sales gains from combining soft-skills training with standard business training (Dammert & Nansamba, 2023), while a Jamaican evaluation found that some short-run business effects did not persist after 12 months (Ubfal et al., 2022). By contrast, seven-year follow-up in Togo documented lasting but heterogeneous effects of personal-initiative training (Campos et al., 2025). The duration and content of these interventions differ from Margorejo's one-day basic-bookkeeping session, underscoring the need to measure actual record use before discussing long-term benefits.

Knowledge, perceived readiness, and actual accounting behavior require separate interpretations. Responses coded correct on the readiness-labeled item reached 16 of 20

after the session; the item did not constitute a demonstration that participants could independently prepare compliant SAK EMKM statements. Prior work on reporting adoption and SME financial management points to accounting understanding, organizational routines, and continued support as factors worth considering (Oyelakin & Abdullahi, 2022; Patmawati et al., 2024). Whether these factors affected longer-term practice among Margorejo participants was not measured.

Village-government coordination, recognizable transaction examples, participant questions, and direct assistance formed part of the delivery process. The separate contributions of these components to test scores were not measured. Evidence from business training delivered through multiple Indonesian financial-service providers indicates that outcomes may depend on the implementing organization (Avdeenko et al., 2024). This reinforces the practical value of tailoring future sessions to local partner capacity while avoiding a causal claim for any one component of the present program.

A staged training sequence follows from the item pattern: start with purposes of reporting and daily cash transactions, then practice income and expenditure summaries, and finally revisit assets, statement structure, and profitability with concrete examples. Simple templates, repeated clinics, and individualized feedback could support practice, as suggested by findings from microenterprise training and financial-feedback research (Dalla Pellegrina et al., 2021; Grohmann et al., 2022). Such follow-up remains a proposal rather than a documented outcome of the Margorejo event.

4.3 Program Evaluation and Sustainability

Evaluation combined the immediate pre-test/post-test, observation during instruction, questions raised by participants, and informal feedback. The coded-response totals indicate better performance on the program questions at the end of the day, but do not separate learning from recall or testing familiarity. Informal comments were used to understand the practical obstacles raised during the session rather than to estimate their prevalence. The program did not evaluate sustained use of ledgers, the accuracy of completed business statements, or changes in financing and enterprise performance after participants returned home.

The one-day schedule limited opportunities for repeated statement-classification exercises. Facilitators also encountered different needs for explanation and practical guidance, while some reporting concepts remained difficult at the post-test. A village representative expressed interest in continued cooperation and similar activities elsewhere. These observations suggest potential demand for follow-up but do not imply that a second program, agreement, or financial commitment has already been established. Studies with longer observation windows show why repeat evaluation matters: effects can diminish within a year, differ across types of training, or develop over several years (Campos et al., 2025; Dammert & Nansamba, 2023; Ubfal et al., 2022).

A practical next phase would consist of optional bookkeeping clinics with the village administration, beginning with daily cash-book entries and progressing to checking the classification and consistency of simple statements. Future evaluation could document attendance, completeness and accuracy of records, persistence of recording practices, and participants' own accounts of difficulties, with suitable privacy safeguards. These suggestions follow from the topics that remained difficult rather than from any claim that post-program behavioral change has already occurred.

5. Conclusion

A one-day community-service program in Margorejo Village introduced basic financial reporting and cash-book practice to 20 local MSME actors. The proportion of ten-item responses coded correct increased from 40.0% to 83.5% immediately after training. The largest differences were associated with the purpose of reports and initial recording concepts, while statement components, current assets, and profitability remained comparatively difficult. One question concerned reporting readiness and was interpreted

separately from factual accounting knowledge. The descriptive one-group evaluation cannot establish a causal effect or sustained bookkeeping behavior.

The results indicate which topics could receive priority in subsequent community empowerment: repeated exercises for difficult statement concepts, simple daily recording tools, and mentoring designed with village partners. Future evaluation should assess whether participants actually maintain records and produce reliable reports beyond the training day before claiming sustained business or financing benefits.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION
JH: Corresponding; Conceptualization; Methodology; Project administration; Formal analysis; Writing – original draft; Writing – review & editing. **HH:** Methodology; Data curation; Formal analysis; Validation. **DD:** Investigation; Resources; Data curation; Visualization. **WS:** Investigation; Data curation; Formal analysis; Writing – review & editing. **YDA & RIA:** Resources; Writing – review & editing.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST
The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI USE
During the preparation of this work, the author used generative artificial intelligence tools to support the scientific writing process. Grammarly was used to check grammar, refine writing style, and improve clarity in scientific writing. All interpretations, analyses, and conclusions presented in this study are the sole responsibility of the author.

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