

Exploring the Implementation of the Wordwall Application for Students' Vocabulary Mastery

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Abstract

Keywords:

Wordwall; Vocabulary Learning; Digital Gamification; EFL.

This study explores the implementation of Wordwall in vocabulary learning among eleventh-grade students at Vocational High School 1 Tungal Jaya, Indonesia, focusing on teacher planning, instructional strategies, classroom activities, and students' perceptions. A qualitative case study design was employed involving an English teacher and approximately 30 students from the Office Management and Business Services program. Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and documentation and analyzed using data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Triangulation and member checking were applied to enhance the credibility of the findings. The results showed that Wordwall was systematically integrated into vocabulary instruction through careful lesson planning, game-based and student-centered strategies, and pre-, while-, and post-activity stages. Activities such as quizzes, matching exercises, and group sorting encouraged active participation and created an engaging learning environment. Students demonstrated highly positive perceptions, with an average positive response of 94%, particularly regarding learning interest, enjoyment, motivation, participation, and reduced boredom. However, unstable internet connections and limited access to digital devices remained implementation challenges. The findings indicate that meaningful Wordwall integration depends not only on its interactive features but also on teacher preparation, classroom management, and technological support. This study highlights Wordwall's pedagogical potential for facilitating engaging vocabulary learning in vocational EFL classrooms while emphasizing the need for further research to measure its direct effects on vocabulary achievement.

Abstrak

Kata kunci:
Wordwall; Pembelajaran Kosakata; Gamifikasi Digital; EFL

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi implementasi Wordwall dalam pembelajaran kosakata pada siswa kelas XI SMK Negeri 1 Tungal Jaya, Indonesia, dengan berfokus pada perencanaan guru, strategi pembelajaran, aktivitas kelas, dan persepsi siswa. Penelitian menggunakan desain studi kasus kualitatif yang melibatkan seorang guru bahasa Inggris dan sekitar 30 siswa program Manajemen Perkantoran dan Layanan Bisnis. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi kelas, wawancara semi-terstruktur, kuesioner, dan dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis melalui reduksi data, penyajian data, serta penarikan dan verifikasi kesimpulan. Triangulasi dan member checking digunakan untuk meningkatkan kredibilitas temuan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Wordwall diintegrasikan secara sistematis dalam pembelajaran kosakata melalui perencanaan pembelajaran yang matang, strategi berbasis permainan dan berpusat pada siswa, serta tahapan kegiatan awal, inti, dan penutup. Aktivitas berupa kuis, mencocokkan kata, dan pengelompokan mendorong partisipasi aktif serta menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang menarik. Persepsi siswa sangat positif dengan rata-rata respons positif sebesar 94%, terutama terkait ketertarikan, kesenangan, motivasi, partisipasi, dan berkurangnya kebosanan dalam belajar. Namun, koneksi internet yang tidak stabil dan keterbatasan perangkat digital masih menjadi kendala. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa keberhasilan integrasi Wordwall tidak hanya bergantung pada fitur interaktif aplikasi, tetapi juga pada kesiapan guru, pengelolaan kelas, dan dukungan teknologi. Penelitian ini menegaskan

potensi pedagogis Wordwall dalam memfasilitasi pembelajaran kosakata yang menarik pada konteks EFL di sekolah kejuruan, sekaligus menunjukkan perlunya penelitian lanjutan untuk mengukur pengaruh langsungnya terhadap pencapaian kosakata.

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Introduction

Vocabulary mastery is crucial in English language learning because it supports learners' listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Without adequate vocabulary knowledge, students often experience difficulties in understanding texts, expressing ideas, and communicating effectively in various contexts. communication. (Nation, 2022) states that for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, vocabulary functions as a foundation in communicative competence and language proficiency (Khudriyah, Mujahidin, et al., 2026). In the context of vocational high schools, vocabulary mastery becomes even more essential because Students are expected to develop not only general English vocabulary but also vocabulary related to vocational fields and workplace contexts and related terminology to support their future careers and professional communication (Khudriyah et al., 2025).

Despite its importance, many Indonesian vocational high school students still experience difficulties in mastering English vocabulary (Khudriyah, Munir, et al., 2026). Previous studies reported that students' vocabulary achievement remains relatively low due to limited exposure to English, monotonous teaching methods, and insufficient learning motivation (Kararbo & Sudibyo, 2022). Traditional teaching approaches, such as memorizing word lists and copying vocabulary from textbooks, often fail to engage students actively in the learning process. Consequently, students become passive, lose interest in learning activities, and experience difficulties in retaining and using new vocabulary (Khudriyah, 2024). The findings revealed that both teachers utilized similar strategies, notably the use of contextual learning and repetition and reinforcement techniques, to enhance students' vocabulary acquisition. These strategies were found to be effective in promoting student engagement and supporting long-term retention of new vocabulary (Susanto & Nanda, 2025).

The advancement of educational technology has provided teachers with various opportunities to create better interactions and student-centered learning

environments (Khudriyah & Munir, 2025). Digital learning media have increasingly been integrated into language classrooms to enhance students' involvement and learning achievements. Wordwall is one of the digital platform applications that has attracted attention in recent years. Wordwall is an interactive digital tool that facilitates teachers in developing engaging learning activities, such as quizzes, matching games, anagrams, group sorting activities, and other gamified exercises that can be accessed through computers and mobile devices (Sari, 2024). According to (Fadhilah & Daulay, 2025), Wordwall facilitates participatory learning experiences and contributes positively to students' motivation and learning achievement.

Several previous studies have shown the positive impact of Wordwall in English learning contexts. (Arsyad, 2024) found that Wordwall significantly increases student engagement by providing a dynamic and visually stimulating learning environment. Wordwall features and multimedia elements make vocabulary learning more enjoyable, which helps maintain student interest and facilitates better vocabulary retention. Similarly (Chowdhury et al., 2024); (Khasanah & Suminar, 2023) reported that gamified learning activities provide opportunities for repeated vocabulary retrieval and encourage students are more actively involved in class activities. Furthermore, (Maulana et al., 2024) revealed that multimodal and interactive Wordwall activities support long term vocabulary retention because students continuously practice and review new words through enjoyable learning experiences.

Although previous studies confirmed the beneficial influences of Wordwall for students' vocabulary achievement, most of these studies employed quantitative approaches and focused primarily on measuring students' learning outcomes. Limited studies have explored how Wordwall is implemented in real classroom settings, how teachers design and manage Wordwall based activities, and how students perceive in using this application during the learning activities. Qualitative investigations into the implementation process are still relatively scarce, particularly in vocational high school contexts where students have specific vocabulary needs related to their future professions.

The situation at Vocational High School 1 Tungal Jaya also reflects these challenges. Based on preliminary observations, many eleventh-grade students showed low interest in vocabulary learning, had difficulties remembering new words, and demonstrated limited participation during classroom activities. The learning process was still predominantly teacher centered and had not optimally utilized digital learning media. As a result, students' vocabulary practice scores and classroom participation remained unsatisfactory. Therefore, there is an urgent need to implement more engaging and interactive teaching strategies that can increase students' motivation and facilitate vocabulary acquisition.

Wordwall has the potential to become an effective solution to these problems because it combines game based learning principles with interactive digital

technology. (Rubykania et al., 2025) found that the implementation of Wordwall not only improved students' vocabulary mastery but also created a more enjoyable and conducive learning atmosphere. However, previous qualitative studies also indicated that the implementation of Wordwall is often influenced by contextual factors such as internet connectivity, technological facilities, and teacher readiness. The study also highlighted contextual factors that shape these perceptions, including access to digital infrastructure and prior digital literacy, contextual factors such as infrastructure, access, and training shape these perceptions; technical challenges such as limited device access and internet connectivity were barriers to implementation (Ayyub et al., 2025); (Maulya, 2025). Therefore, a deeper understanding of the implementation process and students' experiences is necessary to maximize the benefits of this digital learning medium.

This study is significant because it investigates the implementation of Wordwall in a vocational high school setting through a qualitative case study approach. Unlike previous studies that focused mainly on learning outcomes, this research explores four important aspects of implementation: teachers' planning in using Wordwall, learning strategies employed by teachers, classroom activities during vocabulary instruction, and students' perceptions toward the use of Wordwall for vocabulary mastery. This comprehensive exploration provides a deeper understanding of how digital gamification can support English language learning processes in vocational schools.

The recency of this study lies in its focus on implementation process of Wordwall in vocational high school classrooms, particularly among eleventh grade students who require both general and vocational English vocabulary. Furthermore, this study integrates teachers' perspectives, classroom practices, and students' experiences into one comprehensive analysis, thereby providing new insights into the practical implementation of gamification based learning in an EFL context.

Therefore, the objective of this study is to describe the implementation of the Wordwall application for students' vocabulary mastery of the eleventh grade students at Vocational High School 1 Tungkal Jaya by examining teachers' planning, learning strategies, classroom activities, and students' perceptions toward the use of Wordwall in English vocabulary learning. The findings of this study are supposed to make a valuable role to the development of technology enhanced vocabulary instruction and provide practical recommendations for English teachers, schools, and future researchers interested in digital learning and gamification in EFL classrooms.

Methods

This study used a case study method because this study aims to gain a deep and detailed understanding of an event, program, individual, group, or process in a real conditions or natural context without using statistical measurement and manipulating. According to (Creswell, John W. Poth, 2018) Qualitative research

allows researchers to explore complex educational phenomena. by understanding participants' experiences, perceptions, and behaviors in their natural contexts. Therefore, this approach was suitable for investigating how Wordwall was implemented in English vocabulary instruction and how teachers and students experienced its use in the classroom.

This study was carried out at Vocational High School 1 Tungkal Jaya, Musi Banyuasin Regency, South Sumatra Province, Indonesia. The school is located on Jl. Palembang–Jambi, Desa Sinar Tungkal KM 243, Kecamatan Tungkal Jaya. The school was selected based on several considerations. First, the school has implemented technology based learning in classroom instruction. Second, English teachers regularly use the Wordwall application as one of the learning media in teaching English. Third, the school provides adequate facilities, such as internet access, projectors, and students' digital devices, which support the implementation of digital learning media. Finally, the students are familiar with smartphones and digital applications, making the implementation of Wordwall feasible. The research done in the second semester of the 2025/2026 academic year.

The participants of this research were English teachers who used Wordwall in their lessons and eleventh grade students who participated in the Wordwall based learning. However, the researches only involved one class of XI Office Management and Business Services 1. They were approximately 30 students. The Participants selected because they are directly involved in using Wordwall in the classroom.

The research procedures in this study were conducted in four stages, (1) Pre Research Stage; The researcher asked for permission from the school, coordinated with the principal and English teacher, and identified the class that regularly used the Wordwall application. (2) Data Collection Stage; the researcher conducted classroom observations during Wordwall based learning activities, administered questionnaires, conducted semi structured interviews with the teacher and students, and collected supporting documents related to the learning process. (3) Data Analysis Stage; Processed data using the Miles & Huberman technique (Data Reduction, Data Display, Conclusion Drawing and Verification), Analysed results to explain the application and how it affects vocabulary mastery, (4) Report preparation; the final stage involved presenting the research findings based on research focus, drew conclusion, and gave suggestions.

To obtain comprehensive and credible data, this study used four techniques to collect data: observation, interviews, questionnaires, and documentation. In observation, the researcher used non participant observation to observe the implementation of Wordwall during vocabulary learning activities without directly participating in the classroom instruction. Observation focused on teacher preparation, classroom activities, student participation, and vocabulary understanding. Observation sheets were used to make sure that the data were

collected systematic and in line with research objectives. For the interviews, semi structured interviews were conducted with the English teacher and several students. The interviews aimed to gather the data regarding the planning and implementation of Wordwall, learning strategies employed by the teacher, students' learning experiences, motivation, perceived benefits, and challenges encountered during the use of Wordwall. Semi structured interviews enabled the researcher to explore participants' responses in greater depth while maintaining flexibility during the interview process. Next, questionnaires were distributed to students and the English teacher to collect descriptive information about the implementation of Wordwall and students' perceptions regarding its use in vocabulary learning. The questionnaire employed a Yes/No response format accompanied by brief explanations to provide additional information regarding participants' responses. The Yes/No questionnaire responses from the 30 students were analyzed using simple percentages as supplementary descriptive data. These results were not used for statistical testing but were compared with the qualitative findings to support the interpretation of students' perceptions. The integration of these data sources provided a more comprehensive understanding of the implementation of Wordwall in vocabulary learning. The final documentation is used to support and validate the data gathered through observations and interviews. The documents collected included lesson plans, screenshots of Wordwall activities, students' quiz scores, photographs of classroom activities, student worksheets, and teacher notes related to the implementation of Wordwall.

To make sure the reliability of the findings, this study used triangulation and member checking techniques. Source Triangulation; data obtained from different sources, including the English teacher, students, and supporting documents, were compared to ensure consistency and credibility. Technique Triangulation; the researcher used various data collection methods, namely observations, interviews, questionnaires, and documentation, to investigate the same phenomenon from different perspectives. Member Checking; the findings and interpretations were confirmed with the participants to ensure that the results faithfully represented their experiences and perceptions.

In this study, the data were analyzed using a qualitative data analysis technique proposed by (Miles & Huberman, 2014), which consists of three interactive stages, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. First, the researcher reduced the data by selecting, organizing, and simplifying information from observations, interviews, questionnaires, and documentation based on the research questions. Second, the reduced data were displayed through narrative descriptions, tables, and thematic categories to facilitate interpretation. Third, conclusions were drawn by identifying patterns and relationships across the data and were continuously verified by comparing information from different sources and

data collection techniques.

Through these procedures, the purpose of this study is to provide an in depth understanding of the implementation of the Wordwall application for students' vocabulary mastery of eleventh grades students at Vocational High School 1 Tungkal Jaya.

Result And Discussion

Result

The objective of this study is to examine the implementation of the Wordwall application for students' vocabulary mastery of the eleventh-grade students at Vocational High School 1 Tungkal Jaya. The findings were obtained from observations, interviews, questionnaires, and documentation with the English teacher and selected students, questionnaires completed by 30 students, and supporting documentation

In teacher's Planning in Using Wordwall, the findings showed that the English teacher carefully prepared the learning process before implementing Wordwall in the classroom. Based on the interview and supporting documents, the teacher designed lesson plans, selected vocabulary materials related to the learning objectives, and chose appropriate Wordwall templates, such as Match Up, Quiz, and Group Sort activities. The teacher also prepared digital tools and internet access to support the learning activities. Based on the interview findings, the teacher explained that Wordwall was selected because it provided various interactive activities that could make vocabulary learning more enjoyable and motivate students to participate actively. The teacher also prepared alternative arrangements for technical problems, such as asking students to work in groups when not all students had access to suitable devices.

Furthermore in Learning Strategies Using Wordwall, the classroom observations and teacher interview showed that the teacher used game based learning and student centered learning strategies during the teaching process. The learning activities encouraged students to actively engage in completing quizzes, matching exercises, and group activities through the Wordwall application. The observation also showed that students were actively enthusiastic when participating in Wordwall activities. They were willing to answer questions, discuss vocabulary items with classmates, and compete to obtain higher scores. The teacher guided the activities, explained the vocabulary when necessary, monitored students' participation, and provided feedback during and after the Wordwall activities.

In Classroom Activities, the learning activities were divided into three phases: pre activity, while activity, and post-activity. During the pre-activity phase, the teacher opened the lesson by greeting the students, checked attendance, prepared them for the learning process, introduced the learning objectives, and explained the vocabulary materials that would be studied. While Activity, the teacher displayed the

Wordwall activities using a projector and provided students with a link to access the activities through their smartphones. Students completed several activities, including quizzes, matching games, and group sorting exercises. Post Activity, the teacher discussed students' answers, provided feedback, and reviewed difficult vocabulary items. Finally, the teacher concluded the lesson and evaluated students' understanding.

Documentation, including the teaching module, screenshots of Wordwall activities, students' work, and classroom photographs, supported the observation findings and showed that Wordwall was used as part of the vocabulary learning activities.

Students' Perceptions of Wordwall Implementation: Questionnaire results indicated that the students expressed positive perceptions of the use of Wordwall in vocabulary learning.

Table 1. Interpretation Category:

Percentage	Category
0% - 25%	Very Negative
26% - 50%	Negative
51% - 75%	Positive
76% - 100%	Very Positive

Formula used for the following percentage:

$$P = \frac{f}{N} \times 100\%$$

Description:

P = Percentage

f = Number of answers (Yes or No)

N = Total number of respondents (30 students)

The questionnaire was completed by 30 students to obtain supplementary information about their perceptions of Wordwall. The questionnaire consisted of five Yes/No statements. The results are presented in Table 2

Table 2. The Percentage of Students' Perceptions toward the Use of Wordwall

No	Statements	Yes (f)	Yes (%)	No (f)	No (%)
1	Wordwall makes learning more interesting	30	100%	0	0%
2	Wordwall makes vocabulary learning more enjoyable	28	93,3%	2	6,7%
3	Wordwall increases learning motivation	28	93,3%	2	6,7%
4	Wordwall encourages active participation	27	90%	3	10%

5	Wordwall reduces boredom in learning vocabulary	28	93,3%	2	6,7%
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Overall Interpretation Averaged:

$$\frac{100 + 93.3 + 93.3 + 90 + 93.3}{5} = 94\%$$

Average student perception = 94%

This mean that students' perceptions of using Wordwall fall into "Very High" or "Very Positive" category.

The questionnaire results showed that all 30 students (100%) agreed that Wordwall made learning more interesting. There are 28 students (93.3%) reported that Wordwall made vocabulary learning more enjoyable and increased their motivation. 27 students (90%) agreed that Wordwall encouraged active participation, while 28 students (93.3%) reported that Wordwall reduced boredom during vocabulary learning

According to the analysis of the questionnaire data, the results revealed that most students had positive responses toward the implementation of Wordwall in vocabulary learning. This was evident from the very high percentage of "Yes" responses to each item, with an average of 94% showed that the majority of students showed highly positive responses toward the use of Wordwall, while only 6% responded negatively. These findings indicate that students had highly positive perceptions of the use of Wordwall in vocabulary learning activities.

The data indicate that most students responded positively to the implementation of Wordwall. All students agreed that Wordwall made learning more interesting, while more than ninety percent of students believed that the application increased motivation, participation, and enjoyment during vocabulary learning.

Discussion

The findings show that Wordwall was implemented as an interactive medium within a planned vocabulary learning process. The teacher prepared the learning objectives, vocabulary materials, Wordwall activities, digital devices, and internet access before the lesson. The implementation was then organized through pre-activity, while-activity, and post-activity stages. These findings suggest that the use of Wordwall was not limited to introducing a digital application but was integrated into the teacher's instructional planning and classroom management.

Teacher preparation appears to be an important condition for the use of Wordwall in the vocational classroom. The teacher needed to select vocabulary materials and activities that were appropriate for the lesson objectives and students' learning conditions. The teacher also needed to prepare technological alternatives when problems occurred. This indicates that the use of digital gamification requires

pedagogical decisions in addition to technical skills. In this context, Wordwall functioned as part of the teaching strategy rather than as a replacement for the teacher's role. The teacher's preparation and lesson planning played an important role in ensuring the successful integration of digital media into classroom instruction. This finding supports the argument of (Harmer, 2007), who states that effective technology integration requires careful instructional planning and appropriate material selection.

The classroom observations also showed that Wordwall created opportunities for active student participation. Students answered questions, matched vocabulary items, completed quizzes, discussed answers with classmates, and participated in activities involving scores and competition. This result is in line with the findings of (Nur et al., 2024) who reported that Wordwall improves students' participation and creates a more enjoyable classroom atmosphere, a more enjoyable approach by using the Wordwall platform as a learning method to increase students' interest in learning.

One possible explanation for this engagement is that Wordwall changed vocabulary practice from a mainly individual memorization activity into a more interactive classroom experience. The immediate task, visual presentation, game elements, and opportunity to receive scores provided students with clear and immediate learning activities. The positive perceptions shown by students also support previous studies indicating that digital gamification can enhance vocabulary retention and engagement (Sari, 2024) (Fadhilah & Daulay, 2025). Through repeated exposure to vocabulary items in interactive activities, students had greater opportunities to remember and practice new words.

In a vocational classroom, where students may need practical and repeated opportunities to practice English, these features can make vocabulary activities more accessible and participatory. The implementation of game based learning through Wordwall also increased students' motivation and engagement. The interactive features of Wordwall motivated students to actively engage in learning activities. This finding was in line with (Ryan, Richard M.; Deci, 2020) in Self Determination Theory, emphasizes that enjoyable and interactive learning environments can increase students' intrinsic motivation.

However, the implementation of Wordwall also faced several challenges. The findings showed that technological factors, particularly unstable internet connections and limited devices, influenced the effectiveness of digital learning. Similar findings were found by (Fitriyani & Astuti, 2022) stated that technological limitations remain one of the main challenges in implementing digital learning media in Indonesian schools.

Despite these limitations, the teacher's efforts to encourage collaboration and provide additional guidance helped minimize the problems faced during the learning process. Therefore, the successful implementation of Wordwall depends not only on the application itself but also on teachers' readiness, classroom management, and the

availability of technological support.

Overall, this study demonstrates that Wordwall is an effective digital learning tool for vocabulary instruction because it promotes active participation, increases learning motivation, and creates an enjoyable learning environment. These findings further expand the existing research on technology-supported language learning, particularly in vocational high school contexts where studies on the implementation of Wordwall remain limited. The strongest evidence from this study concerns the implementation process and students' positive perceptions, rather than measurable gains in vocabulary mastery. This distinction is important because it shows that the potential contribution of Wordwall lies not simply in the application itself, but in how its game-based features are pedagogically integrated into classroom learning.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the implementation of Wordwall in vocabulary learning at Vocational High School 1 Tungkal Jaya was systematically integrated into classroom instruction through careful teacher planning, game-based and student-centered learning strategies, and structured pre-, while-, and post-activity stages. Activities such as quizzes, matching exercises, and group sorting created an interactive learning environment in which students actively participated in vocabulary practice. The findings demonstrate that the pedagogical value of Wordwall lies not merely in its digital features but in how teachers integrate those features with appropriate learning objectives, instructional strategies, feedback, and classroom management.

Students demonstrated highly positive perceptions of Wordwall, with an average positive response of 94%. They perceived the application as making vocabulary learning more interesting and enjoyable, increasing their motivation and participation, and reducing boredom. Nevertheless, unstable internet connections and limited access to digital devices remained important challenges. These findings indicate that successful digital gamification requires not only an appropriate technological platform but also teacher readiness, effective classroom management, adequate infrastructure, and alternative strategies for addressing technological constraints.

This study contributes to understanding the practical implementation of digital gamification in vocational EFL classrooms, particularly by highlighting the interaction between technology, pedagogy, and student engagement. However, because the study did not employ pre-test and post-test measures, its findings cannot establish a direct causal improvement in students' vocabulary mastery. Future research should therefore employ experimental or mixed-method designs to measure vocabulary gains and examine Wordwall implementation across different vocational contexts, grade levels, and language skills.

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Ethical Statement

This study was conducted with due consideration of ethical principles in educational research, including respect for participants, privacy, confidentiality, and the responsible use of research data. Permission to conduct the research was obtained from the school prior to data collection. Data collected through classroom observations, interviews, questionnaires, and documentation were used solely for academic purposes, with due attention to protecting participants' personal information.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Statement

The authors used artificial intelligence (AI) tools only for limited language-editing purposes, including improving grammatical accuracy, clarity, and readability of the manuscript. AI was not used to generate or manipulate research data, conduct data analysis, interpret the findings, or formulate the research conclusions. All AI-assisted outputs were critically reviewed and verified by the authors, who take full responsibility for the accuracy, originality, and integrity of the final manuscript.

Author Contributions

Dwi Puji Rahayu contributed to the conceptualization, investigation, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of the findings, and preparation of the original draft. Tahrun contributed to the conceptualization, methodology, supervision, validation, interpretation of the findings, and critical review of the manuscript. Masagus Firdaus contributed to methodology, validation, literature review, interpretation of the findings, and manuscript review and editing. All authors reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript and take responsibility for its scholarly content.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that there are no financial, professional, institutional, or personal conflicts of interest that could have influenced the conduct, interpretation, or publication of this study.

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