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Comparison of Personality Traits in Gifted Students with the Highest and Lowest Levels of Creativity

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A B S T R A C T

Objective: The objective of this study was to compare the personality traits of gifted students with high creativity and those with low creativity.

Methods and Materials: This applied study employed a causal–comparative design. The statistical population consisted of all gifted secondary school students in the city of Isfahan during the 2022–2023 academic year. From this population, 217 students were selected through simple random sampling based on Cochran's formula. Data were collected using Abedi's standardized Torrance Creativity Questionnaire and the Personality Traits Questionnaire developed by Buss and colleagues, which assesses fair-minded, assertive, egalitarian, and introverted personality traits. Questionnaires were administered electronically after obtaining the necessary permissions and informed consent. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data, and independent samples t-tests were conducted to examine differences in personality traits between students with high and low creativity. All analyses were performed using SPSS version 27 with a significance level of 0.05.

Findings: Inferential analysis revealed statistically significant differences between gifted students with high and low creativity across all personality traits. Students with high creativity scored significantly higher in fair-minded personality, assertive personality, and egalitarian personality. In contrast, students with low creativity demonstrated significantly higher levels of introverted personality. The results of Levene's tests confirmed the homogeneity of variances, and the t-test results indicated that all observed differences were statistically significant at the 0.05 level or lower.

Conclusion: The findings indicate that creativity level among gifted students is associated with distinct personality profiles, suggesting that personality traits play a meaningful role in the expression of creativity. Recognizing these differences can contribute to more effective identification, counseling, and educational interventions aimed at fostering creativity in gifted learners.

Keywords: *Gifted students; Creativity; Personality traits; Assertiveness; Introversion*

1. Introduction

Giftedness has long been conceptualized as a multidimensional construct that extends beyond high intellectual ability to include motivational, emotional, social, and personality-related characteristics that shape developmental trajectories and educational outcomes. Contemporary models of gifted education emphasize that cognitive potential alone is insufficient to explain why some gifted students translate their abilities into creative productivity while others do not, highlighting the importance of personality traits and contextual factors in the realization of talent (Subotnik et al., 2022). Within this perspective, creativity is viewed not merely as an ancillary skill but as a core developmental outcome of gifted education, closely intertwined with individual personality structures and psychological dispositions (Cramond et al., 2021).

Creativity among gifted students has attracted increasing scholarly attention due to its role in adaptive problem solving, innovation, and long-term achievement across academic and professional domains. Research has shown that gifted students often demonstrate higher creative potential than their non-gifted peers; however, substantial heterogeneity exists within gifted populations themselves (Keleş, 2022). This intra-group variability suggests that creativity cannot be assumed as a uniform characteristic of giftedness and instead must be examined in relation to individual differences, including personality traits, emotional regulation, and self-concept (Chen & Cheng, 2023). Consequently, understanding why some gifted students exhibit high creativity while others demonstrate comparatively low creativity has become a critical issue for both researchers and practitioners.

Personality traits have been identified as one of the most influential individual factors associated with creative expression in gifted individuals. Early personality-based approaches to giftedness argued that traits such as openness, assertiveness, independence, and tolerance for ambiguity facilitate creative thinking and risk-taking, whereas traits such as excessive conformity or social withdrawal may inhibit creative expression (Carman, 2011). More recent dimensional trait approaches further support the notion that personality profiles among gifted individuals are diverse and meaningfully related to creative outcomes (Mattaa et al., 2019). These findings challenge traditional deficit-oriented views that pathologize certain personality characteristics of gifted students and instead underscore the adaptive role of specific traits in fostering creativity.

Empirical studies have repeatedly demonstrated significant associations between creativity and personality-related constructs in gifted populations. For instance, overexcitabilities, emotional intensity, and heightened sensitivity have been shown to predict creative personality characteristics among gifted students, suggesting that personality-driven emotional responsiveness may serve as a catalyst for creative ideation (Muneera et al., 2023). Similarly, research conducted in different cultural contexts has highlighted that creative problem-solving abilities among gifted students are closely linked to assertiveness, flexibility, and social engagement, rather than to cognitive ability alone (Al-Shamy, 2020; Saygili, 2014). These findings collectively reinforce the argument that personality traits play a central role in shaping creative functioning in gifted learners.

The educational environment and family context further interact with personality traits to influence creativity in gifted students. Studies examining school climate, academic involvement, and autonomy have shown that gifted students who perceive greater freedom, support, and recognition for creative efforts are more likely to translate their personality dispositions into creative productivity (Akkanat & Gökdere, 2018; Brandon et al., 2021). In parallel, family-centered and therapist-centered educational interventions have demonstrated effectiveness in enhancing creativity-related outcomes, particularly when they address emotional and personality dimensions alongside cognitive skills (Afrooz & Sadeghi, 2023). These findings suggest that creativity development in gifted students is best understood through an integrative framework that incorporates personality, emotional processes, and contextual supports.

Within the Iranian context, several studies have explored creativity and its psychological correlates among gifted students, emphasizing the role of emotional intelligence, mindfulness, resilience, and family dynamics. For example, creativity has been shown to interact with emotional intelligence and mindfulness in predicting academic stress among gifted students, highlighting the regulatory function of personality-related emotional skills (Eyni et al., 2021). Other research has demonstrated that parenting styles, spiritual vitality, and social adjustment significantly predict creativity in gifted adolescents, further underscoring the complex interplay between personality characteristics and environmental factors (Mamqani et al., 2019). These studies provide valuable insights but often focus on creativity as a

JAYPS
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dependent variable without systematically comparing personality traits across different levels of creativity within gifted populations.

International research similarly points to the necessity of distinguishing subgroups of gifted students based on creative functioning. Comparative studies between gifted and non-gifted students have consistently reported higher creative problem-solving skills among gifted learners, yet they also reveal notable differences within gifted groups themselves (Keleş, 2022). Moreover, longitudinal and developmental analyses suggest that personality characteristics associated with giftedness may sometimes create adjustment challenges in educational settings, particularly when creative tendencies are not adequately supported (Ermakov, 2016). This highlights the importance of identifying personality profiles that differentiate highly creative gifted students from those with lower creative expression.

Theoretical contributions to the field have also emphasized personality as a core dimension of creative giftedness. The hexahedral paradigm of creative personality proposes that creativity emerges from the dynamic interaction of multiple personality dimensions, including fairness, assertiveness, social orientation, and introversion–extraversion balance (Kazemi Haghighi, 2007). Such models provide a conceptual foundation for empirical investigations that seek to compare specific personality traits across levels of creativity. In addition, contemporary frameworks of transformational giftedness argue that channeling gifted abilities into socially meaningful creative productivity requires not only cognitive excellence but also adaptive personality traits that support perseverance, collaboration, and ethical engagement (Subotnik et al., 2022).

Recent studies have further expanded the scope of research by examining gender, self-efficacy, resilience, and emotional regulation as moderators or mediators in the creativity–personality relationship. Emotional intelligence and self-esteem, for instance, have been shown to mediate the relationship between giftedness and creative self-efficacy, suggesting that personality-related self-perceptions are crucial for creative engagement (Chen & Cheng, 2023). Likewise, mindfulness-based interventions have demonstrated positive effects on psychological capital and emotional regulation in gifted students, indirectly supporting creative functioning (Sharifian Motlaq & Mohammadi, 2025; Sisk, 2021). These findings indicate that personality traits associated with self-regulation and emotional balance may distinguish highly creative gifted students from their less creative peers.

Despite the growing body of literature, several gaps remain evident. First, many studies examine creativity and personality using correlational designs without explicitly comparing gifted students at opposite ends of the creativity continuum. Second, much of the existing research focuses on broad personality dimensions, such as the Big Five, rather than context-specific personality traits relevant to educational and social functioning. Third, there is limited empirical evidence from Middle Eastern contexts that directly contrasts personality profiles of gifted students with high versus low creativity using standardized measures. Addressing these gaps is essential for developing targeted educational interventions and more nuanced identification practices for gifted learners (Hemingway, 2023; Shaidenko et al., 2021).

From an applied perspective, understanding personality differences among gifted students with varying levels of creativity has important implications for counseling, curriculum design, and talent development programs. Educators and psychologists who recognize that not all gifted students are equally creative can better tailor instructional strategies and psychosocial supports to individual needs (Rashidi et al., 2022). Moreover, identifying personality traits associated with high creativity may inform enrichment models aimed at fostering creative problem solving and adaptive functioning in gifted students (Davaei et al., 2021; Kashani-Vahid et al., 2017). Such efforts align with global trends in gifted education that emphasize holistic development rather than narrow academic acceleration (Cramond et al., 2021; Güler & Ulusoy, 2025).

In light of these theoretical and empirical considerations, there is a clear need for research that systematically compares personality traits of gifted students with the highest and lowest levels of creativity. Such comparative analyses can contribute to a deeper understanding of how personality characteristics differentiate creative functioning within gifted populations and can provide evidence-based guidance for educational practice and policy. Therefore, the aim of the present study was to compare the personality traits of gifted students with high creativity and those with low creativity.

JAYPS
E-ISSN: 2981-2526

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study Design and Participants

The present study was applied in terms of purpose and employed a causal–comparative research design with a cross-sectional approach to data collection and analysis. The target population consisted of gifted students enrolled in schools for talented students in the city of Isfahan, Iran. According to official statistics provided by the General Department of Education of Isfahan for the academic year 2022–2023, a total of 485 gifted students were studying at the secondary school level, and this group constituted the statistical population of the study. Given the manageable size of the population, all students were considered eligible for inclusion. Using Cochran's sample size formula, a sample of 217 students was determined and selected through simple random sampling to ensure adequate representativeness. After obtaining the necessary permissions from the relevant educational authorities and coordinating with the administrators of gifted schools, students were informed about the objectives and procedures of the research during an introductory session. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained prior to data collection. To facilitate accessibility and reduce time constraints, the questionnaires were administered electronically via an online survey platform, and the survey link was provided to the participants.

2.2. Measures

Data were collected using two standardized instruments measuring creativity and personality traits. Creativity was assessed using the Torrance Creativity Questionnaire as standardized and adapted for use in Iran by Abedi in 1993. This instrument is a shortened and standardized version of the original Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking and consists of 60 items designed to assess four core components of creativity: fluency, originality, flexibility, and elaboration. Each participant's total creativity score could range from 0 to 120, with higher scores indicating greater creative potential. Evidence for the validity of the questionnaire has been reported through concurrent validity, based on the simultaneous administration of the original Torrance test and Abedi's creativity questionnaire, which yielded significant correlations between corresponding subscales, such as originality and fluency. Content validity was also confirmed through expert judgment. Reliability indices reported in previous research indicated acceptable internal consistency and stability, with coefficients obtained through split-half methods and the Spearman–Brown formula, as well as Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the total scale and its subscales, all reaching statistically significant levels.

Personality traits were measured using the Personality Traits Questionnaire developed by Buss and colleagues in 1975. This questionnaire contains 27 items distributed across four dimensions: fair-minded personality, assertive personality, aggressive-oriented personality, and introverted personality. Responses are recorded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." In the present study, personality traits were operationalized as the total and subscale scores derived from students' responses to these 27 items. Previous studies have reported acceptable reliability for this instrument, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.74, indicating satisfactory internal consistency for research purposes.

2.3. Data Analysis

Following data collection, responses were screened and coded for statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, and variances, were computed to summarize the characteristics of the sample and the distribution of creativity and personality trait scores. For inferential analysis, participants were categorized into groups with the highest and lowest levels of creativity based on their total creativity scores. Independent samples t-tests were then conducted to examine differences in personality traits between these two groups of gifted students. All statistical analyses were performed using SPSS software, version 27, and the significance level was set at 0.05 for all tests.

3. Findings and Results

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of creativity scores among respondents, comparing gifted students with high and low levels of creativity.

JAYPS
E-ISSN: 2981-2526

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Respondents' Creativity

Variable	N	Mean	Median	Mode	Standard Deviation	Range	Minimum	Maximum
High creativity	112	100.04	100.00	101	6.659	32	86	118
Low creativity	105	54.90	55.00	58	8.137	45	31	76

As shown in Table 1, the group of gifted students with high creativity (n = 112) exhibited a substantially higher mean creativity score (M = 100.04) compared with students classified as having low creativity (n = 105), whose mean score was 54.90. The median and mode values further reinforce this distinction, with both measures of central tendency concentrated at higher values in the high-creativity group and noticeably lower values in the low-creativity group. The standard deviation indicates that creativity scores among highly creative students were relatively homogeneous (SD = 6.659), whereas greater variability was observed in the low-creativity group (SD = 8.137). In addition, the range of scores was narrower among students with high creativity (range = 32) than among those with low creativity (range = 45), suggesting more consistency in creativity levels within the high-creativity group. Overall, these descriptive statistics clearly differentiate gifted students with high and low creativity in terms of both central tendency and dispersion of creativity scores.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistical Indices of Personality Traits by Creativity Group

Group	Variable	Mean	Median	Mode	Standard Deviation	Range	Minimum	Maximum
High creativity	Fair-minded personality	34.59	34.50	32	6.881	33	17	50
	Assertive personality	17.81	18.00	18	2.918	14	10	24
	Egalitarian personality	19.26	19.00	16	3.970	16	11	27
	Introverted personality	13.09	13.00	13	2.909	15	5	20
Low creativity	Fair-minded personality	32.26	32.00	27	6.938	35	15	50
	Assertive personality	12.16	13.00	13	2.919	13	5	18
	Egalitarian personality	17.15	17.00	18	3.705	17	10	27
	Introverted personality	17.05	17.00	17	3.046	15	10	25

As shown in Table 2, gifted students with high creativity demonstrated higher mean scores in fair-minded personality (M = 34.59), assertive personality (M = 17.81), and egalitarian personality (M = 19.26) compared with their low-creativity counterparts, whose corresponding means were 32.26, 12.16, and 17.15, respectively. In contrast, students with low creativity showed a higher mean score in introverted personality (M = 17.05) than students with high creativity (M = 13.09). The median and mode values generally aligned with the mean scores across both groups, indicating relatively symmetrical distributions for most personality traits. The standard deviations suggest comparable levels of variability between the two groups across traits, with slightly greater dispersion observed in fair-minded personality scores. Overall, the descriptive results indicate distinct personality profiles associated with high and low levels of creativity among gifted students, particularly in assertiveness and introversion.

Table 3

Independent Samples t-Test Results for Personality Trait Components

Variable	Levene's F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper
Fair-minded personality	0.152	0.697	2.485	215	0.014	2.332	0.938	0.482	4.182
Assertive personality	0.067	0.796	14.253	215	0.0001	5.651	0.396	4.869	6.432
Egalitarian personality	0.765	0.383	4.034	215	0.0001	2.107	0.522	1.077	3.136
Introverted personality	0.235	0.628	-9.792	215	0.0001	-3.958	0.404	-4.755	-3.162

JAYPS
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As shown in Table 3, the results of Levene's test indicate that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was met for all personality trait components, as none of the significance values were statistically meaningful. The independent samples t-test revealed statistically significant differences between gifted students with high and low creativity across all examined personality traits. Specifically, students with high creativity scored significantly higher in fair-minded, assertive, and egalitarian personality traits, while students with low creativity demonstrated significantly higher levels of introverted personality. The observed mean differences were substantial, particularly for assertive personality, and the 95% confidence intervals did not include zero in any comparison, confirming the robustness of these differences. Overall, the findings suggest that creativity level is strongly associated with distinct and systematic differences in personality traits among gifted students.

4. Discussion

The present study aimed to compare the personality traits of gifted students with the highest and lowest levels of creativity, and the findings revealed clear and statistically significant differences between these two groups across all examined personality dimensions. Overall, gifted students with high creativity demonstrated higher levels of fair-minded, assertive, and egalitarian personality traits, whereas gifted students with low creativity exhibited significantly higher levels of introverted personality. These results support contemporary multidimensional perspectives on giftedness, which emphasize that creativity among gifted learners is not merely a function of cognitive ability but is strongly shaped by personality configurations that facilitate or constrain creative expression (Cramond et al., 2021; Subotnik et al., 2022).

One of the most salient findings of this study was the significantly higher fair-minded personality scores among highly creative gifted students. This trait reflects a tendency toward justice, ethical sensitivity, and balanced interpersonal judgment, which may provide a psychological foundation for creative engagement that is socially constructive rather than purely individualistic. Previous research has suggested that creativity in gifted individuals often coexists with heightened moral awareness and social sensitivity, particularly when creative activities involve problem solving in real-world or interpersonal contexts (Muneera et al., 2023; Safaei Rad et al., 2019). From this perspective, fair-mindedness may enhance creativity by enabling gifted students to consider multiple perspectives, tolerate ambiguity, and integrate diverse viewpoints into novel solutions. Carman's personality-based approach to gifted identification similarly emphasizes that socially adaptive personality traits distinguish gifted individuals who effectively translate potential into creative performance (Carman, 2011).

The results also indicated that assertive personality traits were markedly higher among gifted students with high creativity, representing the largest mean difference between the two groups. Assertiveness involves self-confidence, initiative, and the ability to express ideas openly, all of which are critical for creative productivity. This finding aligns with studies demonstrating that creative gifted students are more likely to take intellectual risks, challenge existing norms, and actively communicate their ideas (Brandon et al., 2021; Saygili, 2014). In educational settings, assertiveness may function as a mediating mechanism that allows creative ideas to move beyond internal ideation and into observable performance. Research on creative problem solving among gifted students further supports this interpretation, showing that students who are more assertive and socially engaged tend to demonstrate higher creative output than those who are cognitively capable but socially withdrawn (Al-Shamy, 2020; Keleş, 2022).

Egalitarian personality traits were also significantly higher among highly creative gifted students. Egalitarianism reflects an orientation toward equality, cooperation, and balanced social relationships, which may foster collaborative creativity and openness to diverse ideas. This result is consistent with research highlighting the role of social adjustment and interpersonal flexibility in predicting creativity among gifted adolescents (Mamqani et al., 2019). Creative processes, particularly in educational and group-based contexts, often require negotiation, perspective-taking, and shared meaning-making, all of which are facilitated by egalitarian dispositions. Studies examining school climate and autonomy among gifted students further suggest that students who value equality and mutual respect are better positioned to benefit from supportive environments that encourage creative exploration (Akkanat & Gökdere, 2018). Thus, egalitarian personality traits may act as social-enabling factors that enhance creative engagement in gifted populations.

In contrast, introverted personality traits were significantly higher among gifted students with low creativity. While introversion is not inherently maladaptive and may even support certain forms of deep cognitive

JAYPS
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processing, the present findings suggest that elevated introversion may be associated with reduced creative expression among gifted students. This interpretation is supported by previous studies indicating that excessive social withdrawal or emotional inhibition can limit opportunities for creative collaboration, feedback, and idea elaboration (Ermakov, 2016). Moreover, research on emotional intelligence and creativity has shown that gifted students who struggle with emotional expression or social engagement may experience barriers to translating creative potential into performance (Chen & Cheng, 2023). It is important to note that this finding does not imply that introverted gifted students lack creative capacity, but rather that their personality configuration may require different environmental supports to facilitate creative expression.

The observed personality differences between high- and low-creativity gifted students are also consistent with broader theoretical models of creative personality. The hexahedral paradigm of creative personality posits that creativity emerges from the dynamic balance of multiple personality dimensions, including assertiveness, social orientation, and ethical sensitivity (Kazemi Haghighi, 2007). According to this model, creativity is optimized when individuals possess both internal cognitive resources and external-oriented personality traits that support engagement with complex environments. The present findings empirically support this framework by demonstrating that gifted students with higher creativity exhibit a constellation of personality traits that collectively promote interaction, initiative, and social awareness.

Cultural and contextual factors may further shape the relationship between personality traits and creativity in gifted students. Studies conducted in non-Western contexts have emphasized that cultural norms regarding conformity, emotional expression, and social hierarchy can influence how personality traits are expressed and valued in educational settings (Cramond et al., 2021; Shaidenko et al., 2021). In this regard, the higher assertiveness and egalitarianism observed among highly creative gifted students in the present study may reflect adaptive responses to educational environments that increasingly value participation, collaboration, and innovation. Conversely, gifted students with lower creativity may experience a mismatch between their introverted tendencies and the demands of contemporary learning environments, leading to underexpression of creative potential (Hemingway, 2023).

The findings of this study also align with intervention-based research demonstrating that creativity can be enhanced when personality-related factors such as emotional regulation, resilience, and interpersonal skills are addressed. For example, creativity-based educational programs that integrate family-centered and therapist-centered approaches have been shown to improve critical thinking and creative outcomes among gifted students, partly by modifying emotional and personality-related processes (Afrooz & Sadeghi, 2023). Similarly, creative problem-solving training has been found to enhance emotional management and resilience in parents of gifted students, indirectly supporting the creative development of children through improved family dynamics (Davaei et al., 2021). These studies suggest that personality traits associated with high creativity are not fixed but can be cultivated through targeted interventions.

Furthermore, mindfulness-based and emotional regulation programs have demonstrated positive effects on psychological capital and adaptive functioning in gifted students, which are closely linked to creative engagement (Sharifian Motlaq & Mohammadi, 2025; Sisk, 2021). The present findings complement this body of research by indicating which personality traits are most strongly associated with high creativity, thereby providing clearer targets for intervention. When gifted students develop assertiveness, social openness, and fair-mindedness, they may become better equipped to engage creatively with academic and social challenges.

5. Conclusion

Taken together, the results of this study underscore the importance of adopting a holistic approach to gifted education that recognizes personality traits as central components of creative development. Rather than treating creativity as an automatic outcome of giftedness, educators and psychologists should attend to the personality profiles that differentiate highly creative gifted students from those whose creativity remains underdeveloped. By integrating personality assessment into identification and support processes, educational systems can more effectively nurture diverse forms of giftedness and creative potential (Rashidi et al., 2022; Subotnik et al., 2022).

6. Limitations & Suggestions

Despite the meaningful findings of this study, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the causal–comparative design does not allow for definitive causal inferences regarding the direction of the relationship between personality traits and creativity. Second, the

JAYPS Adolescent and Youth Psychological Studies E-ISSN: 2981-2526

reliance on self-report questionnaires may have introduced response biases related to social desirability or self-perception. Third, the sample was limited to gifted secondary school students in a single city, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other age groups, educational levels, or cultural contexts. Finally, creativity was operationalized using a single standardized instrument, which may not fully capture the multidimensional and context-dependent nature of creative performance.

Future research could benefit from longitudinal designs that examine how personality traits and creativity interact over time in gifted students. Incorporating multiple measures of creativity, including performance-based assessments and teacher evaluations, would provide a more comprehensive understanding of creative functioning. Comparative studies across different cultural and educational contexts are also recommended to explore the role of sociocultural factors in shaping personality–creativity relationships. Additionally, qualitative approaches could offer deeper insights into the lived experiences of gifted students with varying levels of creativity, enriching the interpretation of quantitative findings.

From a practical standpoint, educators and school psychologists are encouraged to consider personality traits when designing programs for gifted students. Differentiated instructional strategies that foster assertiveness, collaboration, and ethical engagement may help enhance creativity, particularly among gifted students who exhibit more introverted tendencies. Counseling and enrichment programs should aim to create safe environments in which students feel confident expressing ideas and taking intellectual risks. Finally, teacher training initiatives should emphasize the diversity of personality profiles among gifted students and promote flexible approaches that support both creative expression and socio-emotional development.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contributed to this article.

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