Social emotional learning at global islamic school 3 yogyakarta: challenges and solutions

Muthmainah[1]✉, Riana Mashar[2], Tuti Puspita Sari[3]
[1,3] Department of Early Childhood Education, Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Indonesia
[2] Department of Early Childhood Education, Universitas Ahmad Dahlan, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
✉*muthmainnah@uny.ac.id*

Abstract
Background: Social Emotional Learning (SEL) has become an important part that needs to be accomplished from an early age. However, the issue of implementing learning in kindergarten has not been widely researched, especially when viewed from the challenges and solutions for teachers. Social emotional learning is an important agenda at GIS 3 Yogyakarta to lay a solid foundation for children's personality and behavior.
Aim: This research aims to examine the challenges and solutions for SEL at Global Islamic School 3 Yogyakarta.
Method: This study employed qualitative methods with semi-structured interviews of five teachers. Data analysis includes the process of data collection, data condensation, data presentation, and drawing conclusions/verification. The validity of the data was tested through source triangulation and technical triangulation.
Results: The results of the research show that the challenges faced by teachers are the exclusive environment for children, parental care, and lack of control over the use of gadgets. Next, the teacher determines a solution, namely implementing various activities such as morning sharing, class agreements, taking turns appearing in front of the class, new and exciting games, giving reward stars, group work, circle time, market day, show and tell, cooperative games, reading stories or fairy tales, projects with parents, school habituation programs, as well as parenting and collaborating with parents regarding children's use of gadgets. Creative teachers are prudent. They have good personal and professional well-being.
Conclution: Collaboration with parents needs to be improved so that social-emotional abilities increase.

INTRODUCTION

Having good social-emotional skills is not an easy thing. This statement is in line with the opinion of (Halle & Darling-Churchill, 2016) that one of the most common problems experienced by children is a lack of social emotional skills. Therefore, schools need to facilitate it, one of which is through Social Emotional Learning (SEL) (CASEL, 2013; Weissberg et al., 2015; Jones, S. M., & Doolittle, 2017). SEL strengthen developmental process that begins at birth and develops throughout the life span (Borowski, 2019; Weissberg et al., 2015; Jones, S. M., & Doolittle, 2017). SEL relates to the skills necessary for optimal functioning, such as self-awareness, self-management, social skills, and responsible decision making (CASEL, 2020). This theory emphasizes the importance of instilling personal and interpersonal skills simultaneously and combined with cognitive learning processes. Through SEL, children, teens, and adults learn skills to support healthy development and relationships.

Social emotional skills often receive little attention in early childhood learning, even though social emotional skills are very important for children's future development (Mondi et al., 2021). Research shows that social and emotional learning can improve academic achievement, well-being, positive life outcomes, reduce teacher burnout and can be a powerful tool for prevention and resilience when integrated with intentionality in curriculum, teaching, and school climate (Taylor et al., 2017; Schonert-Reichl, K. A., 2017; Rojas, N, 2022). The issue of implementing learning in kindergarten has not been widely researched, especially or focused the challenges and solutions for teachers. The research results can be used as a reference for other institutions in implementing SEL.

Early childhood with optimal social and emotional skills will become the foundation for development in adulthood. The impact of negative social emotional development in early childhood will also have a negative influence in adolescence (Foot et al., 2004; Ramsden & Hubbard, 2002; Reid et al., 2002). It is important that social and emotional competencies are stimulated early so that children gain the confidence and competence needed to build relationships in various environments, solve problems, and overcome challenges (Halle & Darling-Churchill, 2016; Schonert-Reichl, K. A., 2017; Rojas, N, 2022). Longitudinal studies, suggest that academic achievement in the first years of school is built on a foundation of children's social-emotional skills and strategies. indicators that future success and positive life outcomes are dependent on the development of children's social and emotional competencies. Research shows that SEL can improve academic achievement, well-being, positive behaviour, and reduce teacher "burnout" when integrated with curriculum, teaching, and school climate (Durlak et al., 2011; Weissberg et al., 2015; Taylor et al., 2017). Emotional health, social skills, and cognitive linguistic abilities that emerge in the early years are predictive of successful school outcomes (Rhoades et al., 2011; Weissberg et al., 2015; Jones, S. M., & Doolittle, 2017).

The implementation of SEL activities in kindergarten can be done through daily routine activities and providing opportunities for reflection and discussion. These include daily activities such as morning meetings, transitions, and free play time. This helps children see SEL as a natural part of a child's daily life and strengthens the skills being learned. Furthermore, SEL can be applied both through intra-curricular and extra-curricular activities. However, in reality, some kindergarten teachers tend to emphasize academic teaching in the classroom (Bassok et al., 2016), train academic skills such as reading, numeracy, and spatial skills (Bahlmann Bollinger & Myers, 2020), and some teachers have not maximized the structured SEL (Pyle et al., 2020).

An interesting phenomenon was discovered at TK Global Islamic School 3 or GIS 3 Yogyakarta. GIS 3 Yogyakarta Kindergarten is one of the favourite kindergartens in Yogyakarta whose students come from the middle to upper classes. In general, children from middle to upper classes receive preferential treatments from their parents, such as having all their needs met and serving what the child wants. Initial research results show that these special treatments have an impact on the children's social-emotional development, such as children who are less independent, impatient, and not used to share and socialize. This impact is very visible at the beginning of the new school year, where going to school and being separated from parents is an initial experience for children. Children need to learn to adapt to the environment. Of course, this is a challenge for teachers, and therefore it needs solutions.

Several studies that emphasize SEL have been conducted, such as the Sunshine Circles program which has been proven to improve children's social interaction, problem solving, cooperation and behaviour regulation skills through open discussion and adult-directed play (Tucker et al., 2017). Apart from that, there is the Tools of the Mind program, which is a program centered on teacher-facilitated drama games that focuses on increasing children's

attention, self-regulation and social cooperation to train self-regulation skills (Diamond et al., 2019). But some of this research has not examined teachers' challenges and solutions in social-emotional learning. Therefore, this research seeks to examine the challenges and solutions faced by teachers in implementing SEL in Kindergarten, especially in GIS 3 Yogyakarta.

METHODS

The research that focuses on challenges and solutions in Global Islamic School 3 or GIS 3 Yogyakarta. This research was conducted for two months. By knowing the challenges and solutions, the research results can inspire other institutions in implementing SEL. The selection of research locations was based on an investigative phenomenon, namely, that all children came from middle to upper classes, which based on a preliminaryresearch results, it showed that social-emotional development needed to be stimulated more than other developments. Informants stated that the majority of children come from educated families so the children's academic development has developed well. In the other hand, the development that still needs to be further stimulated is social-emotional development. This creates challenges for teachers and they have offered various solutions during teaching. Five teachers volunteered to participate as investigation participants. The consideration for recruiting five teachers as participants was because these teachers had served as teachers for a long time and carried out their roles as professional teachers. Furthermore, the teachers indicated their willingness to participate in this research. The research method used is qualitative with semi-structured interviews. Researchers compiled several open questions for research subjects, and added other questions to deepen the research data. Interviews allow the interviewer to get a comprehensive picture of the problem under investigation. The interview questions covered several topics, such as challenges and potential solutions in implementing SEL in GIS 3 Yogyakarta.
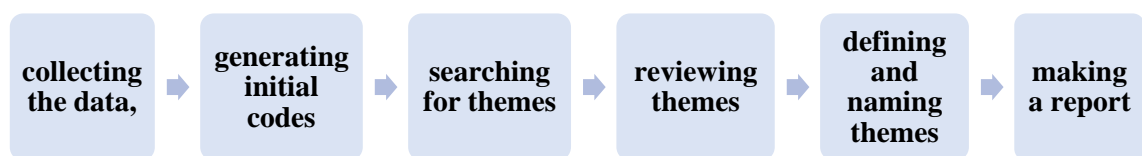
Picture 1. Flowchart the research

After the data was collected, it was analysed through six stages, namely, introducing the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and making a report. By applying these data analysis techniques, data can be explored effectively to achieve a comprehensive and multidimensional understanding of research objectives. Triangulation of methods and sources was carried out to obtain valid data. Method triangulation was carried out to check the results of interviews, observations and documentation. Meanwhile, technical triangulation was carried out to check the information obtained from various informants.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
A. Result
3.1. Teacher Challenges in Social-emotional Learning at GIS 3 Yogyakarta
3.1.1. Exclusive children's environment

The first challenge teachers face when SEL is the exclusive child environment. The exclusive environment in question means that most children live in housing complexes with few peers, so the children are only accompanied by their caregivers. Children rarely interact socially with the environment, so social development such as communicating, socializing, collaborating and sharing still really needs to be stimulated. Emotional development such as self-confidence, self-control, patience, independence and persistence also need to be stimulated. This is illustrated in quotes 1-3 below.

Quote 1: "We need to get children used to socialize and that is quite challenging for me. Most children live in housing complex and rarely interact with their surrounding environment, including their peers. Children spend more time with caregivers who tend to be all-hands-on-deck. "At first the children showed that they were less independent in their activities, less patient, and less confident in socializing (reluctant to hang out with friends), still fought over toys, had difficulty in saying sorry, liked to sulk and some even had tantrums". (Teacher interview transcript #1)

Quote 2: "At home they tend to be obeyed and served, so in terms of independence, patience, persistence and self-confidence they are still lacking. When they do a task, sometimes they say they can't and want to ask for help. That's why I motivate and convince them that "I can definitely do it". Some children also lack self-confidence, if they don't know them then they are quiet, reluctant to join in and play alone. That's why I make it a habit to give assignments to lead prayers in turns and encourage children to play together. Apart from that, I give rewards such as pictures and stickers if the child behaves well and shows positive changes". (Teacher interview transcript #2)

Quote 3: "The children spend more time with Miss E, who mostly serves the children because that is her job. Children also spend more time at home playing with Ms. E or her siblings. There are even people whose houses are close together or in the same complex, but they don't know each other because they rarely leave the house. "It turns out that it has an impact on children's socialization and children's attitudes towards other people". (Teacher interview transcript #3)

3.1.2. Parental care

The results of interviews with teachers stated that parental care could be an obstacle. This obstacle occurs because some parents love their children too much (pamper them too much). They do not train their children to be independent and responsible while at home, they do not have time for deep talks and accompany their children when playing, and they do not train their children to socialize with a wider environment either.

This is illustrated in quotes 4 and 5 below.

Quote 4: "Some parents still don't make their children independent at home and their children are served completely by their caregivers. "In the beginning, the children still need helps, for example in putting on pants or skirts again after toilet training, putting on socks, feeding themselves, and completing assignments". (Teacher interview transcript #4)

Quote 5: "Children do spend more time with caregivers and the caregivers tend to be used to serving". (Teacher interview transcript #5)

3.1.3 Lack of control over the use of gadgets

Lack of control over the use of gadgets at home is also a challenge when the teachers teach. Children who use gadgets too much tend to be impatient and less able to control themselves. As an illustration, teachers face teaching challenges when one of the children still shows impatient behaviour, wants to win on his/her own, and even has tantrums. On one hand, this is normal because children still have high egocentrism, but on the other hand, it is a challenge because as they develop, children's egocentrism needs to be changed to become sociocentric. This is illustrated in quotes 6 and 7 below.

Quote 6: "Children still need to be taught to be patient, to have empathy, and to actively interact with friends". (Transcript of tutor interview #1)

Quote 7: "The obstacles I encounter in class include children who are impatient, have difficulty in saying sorry, and show tantrum behaviour. After I asked the child, it turned out that the child at home often played with gadgets, which more or less affected his emotional development such as being impatient or having difficulty in controlling himself, being oversensitive, and his social development such as lack of communication, socializing, empathy and cooperation skills". (Transcript of tutor interview # 2).

3.2 Potential solutions to overcome the challenges

3.2.1. Implementing various unique and interesting activities to stimulate children's social emotional development

The teachers at GIS 3 Yogyakarta provide the best service. They are responsive, professional, and supportive to children. Through these attitudes, the children feel close, comfortable, and more easily accept input and direction from the teacher. Classes and schools are environments that are conditioned to shape children's positive behaviour. This is illustrated in quote 8 below.

Quote 8: "I try to understand the differences in children's characters, make them comfortable, be responsive when children need them, and encourage them to move forward. I believe that if children are comfortable and trust the teacher, it will be easier for the teacher to condition the child". (Transcript of teacher interview #2)

Various activities are carried out to stimulate children's social emotional development. This is illustrated in quotes 9-12 below.

Quote 9: "I apply various interesting methods that some children have never done or experienced or are not used to. So if the activity is new and challenging, children are enthusiastic and happy. Indirectly, learning objectives can be achieved. These methods include getting children used to expressing the feelings they are experiencing before playing activities start taking turns, choosing emoticon images according to the feelings they are experiencing and telling about them, market day, show and tell, cooperative games, reading stories or fairy tales from books in the school library, getting used to children to retell, and project with my parents" (Transcript of teacher interview #2)

Quote 10: "I often take a personal approach to children, such as asking questions, listening to them, directing them gradually and this has to be intensive. Through this process, children show the development of their social-emotional abilities. We as teachers carry out various interesting activities and games such as playing pretend to look for carrots and feeding rabbits, tiger games looking for prey, market day and other games that invite children to experience the excitement of making friends and having fun together". (Transcript of teacher interview #3)

Quote 11: "There are many unexpected things that happen during the game, and it trains social emotional skills such as learning to share, helping friends, communicating, solving problems, making their own decisions, and the children feel happy. We try to understand the characters of each child, and we provide treatments according to their characters. We implement morning sharing activities, class agreements, new and exciting games, giving reward stars, group work, circle time, and school habituation programs. "Thank God, so far the children are comfortable and their progress is good". (Teacher interview transcript #4)

Teachers at GIS 3 Yogyakarta have used various creative methods and this has proven effective in encouraging preschool children to be able to express their feelings better, to get along better, to show empathy for other people in the group, to care more about others, to feel happier, and to develop social emotional abilities.

Quote 12: "In the morning I get the children used to expressing their feelings in turns, leading prayers in turns, telling stories or problems before the children go home so that they can be resolved, so the children are indirectly confident, and get used to conveying their feelings, not harbouring problems". (Transcript of teacher interview #5)

Parenting

Collaboration with parents is carried out to optimize children's development. GIS 3 Yogyakarta teachers conduct dialogue with parents to communicate children's development. Apart from that, Kindergarten also organizes parenting to improve knowledge and skills, including parental care for their children.

This is illustrated in quotes 13 and 14 below.

Quote 13: "We carry out parenting activities to communicate about children's development and to increase parents' knowledge regarding parenting. We hope that what becomes habituation in the classroom will be in line with habituation at home ". (Teacher interview transcript #1)

Quote 14: "Some parents may not be aware of the impact of parenting and how to properly care for children. "Through parenting program, we invite professional sources to share knowledge and experience so that parents understand more about positive parenting". (Teacher interview transcript #2)

Collaboration with parents regarding gadget use.

Teachers are worried about children's habits in using gadgets while at home. This is illustrated in quotes 15-17 below.

Quote 15: "Most children at home enjoy playing smartphones or gadgets for their entertainment and games. "Actually, the impact is not good for children, so we work with parents to manage their children's screen time". (Teacher Interview Transcript #3)

Quote 16: "We invite parents to share about the impact of using smartphones or gadgets on children, so that they can provide rules and limits to children". (Teacher Interview Transcript #4)

Quote 17: "It turns out that children's use of gadgets if not regulated has a big impact, and thank God some parents are cooperative and equally aware of the impact on children. "In class, we also convey this to children, so that children know that there are times or limits when using gadgets or smartphones". (Teacher Interview Transcript #5)

Table 1. Recapitulation of research data

No	Research question	The answer of research question
1	Teacher challenges in social-emotional learning	Exclusive children's environment
		Parental care
		Lack of control over the use of gadgets
2	Potential solutions to overcome the challenges	Implementing various unique and interesting activities to stimulate children's social emotional development
		Parenting
		Collaboration with parents regarding gadget use.

B. Discussion

3.1. Teacher Challenges in Social-emotional Learning at GIS 3 Yogyakarta

3.1.1. Exclusive children's environment

The results of the interview are supported by the research results of (Pratiwi et al., 2021) that the obstacles experienced by teachers in developing social skills are developing an attitude of trust in children to join their group, encouraging children to be able to forgive other people's mistakes, and getting children used to having a warm attitude towards other people.

The formation of social life and emotional development can be done through socialization or giving children opportunities to get to know the outside world such as playing with peers and socializing with people around them. Children will learn and have experience to be able to adapt to group norms, moral values, to communicate with each other, to cooperate, and to understand other social values. Children will also learn to recognize the character of their friends and begin to train themselves to adapt to their environment in order to be socially accepted.

Parental care

Parents need to invite and encourage children to carry out activities according to their own needs. These needs include eating by themselves, bathing themselves, putting on and taking off their own clothes, and other self-help activities. Parents can also provide an example or role model, and provide encouragements so that the children want to try on their own without the help of others (Coleman, 2013).

3.1.3 Lack of control over the use of gadgets

Children who have good social emotional skills are usually able to recognize their own feelings, to recognize other people's feelings, to manage emotions, to express their feelings through reasonable behaviour, to have empathy, and to know how to maintain relationships (Badilla, 2015; Dowling, 2014). Children also know how to control emotions, thoughts and actions to avoid conflict. On the other hand, children who lack social emotional skills usually have difficulty to engage in all forms of social interaction activities (Cooper et al., 2009) and get angry easily (Syifa et al., 2019). The findings of (Musdalifah & Indriani, 2017) also show that if children are too busy playing with smartphones, they will not care about their surroundings, so they will not understand the ethics of socializing and become anti-social (Sahriana, 2019). Lack of social emotional development will have an impact on other developmental domains such as adaptive, cognitive and communication (Durlak et al., 2015).

The role of parents in supervising their children's use of gadgets or smartphones should be firm and they should not pamper their young children from using smartphones continuously because there are more negative impacts that arise if a minor is given a smartphone (Putriana et al., 2019; Sahriana, 2019). The lack of parental attention and strictness in excessive use of smartphones causes the children experience behavioural disorders such as lazy behaviour, social behaviour, and emotional behaviour.

Potential solutions to overcome the challenges

Implementing various unique and interesting activities to stimulate children's social emotional development

Teachers who are responsive to children's emotional cues are more likely to form supportive relationships that act as stress buffers (Nagel, 2012). This statement is reinforced by (Denham et al., 2012) that the quality of emotional interactions between teachers and children can foster mutual respect, positive communication and sensitivity to children's feelings. School is an environment that makes learning comfortable and enthusiastic and can train students to have optimism and resilience in facing challenges. The diversity of abilities and potential among the students influences their acceptance in the learning process and the growth and development of their social and emotional aspects. It is a challenge for classroom teachers to approach, know, and deal with each student with different needs and problems.

(Schonert-Reichl, 2017; Jones & Doolittle, 2017) state that the SEL approach aims to improve students' social and emotional skills by presenting a positive environment and directing students towards positive goals so that learning does not only emphasize cognitive but also affective development and student's character.

Through playing, children learn to negotiate and compromise. (Gray, 2013) states that children learn how to solve problems without upsetting their friends. Children develop ways of communicating, providing meaning, and sharing ideas in play (Taylor & Boyer, 2020), developing a sense of autonomy through playing, where they can make their own decisions and take risks without the guidance of educators (Hewes, 2014). In this way, teachers can take advantage of opportunities to help support and enhance children's self-regulation, attention, and emotional development (Rojas et al., 2022).

Various activities are aimed at children as a context for PSE learning and practice. Through active exploration with various activities, children learn to solve problems and organize themselves in a social context (Keung & Cheung, 2019). Children become aware of how to self-regulate among peers, enable the children to learn to cooperate and interact socially, thus help them grow and foster relationships (Keung & Cheung, 2019). Some children also learn to respond to unexpected, and sometimes, unpredictable, events (Taylor & Boyer, 2020).

Play and PSE are important components of the early year's curriculum (Dusenbury et al., 2015). Through active exploration, children learn to solve problems and manage themselves among their peers, enable themselves to learn to cooperate and interact socially thereby helping them to grow and foster these relationships (Keung & Cheung, 2019). When children challenge themselves through play, children naturally build self-esteem, self-confidence, and resilience (Whitebread et al., 2012).

Parenting

Parenting is an activity to help families understand children's development, appropriate parenting skills, home conditions that support children's learning and help the schools obtaining information about children. In parenting activities, schools can present an expert who can explain a problem, or hold discussions to support children's education and development (Coleman, 2013).

Children with good social-emotional skills have been shown to be better prepared to adjust when entering school (Zins et al., 2007). In contrast, children with low social-emotional skills tend to exhibit behaviour problems and social problems as well as academic barriers (Buchanan et al., 2009). One of the behavioural problems that arises is a lack of emotional control so that children have difficulty adjusting to their peers and have difficulty obeying school rules (Sutan et al., 2018).

Collaboration with parents regarding gadget use.

Parental involvement in education can be manifested in various forms of activities carried out by parents, both at home and at school (Morrison, 1988; Park et al., 2011) revealed that parental involvement contributes to the achievement of children's developmental tasks, increasing children's attendance at school, children's attitudes and behaviour (Homby, 2011), improving children's achievements and personalities.

One form of parental involvement is supervising and regulating children's use of gadgets. Rowan in (Anggraeni, 2019) stated that using gadgets beyond the time limit has risks to health, so the role of parents in accompanying and supervising gadget use is very important. Chusna stated that the negative impacts of smartphones on children include children having difficulty in concentrating, slow motor development, and significant changes in behaviour. These findings are in line with (Hasanah et al., 2020) who revealed that excessive use of smartphones can make children behave aggressively.

This study highlights the critical role of structured Social Emotional Learning (SEL) strategies in early childhood education. By identifying specific challenges faced by teachers at GIS 3 Yogyakarta, including an exclusive environment, parental care, and gadget overuse, the research underscores the necessity of tailored interventions to enhance children's social-emotional development. The findings suggest that collaborative efforts between teachers and parents, alongside innovative classroom activities, can significantly improve SEL outcomes. These implications are valuable for educators, policymakers, and curriculum developers aiming to integrate SEL comprehensively into early childhood education systems. This research contributes to the field of early childhood education by providing empirical insights into the challenges and practical solutions of implementing SEL in kindergartens. Unlike previous studies, it focuses on the socio-economic context of children from middle to upper-class families, offering unique perspectives on SEL development. Furthermore, it introduces actionable strategies, such as parenting programs and controlled gadget use, which are adaptable to similar educational settings. The study enriches the academic discourse on SEL by bridging the gap between theoretical frameworks and real-world applications in early childhood environments. While this research provides valuable findings, it is not without limitations. The study is confined to a single kindergarten, limiting the generalizability of its results to other socio-economic or cultural contexts. Additionally, the perspectives gathered were predominantly from teachers, with minimal direct input from parents or children. Observations were also limited to short-term interactions, which may not fully capture the longitudinal impacts of SEL interventions. These constraints highlight the need for broader and more inclusive research. Future studies should expand the scope by including diverse kindergarten settings across different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. Incorporating parents and children as primary informants would provide a more holistic understanding of SEL dynamics. Longitudinal studies could also explore the sustained impacts of SEL strategies on children's overall development. Furthermore, experimental research could assess the effectiveness of specific interventions, such as parenting workshops and regulated gadget use, to provide stronger evidence for best practices in SEL implementation.

CONCLUSIONS

This research tries to examine the challenges and solutions of teachers in implementing SEL in GIS 3 Yogyakarta. On the one hand, these findings show that teachers face several social emotional learning challenges, namely, an exclusive child environment, parental care, and lack of control over the use of gadgets. Teachers also implement a number of solutions to overcome these challenges, namely, implementing various unique and interesting activities to stimulate children's social emotional development, parenting, and collaboration with parents regarding the use of gadgets. By understanding the challenges and solutions for social emotional learning in GIS 3 Yogyakarta, the conceptualization, implementation and evaluation of social-emotional learning can be managed more effectively. Empowering children to have independence, self-confidence and want to socialize is an important part of their future life. The pedagogical implication of this research is to provide information that social-emotional learning strategies should not only emphasize knowledge, but also need to develop attitudes and skills. Although this research offers a valuable contribution to the empirical issue of social emotional learning, such as in GIS 3 Yogyakarta, it reveals several limitations. This research only focuses on the challenges and solutions of teachers in social-emotional learning only at GIS 3 Yogyakarta. Teacher creativity and parent collaboration have been proven to determine the success of the SEL. Further research is recommended to explore the process of social-emotional

learning activities to obtain a more representative scope of inquiry. Apart from that, it is hoped that this research will further involve parents as research informants and make observations.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

M contributed significantly to the conceptualization and design of the study and conducted the data collection. IBM performed the initial data analysis and involved in the revision process to ensure the accuracy and integrity of the study's findings. OM and RW assisted with the data collection, played a key role in the data analysis phase, and contributed to the writing and editing of the manuscript.

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