Examining the predictors of firm performance: The role of transformational leadership, HRM digitalization, and organizational commitment

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ABSTRACT
This study aims to understand the predictors of firm performance, namely by examining the direct influence of transformational leadership, HRM digitalization, and organizational commitment. The sample which becomes the respondents of this study is the owners or managers of creative MSMEs in Bandung, West Java, with the number of samples of 125 respondents. The data is collected using survey method, namely by giving the questionnaires to the respondents. The data is analyzed using multiple linear regression analysis with SPSS 25 software. The findings prove that transformational leadership, HRM digitalization, and organizational commitment are able to predict firm performance, both partially and simultaneously.

JEL Classification: M10, M12, O32

ARTICLE INFO
Article history:
Received 08 April 2022
Received in rev. form 12 May 2022
Accepted 20 May 2022

Keywords:
Firm Performance, Transformational Leadership, HRM Digitalization, Organizational Commitment

Introduction
The business environment that is currently undergoing rapid changes can have an effect on the way companies do business. To be able to respond to these changes, leaders in companies need to identify factors that can affect the company’s performance as well as carry out other practices that are considered effective, so they can maximize them to achieve higher performance (Mammassis & Kostopoulos, 2019; Tang, 2017). Leaders play an important role in improving performance, because they can form a supportive and conducive situation at work (Eliyana et al., 2019).

Several previous researchers have shown that leadership style, especially transformational leadership, has a positive effect on various performance indicators (Wang et al., 2011; Judge & Piccolo, 2004). Leaders with a transformational style are leaders who can inspire and motivate followers to go beyond their self-interest, and move towards a common goal (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Lord et al., 2017). Although transformational leadership has been found to have a positive effect on performance, the relationship between transformational leadership and performance at the organizational level is still smaller than that of individual subjective performance (Jensen et al., 2020). So, this research was conducted to find out more about the extent to which the leader can affect the company’s performance.

In addition to transformational leadership, organizational commitment is also predicted as a variable that has an important influence on performance. Organizational commitment is significantly related to performance, because committed individuals will continue to...
work in the company and strive to add value to the company (Imamoglu et al., 2019). Organizational commitment also allows the company to get maximum benefits from its employees, because they will carry out harmonious cooperation within the company.

Then, another factor that is also expected to affect the company's performance is the digitization of HRM. Currently, the digital economy has become a concern, including in the business world and the HRM aspect. However, Zhou et al. (2020) stated that digital HRM research tends to be more aimed at knowing the antecedents or predictors of E-HRM. Regarding the consequences, the research conducted also focuses more on the effect of E-HRM on the behavior and attitudes of its users (Marler et al., 2009; Obeidat, 2016). So, the question that arises is whether the digitization of HRM can affect company performance, because previous research still shows inconsistent results in this regard (Zhou et al., 2020; Buckley et al., 2004; Reddick, 2009).

Based on the explanation above, this research was conducted to fill the gap of previous research by understanding the factors that can affect the company's performance. Researchers build and develop a model that combines several factors from different sides as antecedents of company performance, namely transformational leadership, digitalization of HRM, and organizational commitment. Although there have been several previous studies conducted on these concepts, no studies have comprehensively examined these three factors simultaneously. Thus, this study also contributes to the literature by examining the relationship between these variables.

This paper is organized into several parts. First, in the introduction part, the author explains the research background. Following the introduction part, a second part is a literature review with theoretical and empirical studies that shed a light on linkage between theory and practice. The third part introduces the background information on research and methodology. After analysis and findings of the study, authors provide discussions and implications. Finally, this paper concludes with key points, recommendations, future research directions and limitations.

**Literature Review**

**Transformational Leadership**

Transformational leadership is a relational leadership style in which followers have trust and respect for the leader and are motivated to do more than what is formally expected of them to achieve organizational goals (Wang et al., 2017). According to Le & Lei (2019), transformational leadership is defined as a leadership approach that causes changes in individuals and systems in organizations. Bohlander (2019) confirmed the positive impact of transformational leadership on company performance, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and employee well-being. According to Elrehail et al. (2018), transformational leadership can increase motivation and performance through various mechanisms such as understanding the company's internal strengths and weaknesses, especially in the context of HR. Luo et al. (2019) stated that the transformational leadership style serves as a role model for leaders at the management level, both upper, middle and lower management levels, thus leading to better company performance.

Transformational leadership consists of four core dimensions: idealized influence (attributes and behavior) describes a manager who is a role model for followers, sets high standards of behavior, and is able to articulate the organization's vision in an effort to win the competition (Duan et al., 2017; Aldholay et al., 2018; Luo et al., 2019). The second dimension, inspirational motivation, reflects a leader's clear articulation of a compelling vision through words, symbols, and imagery to inspire followers to take action. The third dimension, intellectual stimulation, reflects the degree to which a leader gathers employee perspectives on problems and considers multiple opinions in making decisions. Finally, leaders who engage in individualized consideration, the fourth dimension of transformational leadership, pay attention to individual differences in the needs of their employees and seek to coach or guide them in an effort to help them reach their full potential (Hildenbrand et al., 2018). Previous research conducted by Masood & Afsar (2017), Suifan et al. (2018), Le & Lei (2019), & Manzoor et al. (2019) found that transformational leadership has an effect on company performance.

H1. Transformational leadership has a positive effect on company performance

**HRM Digitalization**

Boudreau and Jesuthasan (2017) stated that the effectiveness of technology does not only depend on the technology itself but also on the characteristics of human resources in responding to changes that occur. Specifically, Amladi (2017) argued that the digitization of HRM is able to improve company performance for at least two reasons: first, employee data can be collected, processed, and used effectively by using advanced digital technology, moreover, organizations can identify various staff within a particular organization. The information can then be used for recruitment processes, interviews, and team development (Amladi, 2017), which in turn helps organizations build a more effective talent pool. Second, analyzing HR-related data in depth with the help of digital technology so that organizations can better understand employees’ personal characteristics (for example, work attitudes and emotional and behavioral tendencies) in an accurate, comprehensive, and timely manner (Marler et al., 2015). In addition, Calvard & Jeske (2018) found that HRM digitalization can increase employee satisfaction and their willingness to stay with the company. Second, without a mature HRM process, the HRM digitization system cannot work effectively, and can even lead to confusion. In addition, without a good HRM process, the digitization system will not be able to run effectively. Previous research stated that HRM digitalization has an effect on company performance (Quoosar, 2017; Zhou et al., 2021). Based on this, the second hypothesis is proposed as follows:

H2. HRM digitalization has a positive effect on company performance
Organizational Commitment

According to Baird et al. (2019), organizational commitment is a condition in which employees reflect an attitude of loyalty to the organization. Therefore, commitment to the organization is very important in achieving organizational goals (Siengthai et al., 2019; Aguiar-Quintana et al., 2020). Jawaad et al. (2019) defined organizational commitment as the strength of the bond that employees feel and identify with their organization. Bohlander (2019) also defines organizational commitment as a psychological state that binds employees to the organization. Furthermore, organizational commitment is characterized by three elements: (1) acceptance of and belief in organizational goals, (2) enthusiasm in striving for the organization, (3) willingness to continue organizational membership. According to Chan & Ao (2019), organizational commitment consists of three dimensions: affective, continuance and normative commitment. This dimension is a component of organizational commitment, not the type to determine the overall organizational commitment of employees to the organization.

Affective commitment is the attachment and identification of employees with the organization emotionally. Continuance commitment is an employee’s choice to continue in an existing organization because of the cost of leaving (Oyewobi et al., 2019). Meanwhile, normative commitment is the employee’s choice to continue working in the existing organization because of a feeling of obligation (Al-Hussami et al., 2018). In short, affective commitment is about the desire to continue the work, continuance commitment is about the need to continue the work, and normative commitment is about the obligation to continue the work in the organization. Previous research stated that organizational commitment has a positive influence on company performance (Peng et al., 2020).

H3. Organizational commitment has a positive effect on company performance

Transformational Leadership, HRM Digitalization, and Organizational Commitment on Firm Performance

The company's ability to manage the organization properly can affect performance. In this case the ability is largely determined by how the role of leadership and the ability of the leader. Transformational leadership can inspire resources so that companies can improve their performance (Elrehail et al., 2018). Luo et al. (2019) stated that transformational leadership can have a positive impact on company performance. In addition, Duan et al. (2017) stated that when information technology develops, companies must respond by preparing the maturity of their resources. Specifically, HRM digitalization can be a company's strength that can improve company performance. Boudreau and Jesuthasan (2017) argued that HRM Digitalization is able to improve company performance due to its ability to respond to technological changes. Furthermore, according to Oyewobi et al. (2019), employee commitment to the organization is very important to achieve company goals and achieve success. Thus, employees can improve their performance. Based on this, the final hypothesis is proposed as follows:

H4. Firm performance is jointly influenced by transformational leadership, HRM digitalization and organizational commitment.

Research and Methodology

This research was conducted with a quantitative approach designed to test and determine the effect between variables, or the relationship of variables through hypothesis testing. The population of this research is Creative SMEs in the city of Bandung, West Java, with a total sample of 125 which is determined by purposive sampling technique. The variables in this study can be classified into exogenous and endogenous variables. Transformational leadership (X1), HRM digitization (X2), and organizational commitment (X3) are exogenous variables. Then, the company's performance (Y) becomes an endogenous variable.

The measurement of the transformational leadership variable was adopted from Avolio & Bass (2004) which has 4 dimensions and 14 items, namely idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration. The digitization of HRM was measured by the scale developed by Zhou et al. (2020) which consists of two items. Furthermore, the organizational commitment variable is measured by a scale developed by Allen & Meyer (1990) which has 18 items and 3 dimensions, namely affective commitment, normative commitment, and continuance commitment. Finally, company performance is measured by the
scale adopted from Wang et al. (2014), consists of 11 items and 2 dimensions, namely operational performance and financial performance. The measurement scale uses a Likert scale with 5 points, which ranges from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The data in this study were collected by distributing questionnaires to the respondents directly. The collected data is then processed, by first testing the validity and reliability. Data analysis was performed by multiple linear regression, using SPSS 25 software.

**Findings and Discussions**

**Respondents’ Characteristics**

The results showed that most of the respondents were female with a total of 57 respondents (52.8%), while for male respondents there were 51 respondents (47.2%). The most age-based respondent data ranged from 24-28 years with a total of 59 respondents (54.6%), followed by respondents aged 34-39 years as many as 24 respondents (22.2%). Followed by respondents aged 18-23 years as many as 22 respondents (20.4%). And the remaining 3 respondents (2.8%) aged > 35 years. Based on the latest education, the data shows that the respondents are dominated by high school/vocational high school graduates as many as 70 respondents (64.8%). Followed by S1 graduates as many as 36 respondents (33.3%). The remaining 2 respondents (1.9%) are postgraduate graduates. Based on marital status, the majority of respondents indicated that as many as 56 respondents (51.9%) were married, followed by respondents who were unmarried as many as 49 respondents (45.4%), the remaining 3 respondents were widows/widowers. Based on years of service, respondents were dominated by respondents with a length of service > 5 years as many as 52 respondents (48.1%), followed by respondents with a length of service of 3-4 years as many as 32 respondents (29.6%), respondents with a length of service work < 1 year as many as 14 respondents (13%), and the remaining 10 respondents with a length of work 1-2 years.

**Validity and Reliability Test**

Validity and reliability tests on the 4-dimensions of transformational leadership variables, 2-dimensions of HRM digitalization, 3-dimensions of organizational commitment, and 2-dimensions of Firm performance, obtained values above 0.5. This means that each item in this study is valid, greater than 0.5. The results of the reliability tests are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha (&gt;0,70)</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transformational Leadership</td>
<td>0.736</td>
<td>Reliable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HRM Digitalization</td>
<td>0.873</td>
<td>Reliable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Commitment</td>
<td>0.845</td>
<td>Reliable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firm Performance</td>
<td>0.713</td>
<td>Reliable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Processed Data (2022)

**Normality Test**

Table 2: Results of Normality Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test</th>
<th>Unstandardized Residual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal Parameters<strong>a</strong></td>
<td>Mean: .0000000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Std. Deviation: 1.06319280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most Extreme Differences</td>
<td>Absolute: .044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive: .033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negative: -.044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test Statistic</td>
<td>.044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.058c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Test distribution is Normal.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Calculated from data.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Lilliefors Significance Correction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Processed Data (2022)

In Table 2, it can be seen that the significance value is 0.0058 > 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that the data used is normally distributed. Furthermore, the results of multicollinearity test are as follows:
### Table 3: Results of Multicollinearity Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Collinearity Statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tolerance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Transformational Leadership</td>
<td>.650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HRM digitalization</td>
<td>.738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational commitment</td>
<td>.637</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: Firm performance

Source: Processed Data (2022)

In Table 3, it can be seen that the independent variable has a tolerance value of not less than 0.10. The value of Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) also shows that the independent variable has a VIF value of not more than 10. Therefore, it can be concluded that the independent variable does not occur multicollinearity.

### Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis is used to determine how much influence transformational leadership, HRM digitalization, organizational commitment and firm performance have. The processing results are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (Constant)</td>
<td>6.046</td>
<td>1.497</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformational leadership (X1)</td>
<td>0.208</td>
<td>0.064</td>
<td>0.250</td>
<td>3.234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HRM digitalization (X2)</td>
<td>0.182</td>
<td>0.073</td>
<td>0.179</td>
<td>2.480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational commitment (X3)</td>
<td>0.218</td>
<td>0.057</td>
<td>0.261</td>
<td>3.850</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: Firm performance (Y)

From the output above, it is known that the intercept and regression coefficient values can be formed so that a multiple linear regression equation can be formed as follows:

\[
Y = 6.046 + 0.208 X1 + 0.182 X2 + 0.218 X3 + e
\]

The above equation can be interpreted as follows:

a = 6.046 it means that if the variables of Transformational leadership, HRM digitalization, and Organizational commitment are zero, then Firm performance will be worth 6,046 units, thus it can be seen that the regression lines intersect the Y axis at 6,046.

b1= 0.208 This means that if Transformational leadership increases by one unit while other variables are constant, then Firm performance will increase by 0.208 units.

b2= 0.182 This means that if the HRM digitization variable increases by one unit while the other variables are constant, then Firm performance will increase by 0.182 units.

b3=0.218 This means that if the variable Organizational commitment increases by one unit while the other variables are constant, then Firm performance will increase by 0.218 units.

From the values above, it can be seen that the t-count value obtained by the transformational leadership variable is 3.234 > t table (1.97214), in accordance with the hypothesis testing criteria that Ho is rejected and Ha is accepted. This means that partially, transformational leadership has a significant effect on firm performance. The HRM digitization variable was obtained 2.480 > t table (1.97214), in accordance with the criteria for testing the hypothesis that Ho was rejected and Ha was accepted. This means that partially, the HRM digitization variable has a significant effect on Firm performance. Organizational commitment was obtained at 3.850 > t table (1.97214), in accordance with the criteria for testing the hypothesis that Ho was rejected and Ha was accepted. This means that partially, organizational commitment variable has a significant effect on firm performance.
Simultaneous Hypothesis Test

Table 5: Results of Simultaneous Hypothesis Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>352,657</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>117,552</td>
<td>28.644</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>804,363</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>4,104</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1157,020</td>
<td>199</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Predictor: (Constant), Organizational commitment, Hrm digitalization, Transformational leadership

b. Dependent Variable: Firm performance

Source: Processed Data (2022)

As the table above shows, based on the ANOVA test, the calculated F value is 28.644 with a significant value of 0.000. From the calculation of the F table, namely at the level of \( \alpha = 0.05 \), \( df1 = k - 1 = 4 - 1 = 3 \), and \( df2 = n - k = 200 - 4 = 196 \), the F table is 2.65. Therefore, when it is compared, \( F_{\text{count}} > F_{\text{table}} \), which is 22.821 > 2.65, thus it can be concluded that the three variables, namely Transformational Leadership, HRM digitalization, and Organizational Commitment simultaneously affect Firm Performance.

Simultaneous Hypothesis Test

According to Ghozali (2012), the determinant coefficient is a tool to measure how far the model's ability to explain the variation of the dependent variable.

Table 6: Results of Determinant Coefficient Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.815*</td>
<td>.664</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Predictors: (Constant), Organizational Commitment, HRM digitalization, Transformational Leadership

Dependent Variable: Firm Performance

From the results of the table above, the coefficient of determination is 0.664, which means that the effect of the three independent variables on the dependent variable is 66.4%. Meanwhile, 33.6% or the rest is influenced by other variables not examined. These results prove that the model can improve the company's performance at a moderate level.

Discussion

Based on the results of partial regression analysis, it shows that transformational leadership has a significant influence on company performance. These findings indicate that in this study, transformational leadership affects company performance. Transformational leadership in companies is described as a leadership style that has changes in individuals and organizations, where this can have an impact on the organization. Transformational leadership means leadership that is able to respond to environmental changes in the organization and motivate all staff to achieve success for the organization. The results of this study are supported by Quaosar (2017) that leaders who can guide employees within the company have an influence on employee performance which can improve organizational performance. Furthermore, the good or bad guidance given by the leadership to employees has not described the good or bad reputation of the company. In this study also, the item with the highest question was the leader's ability to provide guidance (mentoring). Respondents gave more high ratings of these items because leaders who have guidance can provide satisfaction to employees so that it can have an impact on company performance. In addition, the results of this study also have results that are not in line with the research of Eliyana & Ma’arif (2019) which stated that there is no influence between transformational leadership on company performance. This can be explained that the sample size and the object of research have differences or from the knowledge of respondents are not the same.

Based on the results of the research that has been done, empirical evidence states that currently technological developments have increased in various sectors, especially in organizations or companies. The test results based on regression indicate that the practice of HRM digitalization has a significant effect on company performance. These results are in line with research conducted by Siengthai et al. (2019) that currently the organization's ability to gain competitive advantage lies in its ability to adopt technology. The presence of technology and digitization makes it easy for staff to carry out the process of recruitment, work division systems, as well as in directing employees. In addition, the practice of HRM digitalization can improve employee performance in terms of facilitating work that can be integrated with one another. Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that the second hypothesis is accepted, meaning that there is an influence between HRM digitalization in improving company performance.
Based on the third hypothesis testing that has been carried out, the results show that the organizational commitment variable has a significant influence on firm performance. This finding is consistent with previous results that have been carried out by (Oyewobi et al., 2019). In this case, commitment to the organization can improve employee performance to work wholeheartedly. According to Bohlander (2019), organizational commitment is an important factor that influences employee knowledge sharing related to company performance. From these results it can be concluded that employees with commitment to the organization show behavior for the benefit of the organization. For this reason, it must be ensured that employees in the organization feel committed to the organization. In this way, employees see themselves as members of the organization and do their best to make the company's performance better. Therefore, based on these results the third hypothesis is accepted.

Based on the results of simultaneous hypothesis testing or the f-test that has been carried out, it can be concluded that the variables of transformational leadership, HRM digitalization and organizational commitment simultaneously affect firm performance. In the ANOVA analysis, the conclusions that can be obtained are that these three variables have a positive effect on Firm performance. Therefore, it can be concluded that the results show that there is a match between the results obtained with the theory that has been put forward in the literature review and previous research that partially transformational leadership, HRM digitalization and organizational commitment to firm performance.

Conclusions

Today, the presence of technology and the development of social media has increased significantly. This study examines the variables of transformational leadership, HRM digitalization and Organizational commitment on the performance of companies located in West Java, Indonesia. The regression results show that the three hypotheses in this study are supported. The highest level of company performance is found when transformational leadership, digitizing HRM, and organizational commitment have been implemented properly. Meanwhile, if one of the three variables is low, the company may get a relatively lower performance. A previous study conducted by Eliyana & Ma’arif (2019) stated that transformational leadership is one of the focuses in improving company performance. In addition, the findings of this study suggest that transformational leadership can improve the quality of human resources in the organization so that employees have a high commitment to advancing company performance. Consistent with other research, positive leadership styles, including transformational leadership behaviors, have been associated with better performance outcomes. The results of this study also simultaneously show that transformational leadership, HRM digitalization and organizational commitment have a direct influence on firm performance.

In addition, this study also shows that organizational commitment is an important factor that affects firm performance. This finding supports the previous research conducted by (Çulübek et al., 2018). Baird et al. (2019) shows that organizational commitment can improve employee performance and care about organizational performance. In this way, employees see themselves as members of the organization and do what is best for the company. Because the most important value of the company is its employees, the company must pay better attention and motivate them to realize the company's interests.

This research provides insight for managers in companies regarding transformational leadership for managers to realize in order to achieve good company performance. In addition, support from human resources is also very important to be integrated in realizing digitalization considering that technological advances are increasing. Employee satisfaction and motivation will increase if the leader can protect and be a role model for employees so that they can create commitment to the organization. This research also strengthens the previous research conducted by Ribeiro et al. (2018). In addition, apart from the results obtained, this study also has limitations on the population and research variables in explaining firm performance. Further research is suggested to involve more variables such as supply chain risk or also other industrial sectors.

Acknowledgement

All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, N.S.N.J.; methodology, N.S.N.J.; validation, A.M.F.; formal analysis, N.S.N.J.; investigation, N.S.N.J.; resources, A.M.F.; writing—original draft preparation, N.S.N.J.; writing—review and editing, A.M.F

Funding: This research was funded individually and not by particular organization or university.

Informed Consent Statement: “Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement: The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to restrictions.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References


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