

A tracer study of the library science graduates of divine word college of Legazpi, Legazpi City From 2014 to 2017

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Abstract

This study aimed to trace the Bachelor of Library and Information Science (BLIS) graduates of Divine Word College of Legazpi (DWCL) from 2014 to 2017. The research focused on determining the graduates' employment status, preparedness for their current roles, competencies, work-related values, and recommendations for curriculum improvement. Data were gathered from ten graduates, addressing their demographic profiles (gender, age, civil status, and position), job placement status, the factors contributing to their job preparedness, the relevance of their competencies and work-related values, and suggestions for enhancing the BLIS program. The findings revealed that the majority of the graduates were women, aged 21–25, and single. Most of them secured jobs quickly after graduation, with roles directly related to their profession, such as cataloging, classification, and library administration. Graduates attributed their preparedness to on-the-job training (OJT) and seminars, although they suggested that the curriculum should offer more practical applications, hands-on learning activities, and improved IT-related instruction. The study concluded that BLIS graduates are employable and well-prepared for their profession, with their skills and competencies aligning with their job requirements. Recommendations included enhancing curriculum content, focusing on practical applications, and promoting the program to a broader audience.

Keywords: Library And Information Science (BLIS); Employment Status; Job Preparedness; BLIS Curriculum; Tracer Study

1. Introduction

A tracer study is an alumni survey designed to track the career paths and activities of graduates from an educational institution (Millington, n.d.). According to the Association of African Universities (AAU, 2002) and Boaduo, Mensah, and Babitseng (2009), tracer studies provide a dynamic and reliable system for understanding the career trajectories of graduates. These studies help evaluate the effectiveness of an institution's education and training by examining job titles, employment status, income levels, and other relevant data (Schomburg, as cited in Millington, n.d.). With employability being a key concern for students, universities have increasingly offered diverse programs aimed at developing the skills needed for career success. These programs not only help students acquire employability skills but also encourage their ongoing development throughout their careers, from job searching to personal growth and maximizing work experience opportunities. The university experience plays a critical role in fostering lifelong learning, which enhances employability and supports students' integration into the global knowledge economy (Ramirez, Cruz, & Alcantara, 2014).

The College of Arts and Sciences of Divine Word College of Legazpi had produced 14 graduates with the degree of Bachelor of Library and Information Science (BLIS) from 2014 to 2017. However, the school had lacked a database or

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record of its graduates' whereabouts after graduation. This had made it challenging for the department to track the status of its knowledge sharing and potential job opportunities, as well as to receive feedback on the value of the program. Moreover, this lack of data hindered the ability to restructure the curriculum to ensure that current students acquired the necessary knowledge and skills for the real world. In line with Republic Act No. 9246, or the "Library and Information Science Act of 2004," which promoted the professionalization of librarianship and enhanced the quality of library education in the Philippines, this tracer study was conceptualized. The law emphasized the importance of ensuring that graduates were well-prepared for professional practice in the information sector. The study focused on the BLIS graduates of DWCL from 2014 to 2017, aiming to assess their employment status, job preparedness, relevant competencies, work-related values, and provide recommendations for curriculum enhancement. Findings from this study were valuable for administrators, faculty, and prospective students, offering insights into the advantages of pursuing a Library Science degree and the job opportunities available to graduates. Additionally, the study served as a basis for upgrading the curriculum to meet industry needs and improve the training and instruction of future graduates.

1.1. Problem Statement

The problem addressed by this study revolves around the need to trace the graduates of the Bachelor of Library and Information Science (BLIS) program at Divine Word College of Legazpi from 2014 to 2017 in order to assess their post-graduation status. Specifically, the study seeks to determine their employment status, job preparedness, competencies, and work-related values as they relate to their current positions. It also aims to gather suggestions from the graduates for enhancing the BLIS program. The study aims to answer the following questions: (1) What is the demographic profile of Library Science graduates in terms of gender, age, civil status, and years of employment? (2) What are the graduates' job placement profiles, including employment status and the nature of their work? (3) To what do the graduates attribute their preparedness for their current jobs? (4) How relevant are the competencies and work-related values acquired during their education to their current occupations? (5) What suggestions or recommendations do the graduates have for improving the BLIS program at DWCL? This study aims to provide insights that can help enhance the curriculum and better prepare future graduates for the demands of the professional world.

1.2. Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Donald Super's Theory of Career Development (1957) and Yorke and Knight's Theory of Employability (2004). Super's theory highlights that career development is a lifelong process, where individuals progress through different stages of life, continuously shaping their professional identities. It suggests that vocational choices are influenced by personal growth, experiences, and transitions. In the context of this tracer study, Super's theory is used to explore how graduates of the Bachelor of Library and Information Science (BLIS) program at Divine Word College of Legazpi make vocational decisions, how their education influences these decisions, and how their professional identities evolve as they advance in their careers. The study evaluates how the educational preparation provided by the BLIS program supports graduates in their career paths and transitions into the workforce.

Yorke and Knight's Theory of Employability (2004) emphasizes that employability is the result of an individual's learning, achievements, and understanding of their personal competencies, which enable success in the workplace. This theory complements Super's by focusing on the role of education in equipping graduates with the necessary skills and competencies for professional success. The tracer study applies this theory to assess how well the BLIS program prepares graduates for employment and career advancement. By examining the skills and knowledge gained during the program, the study aims to determine how these factors have influenced graduates' employability and success in their chosen careers. Together, these theories offer a framework to evaluate the effectiveness of the BLIS program and identify areas for curriculum improvement based on graduates' real-world experiences.

1.3. Review of Related Literatures and Studies

This chapter presents a review of related literature and studies, both foreign and local, which have informed the conduct of this tracer study. The foreign literature highlights the importance of employability skills, such as literacy, communication, and continuous learning, which are essential for career success (Conference Board of Canada, 2015). Studies by Roy Anayoc (2013) and Burnett (2015) emphasize the role of tracer studies in evaluating curriculum relevance and ensuring that educational institutions provide students with skills aligned with job market demands. Further, the European Training Foundation (2016) defines tracer studies as surveys that assess graduates' career paths and the relevance of their education to their employment. Local studies, such as those by Galila-Infante (2014) and Quiambao et al. (2015), emphasize the link between education and employment, with findings suggesting that education equips individuals with market skills that enhance employment opportunities. However, challenges related to employment entry and the underutilization of educated individuals remain prevalent (Macatangay, 2009).

The related studies also focus on the employment status, competencies, and skills required for graduates' career success. Research by Chanchellor College's Tracer Study Team (2017) and Shongwe and Ocholla (2011) shows that graduates, especially in fields like education and Library and Information Science (LIS), often perform well in their respective jobs but highlight areas for improvement in curriculum and training. Local studies by Sanchez and Diamante (2017), Buenrostro and Maglaque (2015), and Pobocan (2015) reinforce the importance of employability skills such as communication, critical thinking, and professional competencies for graduates entering the workforce. The reviewed literature and studies contributed significantly to the understanding of the employability and marketability of BLIS graduates and supported the researchers in examining the status of employment, competencies, and suggestions for curriculum enhancement in the present study.

2. Research Design and Methodology

The study used the descriptive method of research. The main objective in adapting this kind of method was to find out the nature of a situation that exist at the time of the study and to determine the present status of the graduates' employability based on the given survey questionnaires. This method involves collection of data concerning the current status of the subject of the study. Descriptive method involves in describing problems using certain research survey design like questionnaire-checklist. The method was utilized to gather insights and to trace the Library Science graduates in Divine Word College of Legazpi and look into the status of their employment after graduation. Gathering of data was conducted by way of using the survey-checklist questionnaire.

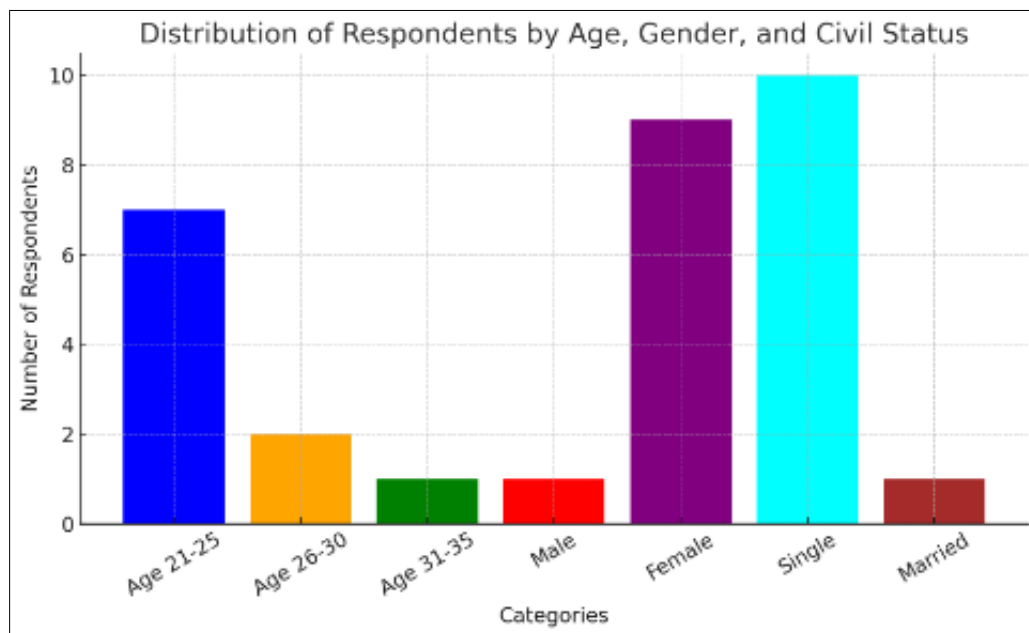


Figure 1 Distribution of respondents by age, gender and civil status

Figure one shows that among the ten respondents, nine (9) or ninety percent (90%) were female and one or ten percent (10%) was male. In terms of the respondents' age, seven (7) or seventy percent (70%) of them were under 21 – 25 years old, two (2) or two percent (2%) were 25 – 30 years old and one (1) or ten (10%) was 31 – 35 years old. This reveals that the course Library Science is more inviting to females than males which mean that women make up the majority of the profession. Further, the findings revealed that more than half of the respondents (70%) seventy percent are in the age bracket of 21-25 years old and most of them are single.

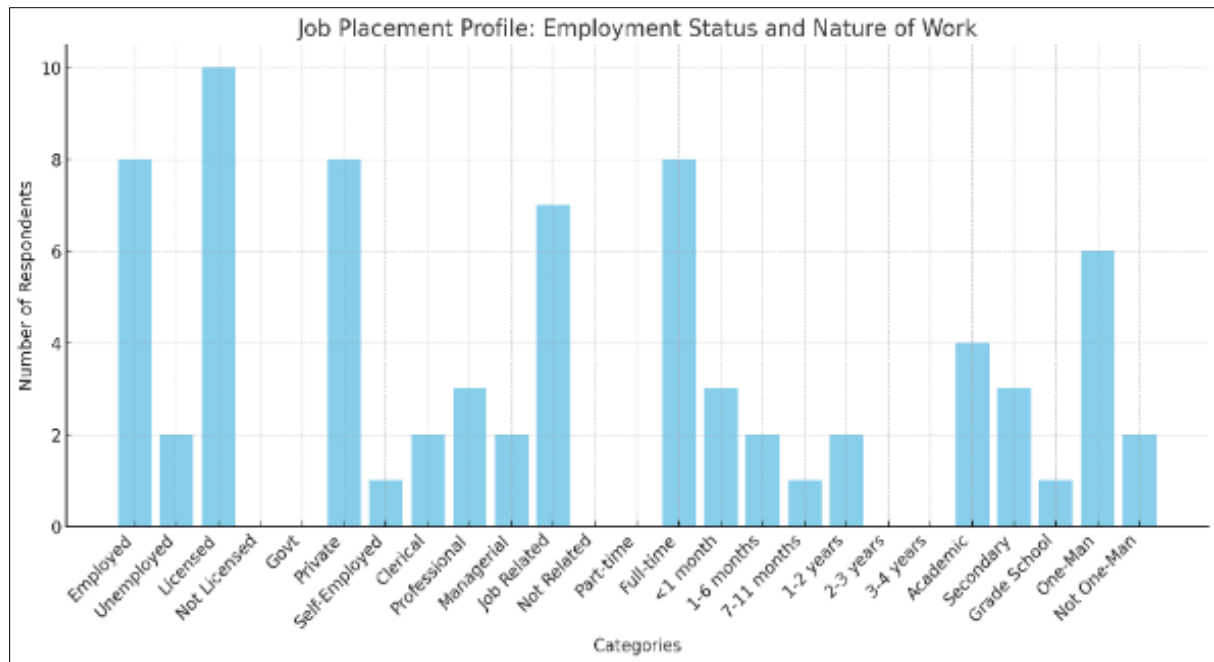


Figure 2 Job placement profile

Figure 2 presents the job placement profile of respondents based on employment status and nature of work. The majority, 80% (8 respondents), are employed in private institutions, while 20% (2 respondents) remain unemployed. All 10 respondents are licensed librarians. In terms of job level, 20% (2) hold rank or clerical positions, 30% (3) are in professional, technical, or supervisory roles, and 20% (2) hold managerial or executive positions, with one respondent not specifying their job level. Regarding job relevance, 70% (7) reported that their job is directly related to their profession, while 30% (3) did not specify. All eight employed respondents work full-time. In terms of job search duration, 30% (3) found jobs in less than a month, 20% (2) were employed within 1-6 months, 10% (1) secured employment after 7-11 months, and 20% (2) found jobs within 1-2 years. Among the employed respondents, 40% (4) work in academic libraries, 30% (3) in secondary school libraries, and 10% (1) in a grade school library. Additionally, 60% (6) serve as one-man librarians, while 20% (2) are assigned to Cataloging and Reserved Sections.

The data suggests that most graduates were highly employable, with many securing jobs within a month of graduation. The private sector serves as their main employer, and the majority work in professional or supervisory positions on a full-time basis. Many are employed as one-man librarians, performing core library functions such as cataloging, referencing, collection development, and general library administration.

Figure 3 shows that 30% (3 respondents) feel very much prepared for their current librarian position, 20% (2) are moderately prepared, while 10% (1) feel adequately prepared, and another 10% (1) feel quite prepared. All respondents (100%) attribute their preparedness to training and seminars, 90% (9) credit their work experience, and 80% (8) acknowledge the impact of their undergraduate curriculum.

Regarding the gap between theory and practice, 70% (7) believe there is a gap, while the rest did not share their opinion. Among those who see a gap, 40% (4) suggest more practical application of theories, another 40% (4) recommend more hands-on IT activities, and 10% (1) propose improving instructions, laboratory facilities, and equipment.

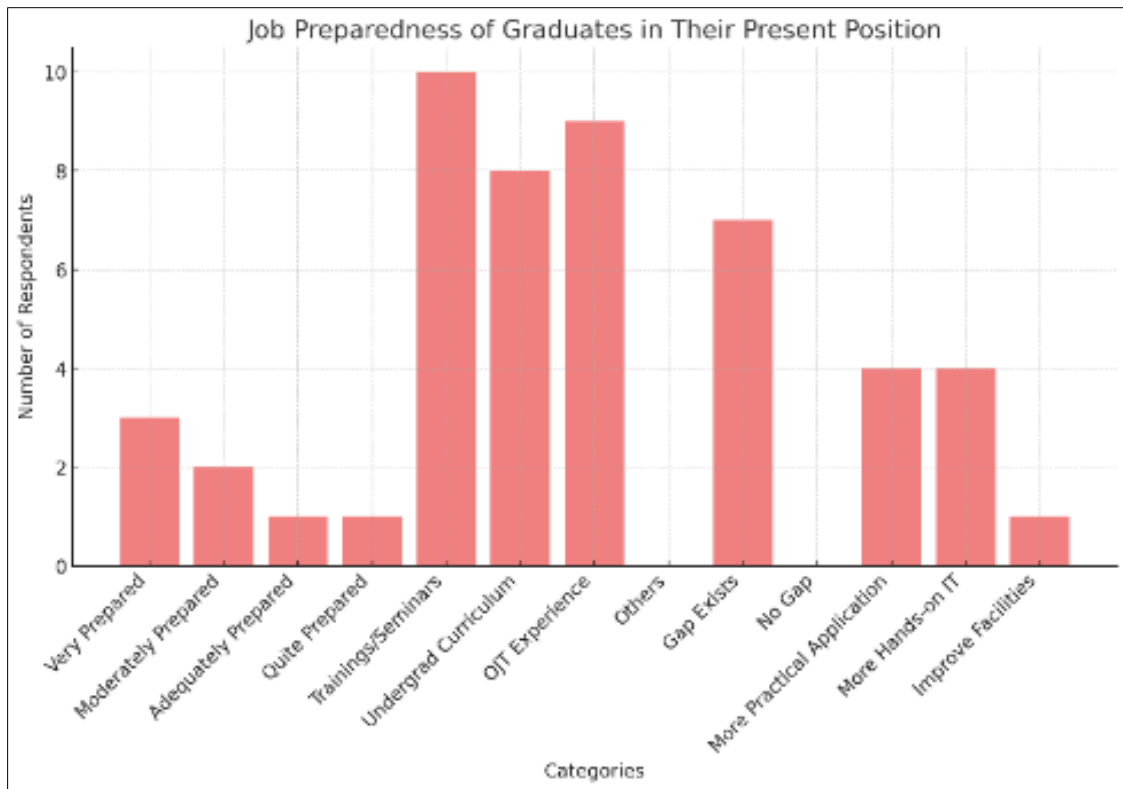


Figure 3 Job Preparedness of graduates in their present position

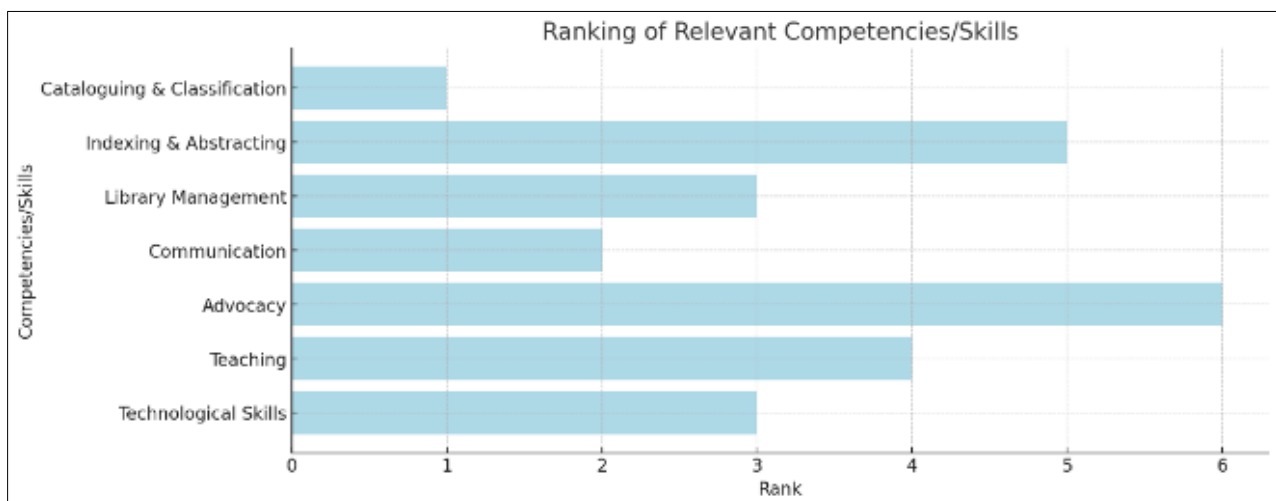


Figure 4 Ranking of relevant competencies/ skills

It can be gleaned from Figure 4 that in terms of competencies/skills, the top three considered relevant were cataloging and classification as top one (1) or nineteen percent communication skills as top two (2) or nineteen percent, and library management skills and technological skills both in the top three (3) or seventeen percent respectively. Graduates find these skills relevant due to the up-to-date level of job performance in the market and important in meeting the other skills were also relevant but were classified least relevant since they could be acquired as they went along their job.

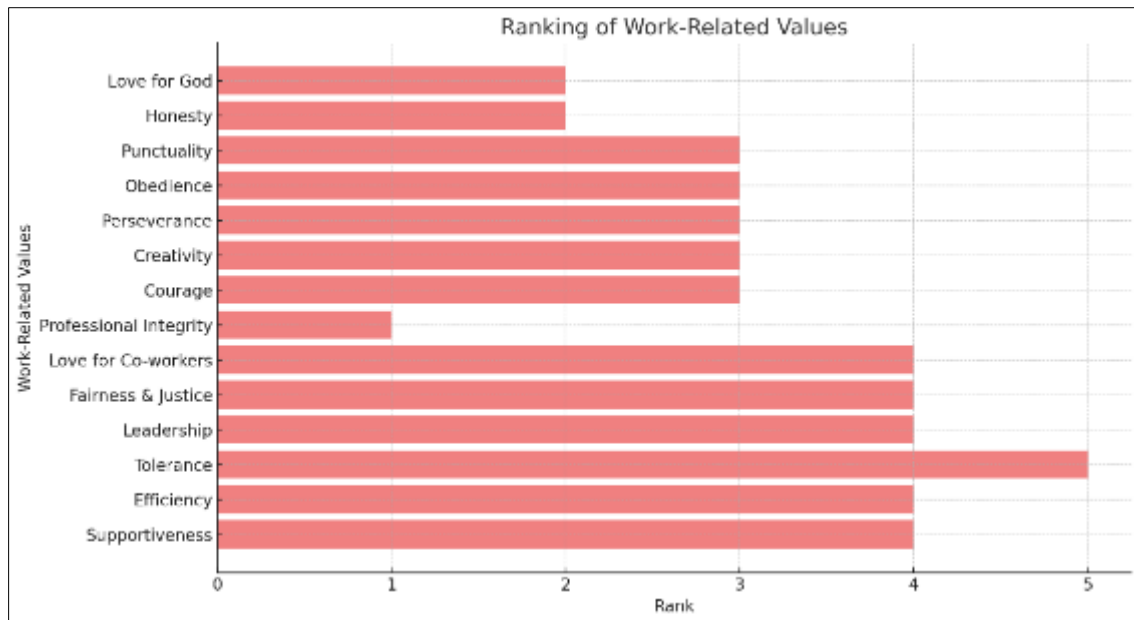


Figure 5 Ranking of work related values

For the work-related values, Figure 4 reveals that the top answer of the respondents was professional integrity (24%) followed by love for God and honesty (22%), and punctuality, obedience to superior, perseverance and hard work, creativity and innovativeness, and courage were all in the top three respectively with a 19% rating each. This shows that these values are very relevant to the librarians/professionals because this profession pertains to the values of human life which every library professional must have and these values contributed much to their current employment.

3. Findings

The study revealed that Library Science is a female-dominated profession, with most respondents being young (aged 21-25) and single. In terms of job placement, the majority of graduates were employed within a month after graduation, having passed the Librarian Licensure Examination and obtained their license within a year. They were mainly employed full-time in private institutions, often as one-man librarians. Their job responsibilities were directly related to their profession, including cataloging and classification, referencing, collection development, processing library requests, book evaluation, and general library administration.

Regarding job preparedness, most graduates felt well-prepared for their roles, attributing their readiness to training, seminars, and on-the-job training (OJT) experiences. However, many acknowledged a gap between theory and practice. They suggested improvements such as incorporating more practical applications of learned theories, increasing hands-on activities in I.T. subjects, and enhancing instructional methods, laboratory facilities, and equipment.

4. Conclusion

Based on the findings, it was concluded that Library Science remains a predominantly female profession, with most graduates being young and single. The graduates demonstrated high employability, securing jobs related to their profession soon after graduation. They also felt well-prepared for their work, crediting their preparedness to training and OJT experiences. Most were employed in academic libraries, working full-time in private institutions, and possessing strong skills in cataloging, classification, and library management. Additionally, the school-acquired skills and competencies were found to be highly relevant to their profession, contributing significantly to their job performance.

Recommendations

To encourage a more diverse student population, schools should implement promotional strategies to attract both male and female students to the Library Science program. The curriculum should place greater emphasis on strengthening major subjects, particularly Indexing and Abstracting, by incorporating more hands-on learning activities. Enhancing students' I.T.-related skills is also essential to prepare them for future library innovations.

To bridge the gap between theory and practice, curriculum improvements should be made to ensure that students acquire the necessary skills and competencies for their profession. Establishing specialized laboratories for cataloging, classification, indexing, abstracting, and I.T. training would provide students with practical experience. Finally, institutions should continue conducting tracer studies to monitor graduate outcomes and refine curriculum and instructional methods to produce more competent and competitive graduates.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

The authors have no relevant financial or non-financial interest to disclosed.

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