DOI: 10.32604/IJMHP.2020.010883

Article



# The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction in the Relationship between Disaster Relief Workers' Perception of Survivors' Rights and Their Performance of Human Rights Advocacy

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**Abstract:** This study aimed to investigate the mediating effect of disaster relief workers' job satisfaction in the relationship between their perception of survivors' rights and their performance of human rights advocacy. Two hundred disaster relief workers in Korea were invited to complete structured questionnaires pertaining to their perception of survivors' rights, job satisfaction, and their performance of human rights advocacy, and the relationships between these variables were analyzed using correlation and multiple regression analysis. There were significant positive correlations between disaster relief workers' perception of survivors' rights, job satisfaction, and performance of human rights advocacy in this study. The higher their perception of survivors' rights, the greater their performance of human rights advocacy and job satisfaction. Job satisfaction also acted as a mediator to increase the impact of their perception of survivors' rights on their performance of human rights advocacy. In order to improve the human rights advocacy performance of disaster relief workers, it is necessary to raise their perception of survivors' rights and increase their job satisfaction by providing a safe and nondiscriminatory work environment for them.

**Keywords:** Survivors' rights; human rights advocacy; job satisfaction; disaster relief workers; mediation

#### 1 Introduction

Over the past one to two decades there has been an increase in both the frequency and intensity of natural, technological, man-made, disease and epidemic disasters [1].

During a disaster, the human rights of the victims such as their right to life, food, and health are at the risk of being violated and the government and regional organizations are obliged to respect and protect these rights. The United Nations Human Rights Treaty Bodies also emphasized that the government's obligation to respect and protect such human rights includes not only passive obligations that do not infringe on them, but also the obligation to take active measures [2,3].

There is a close link between the promotion of mental health and psychosocial well-being and the protection and advocacy of human rights during emergencies and disasters. Advocacy for the implementation of human rights standards, such as the right to health, education, and freedom from discrimination, contributes to the creation of a protective environment and, therefore, must incorporate mental health and psychosocial support to protect and promote human rights. The guidelines officially adopted by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee are currently providing guidance on how to protect



human rights in the event of a disaster [4].

In addition to their relief work at the disaster site, disaster relief workers are also significantly responsible for the protection of survivors' human rights. Disaster responses that support survivors and human rights-oriented approaches are critical to disaster planning and training [5]. In the event of a disaster, the human rights, privacy, and the safety of the survivors should be protected and strictly secured [6]. The disaster management code of ethics specifically states that disaster relief workers will have the responsibility to play the roles of emergency care providers and advocates of human rights [7,8].

Advocacy is defined as an act of directly asserting, defending, intervening, supporting, and recommending a set of measures on behalf of one or more individuals, groups, or communities for the purpose of securing or maintaining social justice [9]. Advocacy in social work involves helping people to better recognize their own rights, to exercise those rights, and engage in and influence decisions about their future [10]. Client advocacy in nursing was developed in 1996, and was defined as the nursing activity performed by nurses in order to protect those who were at a disadvantageous or vulnerable position [11]. Research has been conducted on human rights advocacy by care providers at long-term care facilities, social workers, and mental health professionals. The provision of a web-based human rights program to nurses in nursing homes improved nurses' sensitivity to the rights of the elderly and behavior that facilitated the protection of their human rights [12].

In a previous study, the employees' perception was positively associated with performance or behavior. It was found that the long-term care workers' perception of human rights had a significant effect on human rights advocacy performance [13]. Childcare teachers' perception of children's rights had a positive effect on the behavior of advocating for rights by knowing and understanding them [14]. In social work studies, it has been found that social workers require effective advocacy practices, advocacy attitudes, advocacy knowledge, advocacy skills, and advocacy behavior in order to successfully carry out advocacy activities [15].

Previous studies have shown that perception of rights is positively related to job satisfaction. The higher the level of ethical awareness of social workers, the higher job satisfaction [16]. Teachers' job satisfaction created positive impact on organizational citizenship behavior [17].

In addition to perception, another variable that has consistently been shown to have a positive association with performance or behavior is job satisfaction. A study of job satisfaction found that employee satisfaction affects productive work behaviors, such as creative, productive behaviors, and job performance, while reducing job departure, turnover intentions, and unethical behavior [18]. Job satisfaction of government employees also had a positive impact on helping behaviors [19].

Job satisfaction has also been suggested to be a mediator in the relationship between perception and performance. Physical educators' job satisfaction played a mediate role between organizational justice perception and organizational citizenship behavior [20]. The organizational communication satisfaction of the operating room nurse played a mediating role in the relationship between patient safety culture awareness and patient safety management performance [21].

However, studies on human rights advocacy, perception of survivor's rights and job satisfaction for disaster relief workers have been limited. Therefore, this study will analyze disaster relief workers' degree of perception of survivors' rights, job satisfaction, and their human rights advocacy and identify the relationship between them. The following hypotheses have been developed on the basis of previous evidences regarding the associations between perception of survivors' rights, job satisfaction and performance of human rights advocacy:

Hypothesis 1: Disaster relief workers' perception of survivors' rights will be positively associated with their performance of human rights advocacy and job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2: Disaster relief workers' job satisfaction will be positively associated with their performance of human rights advocacy.

Hypothesis 3: Disaster relief workers' job satisfaction will mediate the association between perception

of survivors' rights and their performance of human rights advocacy.

#### 2 Methods

# 2.1 Design

This study adopted a descriptive correlational design using structured questionnaires to identify the relationships between disaster relief workers' perception of survivors' rights, job satisfaction, and their performance of human rights advocacy.

# 2.2 Participants

Participants in this study were 200 disaster relief workers who had the experience of providing relief during at least one disaster. Participants were recruited using convenience sampling. The researcher contacted and visited fire department officials and fire service academies in person, explained the purpose of the study to the staff, and answered the questionnaire for those who agreed to participate in the study.

#### 2.3 Measures

### 2.3.1 Demographic and Working Characteristics

The demographic and working information of disaster relief workers was collected. This included information regarding their gender, age group, marital status, region of work, period of work, disaster relief experience (number of times they provided relief during a disaster), experience of verbal violence, physical violence, work-related injuries, working with sickness, workplace discrimination, and shift work.

## 2.3.2 Perception of Survivors' Rights

To measure the participants' perception of survivors' rights, the questionnaire on patients' rights developed by Hwang et al. [22] was revised to meet the purpose of this study and was supplemented by the advice of disaster relief experts. The questionnaire contains 10 items and the higher the score, the higher the participant's level of perception of survivors' rights. The Cronbach-Alpha internal consistency coefficient of this scale was determined to be 0.887 in this study.

# 2.3.3 Performance of Human Rights Advocacy

This measure was based on the theory of nursing subjects' advocacy developed by Cho [11]. The advocacy performance of nursing subjects was formulated and developed for this study and was updated accordingly through consultation with human rights experts. The questionnaire contains 10 items and the higher the score, the higher the participants' level of performance of human rights advocacy. The Cronbach-Alpha internal consistency coefficient of this scale was determined to be 0.943 in this study.

### 2.3.4 Job Satisfaction

The measurement tool for job satisfaction was modified by Choi et al. [23] to suit the purpose of this study and was supplemented by the advice of disaster relief experts. The questionnaire contains 8 items and the higher the score, the higher the participants' level of job satisfaction. The Cronbach-Alpha internal consistency coefficient of this scale was determined to be 0.888 in this study.

# 2.4 Data Analysis

The general characteristics of disaster relief workers were analyzed by percentage, mean, and standard deviation, and the relationship between their recognition of the survivors' rights, job satisfaction, human rights status, and human rights advocacy was analyzed through correlation analysis and regression analysis using SPSS version 23.0.

#### 3 Results

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# 3.1 Participants' Demographic and Working Characteristics and Differences in Their Job Satisfaction, Perception of Survivors' Rights, and Performance of Human Rights Advocacy

The demographic and working characteristics of participants were presented in Tab. 1. Of the 200 respondents, 90.5% (n = 181) were men, 75.4% (n = 150) were married, and the mean age of the participants was 39.3 years old, with most belonging to the 30–39 age group (44.2%). In total, 45% (n = 90) worked over 10 years and 68.5% (n = 137) provided disaster relief more than 10 times. Totally, 24% (n = 48) experienced verbal violence at work, 18% (n = 36) had been injured, 34% (n = 68) had worked through sickness, 26.5% (n = 53) had been discriminated against at work, 36.5% (n = 73) had faced promotion discrimination, and 78% (n = 156) worked in shifts.

There were no significant differences in job satisfaction based on gender, marital status, or disaster relief experience. However, there were significant differences in job satisfaction based on age (F = 2.79, p = 0.042), region of work (t = 2.81, p = 0.005), length of work (F = 8.24, p = 0.001), experience of verbal violence at work (t = 3.88, p = 0.001), injury at work (t = 4.64, p = 0.001), working during sickness (t = 5.90, p = 0.001), discrimination at work (t = 3.30, p = 0.001), and promotion discrimination (t = 4.55, p = 0.001).

There were no significant differences in disaster relief workers' perception of survivors' rights when gender, marital status, experience of verbal and physical violence at work, injury at work, working during sickness, discrimination at work, promotion discrimination, or working in shifts were taken into account. However, there were significant differences in their perception of survivors' rights based on age (F = 3.38, p = 0.019), region of work (t = -2.43, p = 0.016), length of work (t = 4.40, t = 0.014), and disaster relief experience (t = 4.35, t = 0.014).

There were no significant differences in relief workers' performance of human rights advocacy based on gender, age, marital status, region and length of work, verbal and physical violence experience at work, injury at work, working during sickness, discrimination at work, promotion discrimination, or working in shifts.

**Table 1:** Demographic and working characteristics of the participants and differences in their job satisfaction, perception of survivors' rights, and performance of human rights advocacy

			_	•		•			
				Job Satisfaction		Perception of Survivors' Rights		Performance of Human Rights Advocacy	
Variables	Categories	N	Percentage	$M \pm SD$	t/F (p)	$M \pm SD$	t/F (p)	$M \pm SD$	t/F (p)
Gender	Male	181	90.5	$3.52 \pm 0.71$	-0.39 (0.695)	$4.50 \pm 0.47$	-0.35 (0.730)	$3.54 \pm 0.72$	0.05 (0.960)
	Female	19	9.5	$3.59 \pm 0.47$		$4.54 \pm 0.45$		$3.53\pm0.63$	
Age (years)	$39.83 \pm 8.50$				2.79 (0.042*)	$4.50 \pm 0.47$	3.38 (0.019*)		0.64 (0.593)
	20-29	20	10.1	$3.82\pm0.68$		$4.46\pm0.54$		$3.57 \pm 0.91$	
	30–39	88	44.2	$3.60\pm0.70$		$4.45\pm0.48$		$3.45\pm0.67$	
	40–49	54	27.1	$3.38 \pm 0.72$		$4.45\pm0.46$		$3.59 \pm 0.71$	
	≥ 50	37	18.6	$3.41\pm0.58$		$4.71 \pm 0.34$		$3.60\pm0.65$	
Marital Status	Unmarried	47	23.6	$3.67 \pm 0.84$	1.341 (0.264)	$4.39 \pm 0.53$	2.23 (0.110)	$3.50 \pm 0.89$	0.12 (0.891)
	Married	150	75.4	$3.49 \pm 0.64$		$4.53\pm0.45$		$3.55\pm0.65$	
	Other	2	1.0	$3.45 \pm 0.64$		$4.86 \pm 0.19$		$3.40 \pm 0.71$	
Region of Work	Gyeonggi Province	94	47.0	$3.68 \pm 0.64$	2.81 (0.005**)	$4.42 \pm 0.50$	-2.43 (0.016*)	$3.54 \pm 0.67$	0.02 (0.983)
	Jeolla Province	103	51.5	$3.40 \pm 0.72$		$4.33 \pm 0.41$		$3.54 \pm 0.75$	

Disaster Relief Experience $6-10$ $19$ $9.5$ $3.51 \pm 0.81$ $4.25 \pm 0.46$ $3.50 \pm 0.52$ $> 10$ $137$ $68.5$ $3.49 \pm 0.66$ $4.55 \pm 0.46$ $3.53 \pm 0.72$ Verbal Violence at Work $0.0018$	0.10 0.901)
(years) $3-9$ $54$ $27.0$ $3.41 \pm 0.69$ $4.38 \pm 0.48$ $3.51 \pm 0.79$ $\geq 10$ $90$ $45.0$ $3.41 \pm 0.65$ $4.60 \pm 0.40$ $3.54 \pm 0.65$ Disaster Relief Experience $1-5$ $40$ $20.0$ $3.66 \pm 0.75$ $0.99$ $4.43 \pm 0.43$ $4.35$ $3.58 \pm 0.74$ $0.375$ $0.014$ *	0.901)
Disaster Relief Experience $\begin{pmatrix} 1-5 & 40 & 20.0 & 3.66 \pm 0.75 & 0.99 & 4.43 \pm 0.43 & 4.35 & 3.58 \pm 0.74 \\ 6-10 & 19 & 9.5 & 3.51 \pm 0.81 & 4.25 \pm 0.46 & 3.50 \pm 0.52 \\ > 10 & 137 & 68.5 & 3.49 \pm 0.66 & 4.55 \pm 0.46 & 3.53 \pm 0.72 \\ \end{pmatrix}$ Verbal Violence at Work $\begin{pmatrix} No & 152 & 76.0 & 3.63 \pm 0.66 & 3.88 & 4.49 \pm 0.48 & -0.41 & 3.53 \pm 0.75 & 0.01 \\ & & & & & & & & & & & & & & & & & & $	0.901)
Disaster Relief Experience $6-10$ 19 9.5 3.51 ± 0.81 4.25 ± 0.46 3.50 ± 0.52 $> 10$ 137 68.5 3.49 ± 0.66 4.55 ± 0.46 3.53 ± 0.72 $> 10$ No 152 76.0 $3.63 \pm 0.66$ 3.88 4.49 ± 0.48 $-0.41$ 3.53 ± 0.75 0.01 Work $= 0.66$ 3.88 $= 0.66$ 3.88 $= 0.66$ 3.88 $= 0.66$ 3.88 $= 0.66$ 3.89 $= 0.66$ 3.60 $= 0.683$	0.901)
Experience 6-10 19 9.5 $3.51 \pm 0.81$ $4.25 \pm 0.46$ $3.50 \pm 0.52$ $> 10 137 68.5 3.49 \pm 0.66 4.55 \pm 0.46 3.53 \pm 0.72  Verbal Violence at Work (0.001**)$	l (0.993)
Verbal Violence at No 152 76.0 $3.63 \pm 0.66$ $3.88$ $4.49 \pm 0.48$ $-0.41$ $3.53 \pm 0.75$ 0.01 Work (0.001**)	l (0.993)
Verbal Violence at No 152 /6.0 (0.001**) (0.683)	1 (0.993)
Work 34.0 3.01±0.67 4.52±0.43 2.52±0.59	
Yes 48 24.0 $3.21\pm0.67$ $4.52\pm0.43$ $3.53\pm0.58$	
Physical Violence No 192 96.0 (0.332) (0.162)	-1.86 0.064)
at Work Yes 8 $4.0$ $3.76 \pm 0.77$ $4.73 \pm 0.42$ $3.99 \pm 0.66$	
No 164 82.0 $3.63 \pm 0.64$ $4.64$ $4.52 \pm 0.46$ $0.97 (0.333) 3.56 \pm 0.73 1.20 Injury at Work$	5 (0.210)
Yes $36   18.0   3.07 \pm 0.72   4.43 \pm 0.50   3.40 \pm 0.58$	
Worked During No 132 66.0 $3.72 \pm 0.61$ $5.90$ $4.51 \pm 0.46$ $0.53$ $(0.596)$ $3.58 \pm 0.68$ $1.34$	1 (0.183)
Sickness Yes 68 $34.0   3.16 \pm 0.70   4.48 \pm 0.48   3.44 \pm 0.75$	
Discrimination at No $147 - 73.5$ $(0.001**)$	-0.47 0.637)
work Yes 53 $26.5$ $3.26 \pm 0.72$ $4.48 \pm 0.42$ $3.57 \pm 0.62$	
Promotion No 127 63.5 $3.69 \pm 0.66$ $4.55$ $4.49 \pm 0.49$ $-0.57$ $3.55 \pm 0.72$ $0.32$ $(0.001**)$ $(0.567)$	2 (0.746)
Discrimination Yes 73 $36.5   3.25 \pm 0.66   4.53 \pm 0.43   3.51 \pm 0.70$	
Worked in Shifts (0.662)	-0.10 0.923)
Yes 156 78.0 $3.52 \pm 0.71$ $4.49 \pm 0.48$ $3.54 \pm 0.70$	

# 3.2 Correlations between Participants' Perception of Survivors' Rights, Job Satisfaction, and Performance of Human Rights Advocacy

In Tab. 2, the correlation analysis showed significant positive correlations among participants' perception of survivors' rights, their job satisfaction, and their performance of human rights advocacy. Participants' perception of survivors' rights and their job satisfaction were moderately associated (0.221), participants' job satisfaction and their performance of human rights advocacy were moderately associated (0.386), and participants' perception of survivors' rights and their performance of human rights advocacy were moderately associated (0.346).

**Table 2:** Correlations between participants' perception of survivors' rights, job satisfaction, and their performance of human rights advocacy

	Perception of Survivors' Rights	Job Satisfaction	Performance of Human Rights Advocacy
Perception of Survivors' Rights	1		
Job Satisfaction	0.221**	1	
Performance of Human Rights Advocacy	0.346**	0.386**	1

# 3.3 Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction in the Relationship between Participants' Perception of Survivors' Rights and Their Performance of Human Rights Advocacy

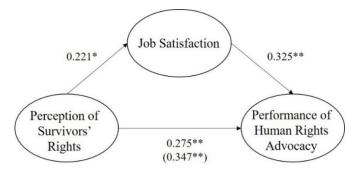
Tab. 3 showed the results of multiple regression which was performed to analyze the mediation effects of the aforementioned factors. The first step illustrated the results of regression analysis on the effect of the participants' perception of survivors' rights on their job satisfaction (mediator variable), which was statistically significant ( $\beta = 0.221$ , p = 0.001). In the second step, the effect of the participants' perception of survivors' rights on their performance of human rights advocacy (dependent variable) was examined through regression analysis and the results were statistically significant ( $\beta = 0.347$ , p = 0.001). Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was supported.

The third step showed the results of a regression analysis to find out whether the participants' perception of survivors' rights and their job satisfaction affect their performance of human rights advocacy (dependent variable) and it was statistically significant ( $\beta$ = 0.275, p = 0.001). The effect of the participants' job satisfaction on performance of their human rights advocacy was statistically significant ( $\beta$  = 0.325, p = 0.001). Thus, Hypothesis 2 was supported.

The results were proved because  $\beta$  in the third step was smaller than that in the second step. In the third step, the independent variable was statistically significant to the dependent variable, so it could be said to have a partial mediating effect. In other words, the participants' job satisfaction had a partial mediating effect on their performance of human rights advocacy. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 was supported. The results were summarized in Fig. 1.

**Table 3:** Mediating role of the participants' job satisfaction in the relationship between their perception of survivors' rights and their performance of human rights advocacy (Multiple Regression Analysis)

Independent/ Mediator/ Dependent Variable	Model	β	t	P	VIF	$R^2$	F
	Step. 1						
	$\mathrm{PSR} \to \mathrm{JS}$	0.221	3.171	0.002	1.000	0.049	10.054**
PHRA (Performance of	Step. 2					0.121	26.726**
Human Rights Advocacy)/	$PSR \to \!\! PHRA$	0.347	5.170	0.000	1.000	0.121	20.720
JS (Job Satisfaction)/ PSR (Perception of Survivors' Rights)	Step. 3 PSR, JS → PHRA					0.221	27.491**
	$PSR {\rightarrow}  PHRA$	0.275	4.239	0.000	1.051		
	$JS \rightarrow PHRA$	0.325	4.997	0.000	1.051		



**Figure 1:** Mediating role of the participants' job satisfaction in the relationship between their perception of survivors' rights and their performance of human rights advocacy

#### 4 Discussion

The purpose of this study was to identify disaster relief workers' degree of perception of survivors' rights, job satisfaction, and performance of human rights advocacy and to verify the relationships between these factors. Two hundred disaster relief workers participated in this study by answering a carefully designed questionnaire.

First, our findings suggest that there were significant positive correlations among the participants' perception of survivors' rights, job satisfaction, and their performance of human rights advocacy in this study. The participants' perception of survivors' rights had a big impact on their performance of human rights advocacy. The higher their perception of survivors' rights, the greater their performance of human rights advocacy. This result is consistent with a previous study on elderly caregivers, which indicated that the higher their awareness of the human rights of the elderly, the greater their level of human rights advocacy behavior [24]. The act of advocacy and intervention was also determined by whether the mental caregivers recognized and interpreted their field situation as a problem [25]. Some studies showed that the higher the human rights sensibility of mental facility nurses and nursing students, the greater their advocacy attitude and advocacy intervention for the mentally disabled [26]. In a previous study, the human rights perception of nursing care providers was found to have a positive effect on their job satisfaction [27]. On the contrary, the job satisfaction of police officers had a positive effect on their human rights awareness [28].

Second, the participants' job satisfaction acts as a mediator to increase the impact of their perception of survivors' rights on their performance of human rights advocacy. Their job satisfaction has been found to be an important factor in having a significant positive impact on and improving their performance of human rights advocacy based on the results from this study. It is consistent with the previous study that the human rights advocacy behavior of the dementia facility workers had a positive effect on their job satisfaction, with social support playing a mediating role [29]. However, there were significant differences in their levels of job satisfaction, based on factors such as age, region of work, length of work, experience of verbal violence at work, injury at work, working during sickness, discrimination at work, and promotion discrimination according to the results from this study.

Among the various age groups, job satisfaction was the highest in the 20–29 group, when the length of work was two years or less. When the length of work is two years or less, there is less burden of responsibility or duty, and competitive stress due to promotion is low. Thus, job stress remains manageable and job satisfaction can consequently be high. In a previous study, job satisfaction was low due to high job stress in the 30–39 age range, when the length of work was between 8–12 years [30].

Job satisfaction was low when participants had experienced verbal violence, injuries at work, or had worked through sickness. In previous studies that measured the prevalence of violence across first responders' careers, 57% to 93% of emergency medical service responders reported experiencing verbal or physical violence at least once in their career [31]. First responders have reduced job satisfaction due to increased physical injury and mental stress from the violent risks they encounter [32].

There are many studies on discrimination in work place. Gender discrimination was the most common form of workplace discrimination among female firefighters, and those who experienced it had a lower job satisfaction [33]. Firefighters who experienced promotion discrimination were found to have high job stress, which consequently had a negative impact on their job satisfaction [34]. Therefore, in order to enhance disaster relief workers' human rights advocacy, it is fundamental to improve their job satisfaction by providing a safe and nondiscriminatory work environment for them.

This study is significant in improving the performance of human rights advocacy as one of the ways to ensure the rights of survivors in the field of disaster, providing the basic data as evidence to increase the perception of survivors' rights and job satisfaction of disaster relief workers.

Overall, in order to improve the human rights advocacy performance of disaster relief workers, it is necessary to raise their perception of the rights of survivors and increase their job satisfaction. To this end, it is necessary to develop these strategies at the national level through the operation of a comprehensive program for disaster relief workers.

#### **5 Conclusions**

The following can be inferred from the findings: disaster relief workers' perception of survivors' rights has a positive impact on their performance of human rights advocacy. This can be applied to increase the human rights advocacy of disaster relief workers by raising their perception of survivors' rights.

Disaster relief workers' perception of survivors' rights also has a positive effect on their job satisfaction. Thus, raising disaster relief workers' awareness of the rights of the survivors will increase their job satisfaction. Their job satisfaction had a significant impact on their performance of human rights advocacy. Finally, this study suggests a partial mediating effect of disaster relief workers' job satisfaction on their perception of survivors' rights and their performance of human rights advocacy. This means that their recognition of survivors' rights has a major impact on their human rights advocacy and that their job satisfaction can have a positive impact on their human rights advocacy.

The importance of this study is to discuss the importance of disaster relief workers' human rights perception and human rights advocacy and to provide a basis for designing a variety of human rights education programs with the goal of improving their job satisfaction and their performance of human rights advocacy.

**Funding Statement:** This research was supported by the Chung-Ang University Graduate Research Scholarship in 2018. This research was supported by the National Research Foundation of Korea (NRF) grant funded by the Korean government (MSIP) (No. NRF-2020R1A2B5B0100208).

**Conflicts of Interest:** The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest to report regarding the present study.

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