

Does Manipulation Help Increase the Productivity of Employees?

Manali Pathare^{1*}

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between Machiavellian Personality and Job Performance in Sales Personnels. The study utilized a quantitative cross-sectional design using the Machiavellian Personality Scale (MPS) (Dahling et al., 2009) and the Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ) (Koopmans et al., 2015), which was administered to participants as a paper pencil test. The results indicated a significantly higher level Machiavellianism results in better Job performance in sales Personnels.

Keywords: *Machiavellian Personality, Job performance*

Machiavellianism has been described as the trait of manipulating others for personal gains. The term originates from the ideologies of Niccolò Machiavelli, an Italian diplomat. In his book, *The Prince* (1532), Machiavelli stated that a prince should adapt his persona as per the demands of the situation. A moral man must make use of amoral and deceptive means when dealing with situations, for a favorable outcome. These ideas were taken in for further studies by psychology researchers Christie and Geis in 1970. They defined Machiavellianism as made up of three values-manipulation, a cynical view of society and unconventional morality. Individuals high in Machiavellianism are said to have a negative view of people and are skilled manipulators. Although manipulation is one of the traits which is said to be valuable for human survival. Hence, to some extent, everyone is said to be a machiavellian in nature. But the degrees of machiavellianism is said to vary as per any other personality construct.

Job performance consists of observable behaviours that people do in their jobs, relevant to the goals and aims of the organisation. Good job performance leads to high productivity in organisations. It is a set of behaviour, indulged in by the employees, which can be observed overtly as well as covertly. According to Motowidlo, Bormon, and Schmit (1997), performance is not just the behaviours but they are the behaviours inherent with an evaluative aspect to them. Job performance is an integral part of behaviours exhibited by an employee in the work environment. Job performance is further studied, in two parts i.e., Task Performance and Contextual Performance. Task performance involves the activities performed by employees that are formally part of the job whereas, contextual performance is comprised of activities taken up voluntarily by the employee.

Studies on Machiavellianism suggests it be related to work behaviour, both in a positive and in a negative light. Machiavellians are said to have the ability to adapt and hence manipulate

¹ Ramnarain Ruia Autonomous College, Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

*Responding Author

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the situation for their favor. Such skill allows someone high in Machiavellianism to establish powerful social networks, attain the trust and respect of coworkers, and extract desirable outcomes from clients, which contributes to an increase in job performance (O'Boyle et al., 2012). The present study aims to understand more about this relationship between Machiavellian Personality and Job Performance.

Review Of Literature

Machiavellianism the concept originates from the ideas and principles of Niccolò Machiavelli, an Italian diplomat, in his *The Prince*, published in 1532. The name of the author is since then used to denote the use of deceit, artifice, and exploitation in interpersonal relationships so as to pursue one's own interests. A "Machiavellian" individual is someone who uses manipulation for his own purposes (Christie & Geis, 2013). The concept Machiavellianism was originally explored by researchers Richard Christie and Florence Geis, in their *Studies in Machiavellianism* in 1970. The Machiavellian Personality is said to have three interrelated values-one is a belief in the effectiveness of manipulation tactics so as to deal with other people, a cynical view of the world and a moral understanding which puts advantages and gain above principles and ideologies. Machiavellians are said to use short-term manipulation strategies over long-term strategies which tend to lead to resentment and social exclusion over time (Wilson et al., 1998). Machiavellianism, along with social manipulation is also said to harbor the other characters of cynical worldview and amorality. Christie (1970), put forth the following characteristics that described the Machiavellian Personality-

- A relative lack of emotional consideration in Interpersonal relationships: The basic tenet is to achieve success by getting others to act or behave in a way one wants them to do, indicates an underlying structure of viewing them as a means manipulated to reach to the desired end. The individual is gauged as an object and not as human beings with empathy or understanding, as such a view contrasts with the aim of achieving leverage so as to influence them to behave the way one wants.
- A lack of concern for moral principles: These Individuals are thought to have a utilitarian view of their interactions with others rather than a moral view. They are said to have no regards about the moral principles based on the compliance of the society, this is accomplished by the use of deceit, lying, cheating, and other behaviours.
- A lack of conspicuous psychological problem: The individual is said to have an instrumental view of others. Such a person will have a distorted view of others as per their emotional needs. Hence, they are considered to inculcate a practical sense of reality.
- A lack of commitment to ideologies: The essence of manipulation is to get the desired outcome and not about focusing on ideological concepts. They are assumed to be involved in manipulation so as to achieve the desired end and not to attain idealistic goals. (Christie, 2013). Based on these characteristics and the writings of Machiavelli, they introduced the psychological construct of Machiavellianism. Geis and Christie (1970) also conclude that "Low Machs, but not highs, get caught up and carried away in a social response process which emerges in the active components of face-to-face interaction" (p. 286).

Individuals high in Machiavellianism or referred to as Machs are assumed to have basic intrinsic motivators that further influence their instrumentalism. Machs are said to give higher profits to money, power, and competition (Stewart & Stewart, 2006). Similarly, In a study by

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McHoskey (1999), Machs comparatively gave low priority to self-love, family concerns, and community development. Machiavellianism is found to have a negative association with emotional intelligence, more specifically the ability to empathise and the ability to recognise others emotions (Jones and Paulhus, 2009).

Literature suggests that Machiavellians may be well adjusted and even well-liked and sometimes, are preferred as leaders. But in a study by Wilson and colleagues (1998) showed that Machs were seen as less desirable for most forms of social interaction but were seemed to be more desirable as debate partners. Machiavellians are also seen as a leader, with higher ratings on charisma and effectiveness (Deluga, 2001). Rim (1966) examined the Machiavellian leadership relation by using choice dilemma items, from which he concluded that Machs are more influential leaders and their leadership dynamic causes them to take risky shifts.

There have been many pieces of research conducted to investigate the relationship between Machiavellianism and internal versus external locus of control as measured by Rotter's (1966) scale. The bulk of these researches found a positive correlation between Machiavellianism and external orientation. In a study conducted by Singh and colleagues (2017), concluded that individuals high on external locus of control scored higher on the Machiavellian spectrum, suggesting that Machs tend to be externally oriented. Overall, in a comprehensive review, Machs tend to score in the external direction of locus of control, on both measures of Levenson's subscales of external locus of control and Rotters' measure of externality (Fehr et al., 1992). Whereas according to Paulhus (1983), the apparent external locus of control exhibited by Machs can be attributed to their sociopolitical or cynical view of others. They perceive others to be weak and having listing control over their situations (Jones and Paulhus, 2009).

A large number of studies have examined the relationship between Machiavellianism and occupational preferences, success, and satisfaction with one's occupation. In a review by Fehr, Samson, and Paulhaus (1992), they concluded that Machs tend to choose careers which are more business oriented, whereas helping professions are least preferred. They are relatively successful in their careers, especially in careers that are less structured (Forsyth et al., 2011). They thrive when they have more decision power as well as a sense of authority, with fewer rules and less managerial supervision (Jones and Paulhus, 2009). Machs, even when opting for helping professions are motivated by financial gains. In the review, it was found that as per the previous research people scoring high in Machiavellianism are more focused on winning and are better able to work in careers with high competition (Fehr et al., 1992). Sales are said to be an exceptional career choice for the Machiavellian as they are endearing and highly manipulative (Christie et al., 1970).

Job Satisfaction and Job Performance

The relation between job satisfaction and Machiavellianism has also been investigated through many studies. All of these studies have shown that Machiavellianism is negatively correlated to job satisfaction and positively correlated to job tension (Fehr, Samsom & Paulhaus, 1992). Similarly, in a study including 150 managers, conducted by Gemmill and Heisler (1972), affirms that Machiavellian orientation is positively correlated by job stress and perceived opportunity for formal control and negatively correlated with job satisfaction. They also found that the greater the Machiavellian orientation higher is the reported job strain and lower is the reported job satisfaction. Studies of marketing suggest that Machiavellianism

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is linked to work behavior, both in the positive and negative light. (Hunt & Chonko, 1984). Social Exchange Theory predicts that Machiavellianism will be negatively associated with job performance (O'Boyle et al., 2014). According to this, Machiavellians will generally be less successful in meeting the demands of the work that they pursue. Another study conducted by Shultz (1994), suggests that Machiavellianism and sales performance are positively correlated. In loosely structured sales marketing organizations, high Machiavellians tend to be more successful as compared to low Machiavellians. Similarly, another research by Aziz et al., (2002) supported the hypothesis that salespeople with a Machiavellian Orientation are likely to be more successful.

Rationale:

According to the social exchange theory, Machiavellianism is negatively correlated with job performances as all work situations require a reliable cooperative alliance with others, but Machiavellians' tendency to violate the principle of social exchange weakens their connections with others (O'Boyle et al., 2011). The objective of the research is to study this relationship between Machiavellianism and Job performance. The impact of this trait on job performance has yet to be examined in the context of India.

The culture and the region where a study is conducted is an important factor for the results of the study to be generalised and be applicable. The previous studies, to examine the relationship between Machiavellianism and Work Performance have been conducted in a culture and setting which is far different from India. India by virtue of its diversity constitutes a dramatically different context. This study accounts for such diversity by employing a diverse sample representing individuals from different demographics and walks of life. As culture has an impact on the development of various personality dimensions (Triandis & Suh, 2001), similarly it has an effect on Machiavellianism (See Elias, 2015). Hence, there was a need for such a study to understand the dynamics of the said variables in the Indian Context.

METHODOLOGY

Problem

To study the association between Machiavellian Personality and Job performance of employees in Mumbai.

Sample

The sample composed of 30 participants working in sales from different organisations across Mumbai. The inclusion criteria required the participants to be 21 or older, therefore the participants who took part were between the ages of 25 to 35 years. Connivence and Snowball sampling were utilised in this study and all participants completed the same questionnaire. The questionnaires were administered manually. Participation was completely voluntary and no incentives were offered at any stage. The study was conducted in organisations in Mumbai and the study was strictly open for all the Indian nationalities.

Instruments

Two measures were used in this study,

The Machiavellian Personality Scale (MPS) (Dahling et al., 2009) and **Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ)** (Koopmans et al., 2013). Demographic questions were constructed at the beginning of the questionnaire concerning age, gender, qualifications, and current occupations.

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Machiavellian Personality was assessed using the Machiavellian Personality Scale (MPS) (Dahling et al., 2009). This scale consists of four sub-scales; each item in the scales determines the Machiavellian behaviours engaged in by the participants. This 16 item scale is scored using a 7-point response format (1=Strongly Disagree; 7= Strongly Agree). According to Dahling et al. (2009), the intercorrelations between the four sub scales of: amorality (five items), desire for control (three items), desire for status (three items) and distrust of others (five items), were intercorrelated and the correlation ranged from 0.05 to 0.45. The results of their study supported the factor structure of MPS and indicated that it is a valid predictor of variables such as job satisfaction, task performance, and counterproductive work behaviours. Similarly, a study conducted by Miller and Konopaske (2012), suggested that MPS was a more granular four-dimensional model, here the intercorrelations between the subscales ranged from 0.20 to 0.35. This suggested that MPS had high discriminant validity.

Job performance was measured using the Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ) (Koopmans et al., 2013), which consists of 18 statements and is scored using a 5-point response format (1= Seldom and 5= Often). This measure assesses work performance in terms of behaviours with a 3-month span. The scale is further classified into three subscales- Task Performance (Five items), Contextual Performance (Eight items) and Counterproductive work behaviours (Five items). The internal consistency of IWPQ is good, for the three subscales- Task Performance, Contextual Performance, and Counter-Productive Work Behaviours, in terms of Cronbach's Alpha was found to be 0.78, 0.85. 0.79 (Koopmans et al., 2014). The construct validity of IWPQ was found to be acceptable, based on the convergent evidences, a correlation of the scores of work engagement measure using UWES-9 (Schaufeli et al., 2006), showed a moderate positive correlation with IWPQ Task and Contextual Performance scales ($r = 0.29$ to 0.43), a moderate negative correlation with the CWB scale ($r = -0.40$ to -0.43). Discriminant evidences were computed using the job satisfaction quartiles, which differed for Task Performance ($F(3, 1420) = 66.49, P < 0.001$), contextual performance ($F(3, 1420) = 49.04, p < 0.001$), and CWB ($F(3, 1420) = 86.62, p < 0.001$), with persons high in job satisfaction showing higher task and contextual performance, and lower CWB. Cross-cultural validity was found, as the original Dutch version was converted to American-English. Cognitive interviews with 40 American workers showed that the comprehensibility, applicability, and completeness of the American-English IWPQ was good. Also, the study showed good results concerning the measurement properties of the American-English IWPQ (e.g., Cronbach's alphas of 0.79, 0.83 and 0.89, respectively, and good content validity) (Koopmans et al., 2014).

Procedure

Firstly, a research proposal was submitted to the Department of psychology, Ramnarain Ruia Autonomous College, Matunga for approval, which was successfully obtained. Both the questionnaires were approved by the Supervisor prior to release. Once approval was granted, the questionnaires were manually administered to participants in the form of a paper-pencil test. The questionnaires were attached with an informed consent form, which outlined the following: the researcher was completing the final year of BA (Psychology in Ramnarain Ruia Autonomous College, the purpose of the study, that the results gathered would be submitted as a part of a final year project to Ramnarain Ruia Autonomous College, participation in the study was entirely voluntary and the responses were confidential.

Participants were made aware that once submitted the survey, it would not be possible to withdraw from the study and responses cannot be attributed to any one participant as the

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answers are anonymous. It was also explained that all the data obtained would be stored securely with the researcher. The researcher's contact details were given along with the supervisor's details. The participants were further asked to fill up some demographic questions, such as sex, age, and current job title, education. These questions were mandatory. The participants were debriefed after the completion of the questionnaire by thanking them for their participation. Upon completion of the questionnaire, which took on average about 10 to 15 minutes, the questionnaires were collected and the data was then calculated manually and stored in excel. There was no pilot study performed prior to going live as the questionnaire were straightforward with no complications.

RESULTS

Data Analysis

The data were entered into Microsoft Excel and then statistically analysed. Checks were conducted and it was ascertained that the data was found to be normally distributed, hence further, Pearson Product Movement correlation coefficient was calculated.

Demographic Data

45 people surveyed all sales personnel from various fields. Of these 30 provided completed surveys that could be used in the study. Of these employees 86.66% (i.e. 26 out of 30) were males and 13.33% were females. The mean of their ages was found to be 29.5.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistical analysis was conducted on both variables in order to ascertain the mean, median, standard deviation and minimums and maximum scores. The mean, SD, minimums and maximums were also calculated for the subscale categories of Individual Work Performance Questionnaire.

Table no 1 - Descriptive statistics of Machiavellian Personality and Job Performance:

VARIABLES	MEAN	MEDIAN	SD	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM
Machiavellian Personality	62.4	65	19.354	16	101
Job Performance	54.5	54	11.389	18	80
-Task Performance	15.967	16	3.979	5	17
- Contextual Performance	26.433	25.5	7.276	8	31
- Counterproductive work behaviours	12.1	24	4.816	5	19

Research Question:

Research question one investigated if there was a significant statistical relationship between Machiavellian Personality and Job performance.

The mean score on the Machiavellian Personality scale is 62.4 (SD = 19.354) and the mean score for Job performance as measured by IWPQ was found to be 54.5 (SD = 11.389). The Pearson Product Movement Correlation Coefficient between Machiavellian Personality and Job Performance for degrees of freedom 28 was calculated. Which was found to be 0.6214 and was statistically significant at .01 level, using a two-tailed test p-value. Hence, the obtained data validate the alternate hypothesis.

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Similarly, the Pearson correlation coefficient between Machiavellian Personality and Task Performance, Contextual Performance and Counterproductive Work Behaviours for degrees of freedom 28 was calculated. The correlation coefficient between Task Performance and Machiavellian Personality was found to be 0.42, which was significant at the 0.05 level. Similarly, the correlation coefficient between Counterproductive Work Behaviour and Machiavellian Personality was found to be 0.56 which was significant at 0.01 level. The correlation coefficient between Contextual Performance and Machiavellian Personality was found to be not significant.

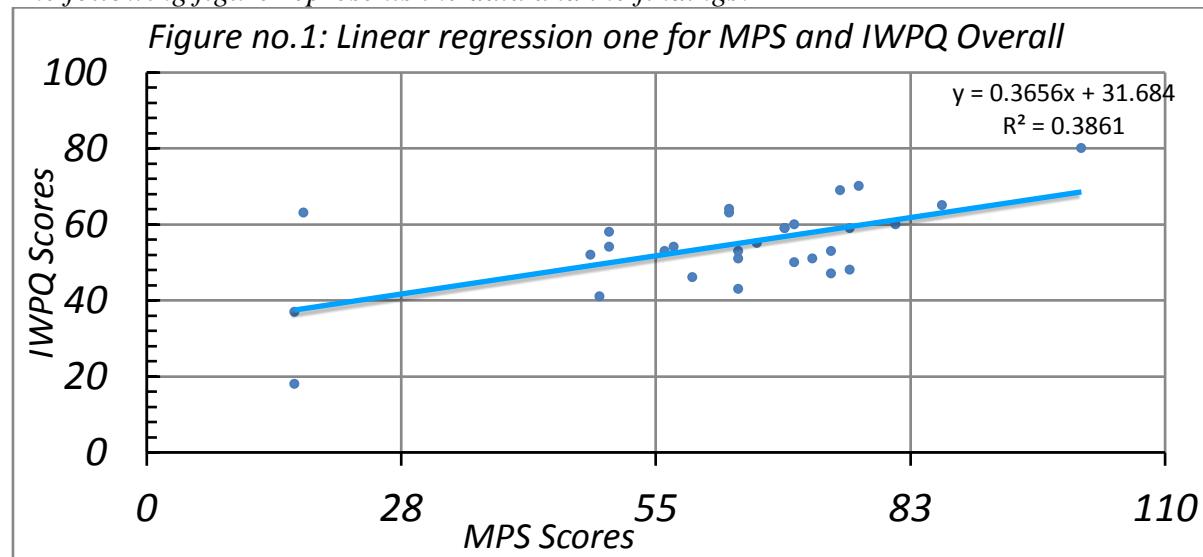
Table no. 2 - Correlation Coefficients for Task Performance, Contextual Performance, and CWB:

VARIABLES	CORRELATION COEFFICIENT	SIGNIFICANCE (Two-tailed test)
Task Performance	0.42	P < 0.05
Contextual Performance	0.37	P = NS
CWB	0.56	P < 0.01

The data was further analysed to find the linear regression equation for the variables of Machiavellian Personality and Job performance.

Figure no.-1 illustrates the relationship between Machiavellian Personality and Job Performance. Each point represents the (X, Y) pair, in this case, MPS Scores and the corresponding IWPQ score for each participant. The graph shows that there is a positive or a direct association between Machiavellian Personality and Job performance; participants scoring low on MPS are more likely to have a low score on IWPQ measuring Job Performance and participants scoring high on MPS are more likely to have a higher score on IWPQ. The graph also shows the estimated regression line superimposed on the scatter diagram. Thus the regression equation can be used to estimate a participant's job performance as a function of his or her score on MPS.

The following figure represents the data and the findings:



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Summary:

The Machiavellian Personality Scale and the Individual Work Performance Questionnaire was given to 30 Sales Personnels between the ages of 25 to 35. Out of 30, 26 were males and 4 were females. Participants were asked to self-report their job performance over the course of the past three months, using the Individual Work Performance Questionnaire. All then questionnaires were calculated and plotted using the scoring instructions given for the respective scales. After calculating the raw total scores and sun scale scores, each survey was inputted into Microsoft Excel for analysis. Descriptive statistics were calculated for each variable and then correlation analysis to prove and disprove the studies hypothesis.

One research question and hypothesis was crated for this study. The research question was tested using the Machiavellian Personality Scale Score and the Individual Work Performance Questionnaire Score. This test provided statistical evidences that Machiavellian Personality has an effect on Job performance of Sales personnels. The researcher rejected the null hypothesis, thus accepting the alternate hypothesis validated by the data. A simple linear regression analysis was calculated and the equation for the line of the best fit was found. This further analysis showed a strong positive relationship between Machiavellian Personality and Job Performance of Sales personnels

DISCUSSION

The contents of the present study support the correlation between Machiavellian Personality and Job Performance in Sales Personnels. The results were found to be statistically significant.

The research question investigated the relationship between Machiavellian Personality and Job Performance in Sales Personnels. It has been found in various studies that Machiavellian Personality has an impact on Job performance. In previous research, it was reported that stockbrokers with a Machiavellian Orientation are likely to be more successful (Aziz et al., 2002). This study sought to prove the significance of Machiavellian Personality in correlation to Job performance of Sales Personnels across Mumbai; such an existence of Machiavellian Personality was found and it was found to correlate significantly with the Job performance ratings.

The correlations were found to be positive, and significant for all the sub scales of the IWPQ, except the correlation between Machiavellian Personality traits and Contextual job performance. Contextual job performance involves going above and beyond the requirements of the job for colleagues and the organisation. This seems to be in line with the theorisations regarding Machiavellian personality traits.

The present study has shown a significant and positive association between scores on Machiavellian Personality scale (Dahling et al.,2008) and one's self-rated indicators of job performance sales personnel measured by Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (Koopmans et al.,2013). These finding together with results from an earlier study (Aziz et al., 2002) provide empirical support for the theoretical assumption of a positive relationship between Machiavellianism and Sales Performance (Christie and Geis, 1970).

Similarly, through further analysis, it was found that the higher the score on the machiavellian scale, the higher is the job performance. Hence these results signify that Machiavellianism and Job Performance of Sales Personnels are interrelated.

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While the literature is generally found to be mixed in regards with Machiavellian personality factors as predictors of job performance, this study found results similar to those found by Aziz et al, (2002) and Shultz (1994).

LIMITATIONS

There were several limitations to consider during this study. The population of the participants was predominantly male and hence, the gender differences in the study weren't counterbalanced. Similarly, as the performance was measured using a self-report scale, some of the participants might have overestimated their performance. Another concern regarding the study is that individuals high on Machiavellian Personality Factors may be more likely to manipulate self-report measures of Job Performance. The size of the sample population was small.

FUTURE RESEARCH

In future studies, it would be beneficial to use a peer or supervisor rated scale to measure job performance. This will add to the results and will aid in discovering if there is or is not a difference in the Sales Performance of the employees. Further, it is a recommendation to administer the scales on the participants with varying age groups, in the present study age was controlled, wherein the data of participants belonging to ages of 25-35 was accepted. A study, conducted with varying age groups might yield different results as Machiavellianism is a variable that changes with age.

While calculating the results and the correction of the research findings, the gender of the participants was not taken into consideration. Hence, the gender of the participant might also influence the relationship and the correlation. It is the last recommendation to further look into the effects of gender, on the participants score on Machiavellianism and Sales performance.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this correlational study was to determine the nature and strength between Machiavellian Personality and Job Performance of Sales personnel. The instrument used to test the level of Machiavellianism was The Machiavellian Personality Scale (MPS) by Dahling et al., (2008) and to measure Job performance was the Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ) by Koopmans et al., (2013). In order to attest for the participant's score on both the measures, the participants self-reported their scores. Other information gathered was the participant's gender and ages.

The researcher analysed completed surveys. Individual survey scores were calculated and the data was entered into Excel to calculate the descriptive statistics and correlation results. After all the data was analysed, the researcher rejected the null hypothesis, thus accepting the alternative hypothesis. The relationship was found to be statistically significant.

The study (sample size 30) on the correlation between Machiavellian Personality and Sales Performance found a significant positive correlation [0.624, p < 0.01] between them. The study has implications in recruitment. Recruiters should try to find a balance between the level of Machiavellian Personality such that sales performance is optimal, and contextual performance is still at a level most beneficial to the organisation.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors carefully declare this paper to bear not a conflict of interests

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