Asian Journal of Education and Social Studies

Volume 51, Issue 1, Page 88-97, 2025; Article no.AJESS.128886
ISSN: 2581-6268

Examining Teaching Motivation and Classroom Practices of Public Secondary School Teachers in Ulanga Tanzania: A Self-Determination Analysis

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Article Information

DOI: https://doi.org/10.9734/ajess/2025/v51i11729

Open Peer Review History:
This journal follows the Advanced Open Peer Review policy. Identity of the Reviewers, Editor(s) and additional Reviewers, peer review comments, different versions of the manuscript, comments of the editors, etc are available here: https://www.sdiarticle5.com/review-history/128886

Original Research Article

Received: 27/10/2024
Accepted: 29/12/2024
Published: 07/01/2025

ABSTRACT

Based on self-determination theory, this study explored how much secondary school teachers in public schools were motivated to work in their careers and how their motivation related to classroom practices. The study adopted a quantitative study design. A study recruited 70 secondary school teachers (male=36 and female=34) from different public schools who were randomly selected and involved. The questionnaire was administered to 70 teachers, and all the papers were returned

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Cite as: *Mpare, Faruku Maulid, Wang Zhichao, and Mwanakhamis Marjan. 2025. "Examining Teaching Motivation and Classroom Practices of Public Secondary School Teachers in Ulanga Tanzania: A Self-Determination Analysis". Asian Journal of Education and Social Studies 51 (1):88-97. https://doi.org/10.9734/ajess/2025/v51i11729.*

positively. Teachers' motivation was measured using the modified Work Tasks Motivation Scale for Teachers (WTMST) (Fernet C. et al., 2008). The Teachers' classroom practices were measured using an adapted vignette-based instrument, the Situations-in-School (SIS) Questionnaire (Alterman A. et al., 2019).
The score for autonomy motivation was computed by averaging the subscale of intrinsic and identified motivation, and the score for controlling motivation was calculated by averaging the subscale of introjected and external motivation. The result indicates that, to a large extent, secondary school teachers are autonomously motivated to work in their careers. It also found that teachers' autonomy motivation allied significantly with structure (need-supportive) and control (need-depriving) classroom practices. Controlling motivation and motivation are significantly related to control and chaos (need-depriving) classroom practices.
The study findings are crucial to educational stakeholders in addressing teachers' challenges to boost their motivation, which positively relates to their classroom teaching and, in turn, can affect students' performance. Conclusively, any change in the educational structure that promotes teacher motivation should result in improved levels of classroom teaching.

Keywords: Autonomy motivation; classroom practices; structure; control; autonomy support; chaos.

1. INTRODUCTION

Teachers' motivation is significant in creating a situation that supports classroom teaching and learning. They often do this through their support for students' autonomy (Schuitema et al., 2016). Teachers' motivation enables students to identify with themselves, their interests, and their values by supporting their freedom of choice (Ferlazzo, 2015). Teachers also help students learn by increasing their duty and participation by letting them generate their own goals and objectives.

Teachers are continuously present in the classroom, practicing classroom teaching and in close contact with students (Benes et al., 2016). For this reason, teachers have been identified as fundamental facilitators in classroom teaching and motivate students' motivation, which raises their academic performances (Routen et al., 2018; Stylianou et al., 2015). Other researchers point out that the implementation of any school-based initiative ultimately relies on teachers' motivation connected to their acceptance and willingness to change existing teaching practices (Beets et al., 2008; Tabanao, 2024)

The primary focus of the study was teachers' motivation concerning classroom practices in the actual teaching to motivate the students to learn (Dubey et al., 2020). There was a consensus in the teaching and learning process that students' learning motivation depends on teacher motivation in classroom practices (Aelterman et al., 2019). Therefore, teacher motivation is essential in substantially influencing student motivation. In recent years, the influential position of teachers in the educational procedure has led to the expansion of research in examining the contextual and dispositional factors influencing teachers' participation and implementation of school innovations (González-Peño et al., 2023). Findings from these studies support the idea that teachers' motivation is one of the essential determinants for the successful implementation of educational innovations, Gorozidis, 2011. Convincingly, the continuation of poor students' performance relates to their motivation in learning; on that connection, the current study seeks to examine the existing relationship between teachers' motivation in teaching and their classroom practices in Ulanga District.

1.1 Objectives

The study's primary objectives were to explore how much public secondary school teachers are motivated to work in their careers and how much their motivation relates to classroom practices. However, the study hypothesized a significant relationship between teachers' autonomy motivation and their need for supportive (autonomy support and structure) classroom practices. On the other hand, it has been hypothesized that teachers' needs in classroom practices are unrelated to their motivation to teach.

1.2 Definition of the Terms

Ryan and Deci (2000) explain that motivation means moving to do something. The Self-determination theory (SDT), according to Ryan and Deci (2000), distinguishes human motivation into three groups: autonomous (self-determined)

motivation (i.e., reflecting enjoyment and personal value), controlled (non-autonomous) motivation (i.e., reflecting internal or external pressures and contingencies) and amotivation (i.e., lack of intention and willingness to engage in a behavior). According to SDT, a person becomes self-determined and motivated when they meet three basic psychological needs of competence, relatedness, and autonomy; lacking these basic needs, they either feel controlled or motivated.

Autonomy refers to teachers' need to be the creator of their actions of psychological freedom in involving a learning matter. Competence is related to the emotional state of success and the requirement to experience confidence in achieving chosen outcomes. Relatedness refers to students' involvement in positive and mutually satisfying associations characterized by a sense of nearness and trust. Satisfaction of these three basic psychological needs, according to SDT, leads a person to be autonomous and motivated to engage in a particular activity. However, if people lack these basic psychological needs, they are left controlled or unencouraged to engage in an activity (Gonzalez et al., 2023).

Control is the teacher's instructional goal and interpersonal tone of pressure. The teacher insists that learners think, feel, and behave in a prescribed way and imposes their agenda and requirements on students, irrespective of their thoughts (Escriva, 2021). Chaos is the teacher's instructional goal and interpersonal tone of laissez-faire. The teacher leaves students alone, making it confusing for learners to figure out what to do and how to develop their skills.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Alterman et al. (2019), teachers provide four central (de)motivating classroom practices (autonomy support, structure, control, and chaos) (Gonzalez et al., 2023). According to Alterman, the four classroom practices are need-support, including autonomy support and structure and need-thwarting (control and chaos) classroom practices. In their study, Alterman defined autonomy support as the teacher's instructional goal and interpersonal understanding tone. The educator seeks to maximally identify and nurture learners' interests, preferences, and feelings so that students can engage in classroom learning activities **(**Baceviciene. et al., (2021**)**.

When autonomy-supportive, teachers adopt a curious, receptive, and open attitude, allowing them to understand better their nurturing learners' emerging interests, values, and preferences. Several components of autonomy-supportive teaching have been identified, including taking students' perspective and welcoming their input (Jang et al., 2016), offering choices (e.g., Patall, Cooper, and Wynn, 2010), providing a meaningful rationale (e.g., Assor, et al., 2002 and Vansteenkiste et al., 2018), following students' pace (Reeve & Jang, 2006), using invitational language (e.g., Vansteenkiste, et al. 2004), nurturing inner motivational resources such as task interest, e.g., Tsai, et al, (2008) and accepting expressions of negative affect (Reeve, 2009).

Structure is the teacher's instructional objectives and interpersonal tone of instruction. Starting from the learners' capabilities and abilities, the teacher provides techniques, help, and assistance so that learners feel competent to master classroom learning activities (Escriva. et al., 2022). In providing structure, teachers usually adopt a process-oriented attitude, trying to align activities and expectations with students' emerging skills while suggesting strategies and providing help so that students feel competent to master classroom learning activities (Vansteenkiste & Soenens, 2015).

According to Alterman. et al. (2019), structure involves several components, such as (a) communicating clear expectations and guidelines for desirable behavior (e.g., being cooperative) and undesirable behavior (e.g., not disturbing others while they are working), (b) providing step-by-step "how to" directions to attain those desired expectations (Jang et al., 2010; Vansteenkiste et al., 2012). (c) offering "how to" guidance and desired help during activities (Jang et al., 2010), (d) adjusting tasks' difficulty levels to students' skills (Belmont et al., 1988), (e) providing positive, informative feedback during and after task completion (Koka & Hein, 2005; Mouratidis et al., 2008, and Reeve, 2006) (f) expressing confidence in students' capabilities.

Teachers can practice controlling in various ways, including external control strategies, such as threatening with sanctions, yelling, intimidating, and offering behaviorally contingent rewards (Bartholomew et al., 2011). It may be more demanding because the teacher uses behavior-focused pressure to force students to comply or rectify their misbehavior. Sometimes,

teachers involve more internal control, such as guilt induction or shaming (Soenens & Vansteenkiste, 2010). This strategy may be more intrusive, manipulative, and domineering in nature because the student as a person is targeted.

When chaotic, teachers fail to successfully adjust their instruction to learners' developmental pace and growth potential and actively interfere with their students' competence development. Teachers are considered chaotic when they adopt an awaiting approach and must be more precise and consistent about their learner requirements and expectations (Alterman A. et al., 2019).

Also, chaos takes the form of permissiveness (Baumrind, 2012), where teachers fail to stick to the guidelines and rules introduced, thereby creating a laissez-faire climate. Finally, teachers may leave students to their own devices, presumably because they feel they need more support or have given up on the instructional effort to provide the required assistance; as a result, students may experience the learning environment needing clarification about how to proceed.

In an educational context, SDT proposes that teachers' behavior in a classroom is highly influenced by how they are motivated to teach. Ryan and Deci (2020) explain that teachers, like their learners, have the paramount psychological necessity for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Therefore, for teachers to actively support students' needs, they must experience the need for support. When teachers are autonomously motivated, they become more autonomy-supportive and provide structure in the classroom. Roth et al. (2007) and Klassen et al. (2012), as noted by Ryan and Deci (2020), in their researchers found that teachers who were reported as more autonomy-motivated reported their students to be more autonomy-supportive, more engaged and reported less emotional exhaustion in the classroom compared to those who have been reported as less autonomy motivated. On the contrary, when teachers feel controlled, they become more controlling of their students (Pelletier et al., 2002).

Impacts of Classroom Practices on Students' Academic Achievements Alterman et al. (2019) have reported, "A teacher's highly structured, highly autonomy-supportive motivating style is associated with various positive and educationally important student outcomes, such as motivation, engagement, learning, and well-being. Also, (Jang et al., 2010; Vansteenkiste et al., 2012) explained that a teacher's highly controlling motivating style is related to a wide range of adverse student outcomes. Many studies have proved that supportive classroom practices positively affect students' engagement in learning activities and academic outcomes. For instance, greater competence and perceived control (Skinner et al., 1998), better self-regulated learning (Sierens et al., 2009), less depressive feelings (Mouratidis et al., 2013), and greater engagement (Jang et al., 2010) have the positive effects on students learning activities.

On the contrary, need-threatening classroom practices have been associated with various adverse outcomes. For instance, Gorozidis and Papaioannou (2014) explain that negative feedback, whether interpersonally administered or self-administered in the form of failure, has generally been found to decrease intrinsic motivation by decreasing perceived competence. Other studies (Vansteenkiste et al., 2012) and (Haerens et al., 2016) indicate that lowered perceived competence can leave people feeling unmotivated and helpless. The reviewed studies also show that when children are denied the interpersonal involvement they desire, they can lose intrinsic motivation, leading to poor classroom engagement. The current study examined the teachers' motivation concerning their classroom practices, which impacts students' engagement in the class.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study applied a quantitative research design, which includes collecting, analyzing, and interpreting quantitative data roughly simultaneously, known as explanatory design. However, the design collected and analyzed the data, interpreting the findings to get clear and deep information concerning the existing relationships between teaching motivation and classroom practices of public secondary school teachers in Ulanga District, Tanzania (Marimo, 2015)

3.1 Participants and Procedure

The researchers sought permission from the district educational officer of Ulanga District and were given a letter that helped them to gather the information smoothly without any disturbances. The letter was prepared and addressed to the

Table1. Participants of this study

No	Number of teachers	Experience interval (years)	%
1	18	1-5	25.1
2	32	6-10	45.7
3	13	11-15	18.6
4	4	16-20	5.7
5	3	20+	4.3

head of schools. Seventy teachers from different public secondary schools in Ulanga District, Tanzania, 36 of whom were males (51.4%) and 34 of whom were females (48.6%), were randomly selected and participated in this study. The selection criterion was the willingness and availability of secondary school teachers to offer their time and participate in filling out the questionnaires for the researchers.

The Table 1 shows the patterns of participants involved in the study.

The consent forms and the adopted questionnaires from (Fernet. et al., 2008) were physically distributed and administered to all participants. Each participant was required to complete the questionnaire voluntarily and return it to the researcher. The researchers utilized face-to-face data collection as the questions were administered effectively to the respondents, and all the participants returned all the question papers to the researchers (Straichea, 2024).

Teachers' motivation was measured using the modified Work Tasks Motivation Scale for Teachers (WTMST) adopted from (Fernet. et al., 2008) with satisfactory reliability in SPSS 20 with an alpha reliability coefficient of 0.70. The hypotheses' reliability and the items' internal consistency were established using Cronbach's alpha, ranging from 0.75 to 0.91. The reliability of the adopted questionnaire was tested to the approval of 0.9 Cronbach's alpha, so it was reliable enough to be used in the current study.

The scale used the stem "you are teaching well because….." followed by 15 items representing five forms of motivations: intrinsic motivation (3 items, for example, "It is pleasant to carry out this task"), identified motivation (3 items, example, "You find this task important for the academic success of your students"), introjected motivation (3-items, example, "You would feel guilty not doing it"), external motivation (3-items example, "You are paid to do it") and amotivation (3-items, example, "You do not know, sometimes you do not see its purpose"). The scale was measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "1= strongly disagree" to "5= strongly agree" (Megheirkouni. et al., 2022). For this study, the score for autonomy motivation was computed by averaging the subscale of intrinsic and identified motivation, and the score for controlling motivation was calculated by averaging the subscale of introjected and external motivation.

Teachers' classroom practices were measured using an adapted vignette-based instrument, the Situations-in-School (SIS) Questionnaire (Alterman. et al., 2019), teachers' version. The SIS has 15-vignette that are based on different classroom situations before, during, and after the lesson (for example, "You are thinking about classroom rules. So, you . . ."). Each vignette was followed by four responses indicating four practices a teacher might adopt (autonomy support, structure, control, and chaos). The Linkert scale ranges from "1= strongly disagree" to "5= strongly agree" (Tarigan et al., 2019).

4. RESULTS

4.1 Secondary School Teachers Motivated to Work in Their Careers

The participants in this study were grouped according to their gender, age, and work experience**.** Descriptive analysis was run to find the mean and standard deviation for the three types of motivation; independent T-tests were performed to see the difference in motivation by gender, and ANOVA was performed to examine motivational differences between working groups. The result shows that autonomy motivation was high compared to other forms of motivation, with a mean of 4.12 and a standard deviation of 0.48. Controlling motivation had a mean of 3.17 and a standard deviation of 0.72, and motivation had a mean of 2.38 and a standard deviation of 0.97 (Table 2).

In terms of motivation difference between males and females, The result found that there is no significance difference in gender in all kinds of

motivation (i.e. autonomy motivation: male – mean = 4.06 and *t* =1.07, *df* =68, *p*= 0.28 and female- mean= *4.19 and t* =1.09, *df* =56.08, *p*= 0.27; controlling motivation: male, mean = *3.04 and t* =1.55, *df* =68, *p*= 0.12 and female, mean = 3.30 and *t* =1.54, *df* =64.12, *p*= 0.12; and Amotivation: male, mean = 2.27 and *t* = -0.98, *df* =68, *p*= 0.32 and female mean = *2.50 and t* = -0.98, *df* =60.94, *p*= 0.33). in Table 3

In terms of working experience, there is no significant difference between all two groups in autonomous motivation (*f* (4, 65) = 0.49, *p* = 0.73) and controlled motivation (*f* (4, 65) = 0.35, *p* = 0.84). However, there is a significant difference in motivation, in which teachers with working experience of more than 20 years (20+) (*f* (4,65) = 0.83, *p* =1.44) seemed to be less motivated compared to other groups (with significance level ranging between *f* (4,65) = 0.83, *p* =2.34 to *f* (4,65) = 0.83, *p* = 2.53) Table 4 and 5

4.2 Relationship Between Teacher Motivation and Classroom Practices

Concerning this objective, a correlation was made between all motivation types and the four classroom practices. The results found that autonomy motivation correlated significantly with structured classroom practice with *r*= 0.01 and *p* = 0.52, but it did not correlate with autonomy support, as previously hypothesized. However, it was correlated significantly with control classroom practice with *r*= 0.01 and *p* = 0.35.

On the other hand, controlling motivation has significantly correlated with both control (*r*= 0.01, *p* = 0.59) and chaos (*r*= 0.01, *p* = 0.60). While amotivation correlated significantly with control (*r*= 0.01, *p* = 0.51), chaos (*r*= 0.01, *p* = 0.52) as well as autonomy support (*r*= 0.05, *p* = 0.24) classroom practices (Table 6).

Table 2. Motivation means of participants

Motivations	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Autonomy	70	2.33	5.00	4.1214	.48977
Controlling	70	1.50	5.00	3.1714	.72730
Amotivation	70	1.00	5.00	2.3810	.97849

Table 3. Motivation means differences in gender

	GENDER	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	Df	Sig
Autonomy	Male	36	4.0602	.59382	-1.078	68	.091
	Female	34	4.1863	.34516	-1.093	56.809	
Controlling	Male	36	3.0417	.65024	-1.552	68	.135
	Female	34	3.3088	.78724	-1.543	64.125	
Amotivation	Male	36	2.2685	.83121	-.989		
	Female	34	2.5000	1.11389	-1.078		.116

Table 4. Motivational difference among working experience group

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Autonomy	Between Groups	.493	4	.123	.499	.737
	Within Groups	16.058	65	.247		
	Total	16.551	69			
Controlling	Between Groups	.777	4	.194	.354	.841
	Within Groups	35.721	65	.550		
	Total	36.498	69			
Amotivation	Between Groups	3.234	4	.809	.837	.507
	Within Groups	62.829	65	.967		
	Total	66.063	69			

Table 5. Post hoc for a motivational level between working experience

Dependent Variable	(I) working experience	(J) working experience	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Autonomy	6-10	1-5	.11053	.14644	.889	-.2608	.4818
	11-15	1-5	.18305	.18091	.743	-.2757	.6418
	16-20	1-5	.24074	.27475	.827	-.4559	.9374
	20+	1-5	.32407	.30996	.721	-.4618	1.1100
Controlling	6-10	1-5	.15104	.21841	.916	-.4028	.7048
	11-15	1-5	.14744	.26982	.962	-.5367	.8316
	16-20	1-5	.08333	.40978	.999	-.9557	1.1223
	20+	1-5	-.30556	.46229	.927	-1.4777	.8666
AMotivation	6-10	1-5	-.10069	.28967	.993	-.8352	.6338
	11-15	1-5	.09402	.35785	.998	-.8133	1.0013
	16-20	1-5	.13889	.54346	.998	-1.2391	1.5169
	20+	1-5	-1.00000	.61311	.335	-2.5545	.5545

a. Dunnett t-tests treat one group as a control and compare all other groups against it.

Table 6. A motivational difference between working experience group

	working experience	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05
			1
Tukey B[a,b]	20+	3	1.4444
	6-10	32	2.3438
	1-5	18	2.4444
	11-15	13	2.5385
	16-20	4	2.5833

Table 7. Correlation between motivations and classroom practices

	Autonomy support	Structure	Control	Chaos
Autonomy	.165	.518**	.349**	.032
	.173	.000	.003	.790
	70	70	70	70
Controlling	.095	.078	.585**	.601**
	.432	.519	.000	.000
	70	70	70	70
Amotivation	.236*	.129	.509**	.522**
	.050	.286	.000	.000
	70	70	70	70

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*

5. DISCUSSION

The study explored the extent to which secondary school teachers are motivated to work in their careers and how their motivations relate to their classroom practices. It was hypothesized that need-supportive classroom practices (autonomy support and structure) were significantly correlated with teachers' autonomy motivation, while need-depriving classroom practices (control and chaos) would have no significant correlation with teachers' autonomy motivation.

The result found that, to a large extent, secondary school teachers in public schools are autonomously motivated. However, some are controlled motivated, and some are even unmotivated to work in their careers. The result also revealed no significant difference in

motivation between males and females and between teachers with different working experiences. However, teachers with more than twenty years (20+) of working experience showed less motivation than other groups.

Regarding the relationship between teachers' motivation and their classroom practices, the results show that only structured classroom practice correlated significantly with autonomy motivation, as previously expected, but not autonomy support. It implies that autonomy-motivated teachers in public schools are highly implementing a structure to help their students achieve good results. Some studies revealed that the teacher's role in inspiring support of students' autonomy, relevance, and relatedness of the material increases develop students' competence and interest in the subject taught, and perception of self-efficacy can influence students' motivation to learn (Johnson, 2017). However, most of them fear providing autonomy support in the classroom. Alterman et al. (2019) reported, "Even though teachers generally believe that an autonomy-supportive teaching style is beneficial for students' sustainable motivation, engagement, and learning, they also fear that too much autonomy support might undermine the structure and lead to demotivating chaos (Jang et al., 2016)."

On the other hand, contrary to what has been expected, teachers' autonomy motivation correlated significantly with the control classroom practices (Baceviciene. et al., 2021). This implies that, despite being autonomy-motivated, teachers can still control their students for various reasons (Scheifele & Schaffner, 2015). According to previous research, teachers may sometimes be controlling their students due to pressure exerted on them from above (like from their superintendents, administrators, school principals, and parents) to make sure the students perform well, as well as from below (that is from the students themselves) (Pelletier et al., 2002). Other studies have explained that teachers, in supporting students' choices and interests, can help students develop personal interests and involvement (Johnson, 2017).

In their studies, Deci et al. (1991) and Megheirkouni. et al. (2022) have mentioned that teachers' perceptions of students' motivation could influence classroom practices. If teachers perceive students as more motivated to learn, they become more supportive, but when they are less motivated, they become more controlling. Moreover, teachers' controlling motivation and amotivation correlated significantly with both control and chaos (need-thwarting/depriving) classroom practices, as previous research and SDT explain. However, Teachers' belief in their ability to reach unmotivated students can increase their motivation to learn (Scheifele & Schaffner. (2015).

6. CONCLUSION

Teachers' classroom practice is crucial in learning activities that benefit students and teachers (Reeve, 2016). Therefore, teachers must diversify teaching styles to support their students for more successful learning (Di et al 2024). To achieve this, it is not essential to focus only on teachers' motivation toward their teaching but also consider another factor that undermines teachers' classroom practices. Other factors like students' motivation and school system pressure can affect teachers and inform teachers about the sequence of events, which can lead them to adopt an autonomy-supportive or controlling style with their students (Pelletier et al., 2002).

The study revealed the importance of teachers' motivation to classroom practices, which can help educational stakeholders take measures to overcome challenges hindering teachers' motivation to boost classroom practice. Teachers should emphasize that they continue to enhance their communication and social interaction skills to foster a better work environment for themselves and their students (Bragat et al., 2024). It emphasizes that the stakeholders should notice that classroom practices can be influenced by other factors, including students' motivation rather than teachers. So, it is recommended that school managers and administrators focus on both factors boosting teachers' motivation and factors influencing students' motivation that impact classroom practices.

CONSENT

The author(s) have collected and preserved the participants' written consent as per international or university standards.

DISCLAIMER (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE)

The author(s) hereby declare that generative AI technologies, including Grammarly (for grammar and style suggestions) and Consensus (for clarity

and alignment of ideas), were used during the writing and editing of this manuscript.

Details of the AI usage are given below

1. Grammar and spelling checks
2. Suggestions for improving sentence clarity and rationality
3. Enhancing style consistency throughout the manuscript
4. The author(s) reviewed and merged the (grammar) AI-generated suggestions where appropriate, as the tools were used exclusively to enhance language and legibility.
5. The content, including research and writing, was fully developed by the author(s).

COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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