

Operationalizing Adaptive Team Performance: Design, Validation, and Application of Instruments in Law Enforcement

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Abstract

This paper presents the concept of adaptive team performance in the context of law enforcement, focusing on how teams can respond effectively to dynamic and often unpredictable challenges. Adaptive performance is important for teams that must make quick decisions, solve complex problems, and maintain effectiveness in high-pressure situations. Based on existing literature, this study identifies key dimensions of adaptive team performance, including handling emergencies, managing stress, solving problems creatively, dealing with uncertainty, training and learning efforts, interpersonal adaptability, cultural adaptability, and physical adaptability. It also explores the antecedents influencing adaptive behavior, such as individual characteristics, job autonomy, group dynamics, and organizational support. This study involves a review of selected literature to identify and synthesize relevant dimensions and antecedents of adaptive performance. The items from each adaptive performance dimension and antecedent were coded and subjected to thematic analysis to uncover underlying patterns and interrelationships. A systematic categorization of items was conducted, leading to the development of an adaptive performance framework. The adaptive performance framework focuses on key concepts from existing research to provide a comprehensive understanding of adaptive performance and how it can be fostered within organizations. This framework is particularly relevant for high-stakes environments like law enforcement, where adaptability is crucial for success.

Keywords: Adaptive team performance, Law enforcement, Team performance, Police teams

INTRODUCTION

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Adaptive performance refers to an outcome of job performance. It is a fundamental component of how tasks are handled. Adaptive behavior is particularly important when tasks are highly unpredictable and the work environment lacks control (Marques-Quinteiro et al., 2013). In the context of law enforcement, constructing adaptive team performance requires established urgency, demanding performance standards, and clear direction. Successful teams in law enforcement are regularly challenged with new information and facts, while maintaining a performance-oriented approach to their tasks and goals (Aznan & Md Hashim, 2021). Moreover, teams have undergone significant transformations in this global digital era to adapt to new challenges and opportunities. Research indicates that the use of technologies plays

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a crucial role in teams' work environments, fostering a sense of belonging and emotional attachment within teams (Fu et al., 2020). Technological advancements and evolving societal expectations have transformed the nature of teamwork in law enforcement. Digital tools such as real-time communication platforms and decision-support systems play an increasingly significant role in fostering team cohesion and adaptability. For example, police teams using predictive analytics can anticipate potential crime hotspots, enabling proactive strategies and adaptive responses (Fu et al., 2020). This highlights the importance of leveraging digital tools to maintain and strengthen team dynamics.

Team members must possess the necessary skills and expertise, and there must be effective communication during initial meetings, along with clear behavioral rules to promote collaborative work. Team members should be encouraged to contribute their ideas and opinions to foster adaptive performance. Additionally, collective feedback, recognition, and rewards play an important role in motivating and maintaining the team's collective performance. Costa et al. (2023) emphasize that team adaptive performance is the collective capacity of a team to perform adaptively, underscoring the importance of teamwork in achieving adaptive outcomes.

In addition to technological influences and necessary skills and expertise, culture change is integral to fostering adaptability. A culture change that supports and values teamwork is necessary to encourage team members to work together and adapt to new situations. Specifically, law enforcement teams must adapt to changing circumstances and collaborate to respond effectively to situations. Effective teamwork is essential for police teams to achieve their goals and respond quickly to evolving situations (Costa et al., 2023).

This paper aims to explore how adaptive team performance is operationalized and measured in the context of law enforcement. By designing and validating specific instruments, this study seeks to provide a robust framework for assessing adaptive team performance, ensuring that law enforcement agencies can systematically evaluate and enhance their teams' ability to respond to dynamic and complex scenarios. The findings will offer valuable insights into the practical applications of these instruments, contributing to the development of more effective and adaptive police teams.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Charbonnier-Voirin and Roussel (2012), adaptive team performance refers to a team's ability to work effectively in dynamic situations, particularly during emergencies. Teams exhibit adaptive performance by modifying

their behavior in response to work conditions or new events. In the context of law enforcement, adaptive team performance involves the team adjusting its behavior to respond effectively to unpredictable or novel work situations.

Tan and Antonio (2022) and Jundt et al. (2015) outline eight key dimensions of adaptive performance identified by Pulakos et al. (2000), which are crucial for law enforcement officers to succeed in challenging situations. The first dimension, handling emergencies or crises, emphasizes the ability to act quickly and effectively in dangerous scenarios. Teams must make rapid decisions and communicate clearly to manage emergencies successfully (Bedwell, 2019; Brown et al., 2021). For instance, in public protests or riots, law enforcement teams had to respond swiftly to manage public safety and maintain order. Police teams demonstrated adaptability by making rapid decisions in the face of large crowds, ensuring safe dispersal while preventing escalation. The teams quickly coordinated with other agencies, adjusted strategies based on evolving events, and communicated effectively to de-escalate tensions and maintain public order (Mohd Nasir & Mohd Rus, 2014). The second dimension, handling work stress, focuses on the team's ability to remain calm under pressure. Teams must plan effectively and guide their members through stressful situations without panicking, finding the best solutions for each mission (Han & Williams, 2008). Law enforcement teams are trained to remain calm in chaotic environments, and utilizing coping strategies. For instance, during large public events, law enforcement teams must manage the stress of long shifts and unpredictable crowd behavior without allowing it to impair their performance (Mohd Nasir & Mohd Rus, 2014).

The third dimension, solving problems creatively, requires generating innovative ideas and finding optimal solutions to complex problems. Police teams should think creatively in complex situations, integrate information to find unique solutions, consider all possibilities, and find new ways to solve problems using limited resources (Han & Williams, 2008; Charbonnier-Voirin & Roussel, 2012). When dealing with the increase in cyber-crime, such as online scams, law enforcement agencies had to adapt their investigative methods. They embraced creative problem-solving by using cutting-edge technology to track cybercriminals and collaborate with international agencies to tackle cross-border cybercrime. Innovative tactics included utilizing social media monitoring tools and digital forensics to identify and apprehend perpetrators who were otherwise difficult to track (Fuad et al., 2022). The fourth dimension, dealing with uncertain work situations, highlights the need for flexibility and quick adaptation. Law enforcement teams must respond effectively to unpredictable events by adjusting their plans and priorities (Tan & Antonio, 2022). During the 2020 COVID-19 lockdown, the

implementation of strict movement control orders (MCO), required law enforcement to adapt to an entirely new scenario. Officers had to manage unforeseen challenges such as enforcing public health protocols, monitoring interstate travel, and ensuring compliance with quarantine rules. The situation was fluid, with daily changes in regulations and evolving public concerns. The ability to quickly adjust operations, such as setting up roadblocks and coordinating with health authorities, exemplified law enforcement's adaptability to an uncertain situation (Tan & Antonio, 2022).

Training and learning effort is the fifth dimension, involving the willingness of police teams to continuously improve through ongoing education and proactive engagement with new developments (Fu et al., 2020; Cyr et al., 2020). Law enforcement agencies provide continuous professional development for officers through various types of training where officers can learn how to respond to evolving threats, adapt to changing information, and apply lessons from previous training (Ahmad et al., 2021). The sixth dimension, interpersonal adaptability, involves being receptive to others, actively listening, welcoming feedback, and modifying one's behavior to enhance team collaboration (Cyr et al., 2020). As an example, law enforcement teams demonstrated interpersonal adaptability when responding to community concerns following a series of thefts in local neighborhoods. Officers held town hall meetings with residents, listening to their concerns and adjusting their communication strategies to ensure understanding. They showed flexibility by engaging with local leaders, adapting their language and approach based on the cultural and demographic makeup of each community. This helped to build trust and foster cooperation, which ultimately led to the successful identification and arrest of suspects (Qurratul et al., 2018). Additionally, the seventh dimension, demonstrating cultural adaptability, requires respecting and integrating with diverse groups. Police teams must adapt to different cultural contexts while maintaining positive relationships (Costa et al., 2023; Jundt et al., 2015). Police teams must interact with people from different cultural backgrounds, respecting diverse customs and traditions. For instance, they adapt their approach when managing large crowds at religious sites or public events, ensuring that they respect religious practices while maintaining law and order. This requires not only knowledge of cultural norms but also the ability to adjust their behavior to ensure smooth interactions and prevent misunderstandings (Ahmad et al., 2021). The final dimension, demonstrating the ability to perform effectively under varying physical conditions, requires teams to develop new physical skills to meet demanding operational requirements (Bedwell, 2019). The law enforcement teams are regularly involved in physically demanding operations such as counter-terrorism efforts. This kind of operation required significant physical readiness, as officers had to navigate dangerous situations, often under threat of armed resistance.

The ability of these officers to remain physically and mentally agile during the operation, despite the high risks, demonstrated their remarkable physical adaptability in a counter-terrorism context (Mohd Nasir & Mohd Rus, 2014). Hence, all these dimensions have been validated in diverse professional settings and remain particularly relevant for law enforcement teams.

Han and Williams (2008) supported Pulakos et al. (2000) but emphasized only four of the original eight dimensions: managing emergencies, creatively solving problems, handling work stress, and coping with uncertainty. Their multilevel survey highlighted the importance of fostering learning at both the individual and team levels. In law enforcement teams, organizations face the challenge of deciding whether to invest resources in developing entire teams or focusing on individual members during crisis or emergency training (Han & Williams, 2008). Additionally, maintaining a strong culture of continuous learning within police teams enables them to swiftly assume critical communication roles in crises, enhancing decision-making effectiveness (Costa et al., 2023).

Charbonnier-Voirin and Roussel (2012) endorsed Pulakos et al. (2000) and defined adaptive performance as the ability of individuals to modify their behavior to suit new and unpredictable environments. Their study, however, concentrated on five dimensions of adaptive team performance derived from Pulakos et al. (2000). Using both qualitative and quantitative approaches, they identified these dimensions as (1) creativity, (2) responsiveness in emergencies or unexpected situations, (3) interpersonal adaptability, (4) training and learning effort, and (5) managing work-related stress. Their findings suggest that most teams prioritize adaptability to address changes like dynamic work environments, which demand diverse interpersonal skills, the ability to navigate volatile competitive settings, and adaptation to advancing technologies. Despite this, research in the field remains limited by the lack of a reliable and widely available tool to measure adaptability across these dimensions. Additionally, their study did not validate the physical adaptability dimension proposed by Pulakos et al. (2000).

Figure 1 below summarize the dimensions of adaptive team as suggested by Pulakos et al. (2000).

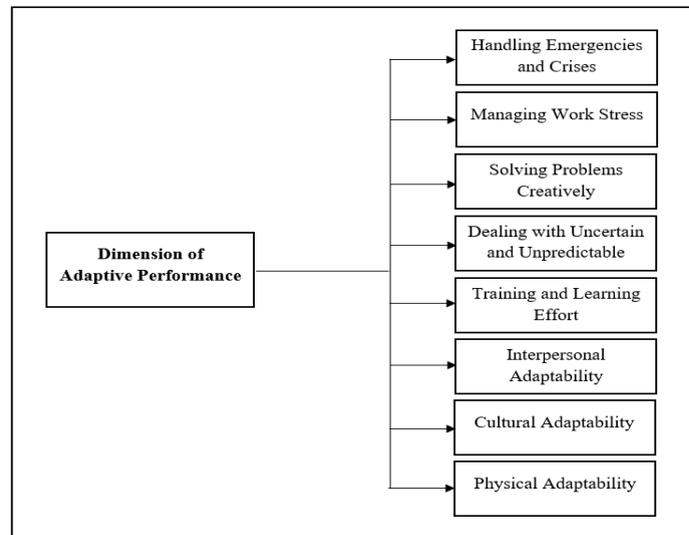


Figure 1: Dimensions of Adaptive Team Performance
Source: Pulakos et al. (2000)

Besides the dimension of adaptive team performance, the antecedents of adaptive performance were also reviewed. Park and Park (2019) categorized antecedents of adaptive performance into four characteristics: individual, job, group, and organizational characteristics. In law enforcement, officers with high emotional stability can manage stress more effectively during crises, contributing to team resilience. In terms of job characteristics, teams with greater autonomy can develop innovative strategies tailored to specific scenarios. For instance, task forces addressing organized crime often rely on decentralized decision-making to respond swiftly to intelligence updates (Chand et al., 2023). Meanwhile, group level antecedents, such as team learning climate and transformational leadership, further enhance adaptability. A supportive team environment encourages collaborative problem-solving and knowledge-sharing, essential for managing uncertainty (Costa et al., 2023). Similarly, transformational leaders inspire adaptability by fostering a shared vision and empowering team members to take initiative. Furthermore, at the organizational level, a culture that values innovation and provides resources for continuous learning is paramount. Organizations that prioritize adaptability tend to perform better in volatile environments. For example, law enforcement agencies with robust training programs

and clear strategic objectives are better equipped to handle public health emergencies (Chand et al., 2023).

Despite significant advancements in understanding adaptive performance, gaps remain. Existing frameworks often lack empirical validation across different cultural and organizational contexts. Moreover, the interplay between dimensions and antecedents of adaptability warrants further exploration. This study addresses these gaps by integrating theoretical insights with practical applications tailored to law enforcement.

METHOD

This study is conceptual in nature, aiming to analyze and integrate the dimensions of adaptive team performance proposed by Pulakos et al. (2000) and Charbonnier-Voirin and Roussel (2012), along with the antecedents of adaptive performance identified by Park and Park (2019). A comprehensive literature review forms the basis of this analysis, providing a theoretical framework to understand how adaptive performance is operationalized in organizational settings, specifically within law enforcement.

The research method employed in this study centers on a comprehensive review of selected literature to identify and synthesize key dimensions and antecedents related to adaptive performance. The first step involved examining the dimensions of adaptive performance outlined by Pulakos et al. (2000) and Charbonnier-Voirin and Roussel (2012). These dimensions encompass a broad range of competencies, including handling emergencies and crises, managing work-related stress, approaching problem-solving with creativity, navigating uncertain and unpredictable work environments, demonstrating effort in training and learning, showcasing interpersonal adaptability, exhibiting cultural adaptability, and maintaining physical adaptability. Each of these dimensions is further broken down into specific items that are measured using a 7-point Likert scale. These items were subjected to a thorough analysis to gain deeper insights into their significance and implications for enhancing adaptive performance within various contexts. By critically examining these dimensions, the study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of how they collectively contribute to an individual's or a team's ability to perform adaptively in dynamic and challenging environments.

Next, the antecedents of adaptive performance, as detailed by Park and Park (2019), were reviewed. These antecedents are categorized into four groups: individual characteristics, job characteristics, group characteristics, and organizational

characteristics. Individual characteristics include personality traits, knowledge, skills, prior experience, biodata, motivation, learning goal orientation, and self-leadership. Job characteristics encompass decision-making autonomy, discretion, job uncertainty, social ties, and task interdependence. Group characteristics involve support from coworkers and supervisors, a team learning climate, and transformational leadership. Organizational characteristics cover a clear vision, a climate for innovation, organizational support, and a learning organization.

The items from each dimension and antecedent were coded and thematically analyzed to identify patterns and relationships. This process involved categorizing the items under relevant dimensions and antecedents and integrating them into a cohesive conceptual framework. The final framework was developed through iterative reviews and expert feedback.

FINDINGS AND ARGUMENTS

The items from each adaptive performance dimension and antecedent were coded and subjected to thematic analysis to uncover underlying patterns and interrelationships. This analytical process began with the systematic categorization of items according to their respective dimensions and antecedents, allowing for a detailed examination of how each element contributes to the overall construct of adaptive performance. Following this initial categorization, the integration of the items into a cohesive conceptual framework was undertaken. This involved synthesizing the insights gained from the thematic analysis to formulate a structured representation of how the dimensions of adaptive performance interact with their antecedents. The framework aimed to illustrate the dynamic interplay between individual traits, job characteristics, group dynamics, and organizational factors, providing a holistic understanding of adaptive performance in workplace contexts.

The examination of items from Pulakos et al. (2000) and Charbonnier-Voirin and Roussel (2012) highlighted several essential dimensions of adaptive performance, including managing emergencies and crises, coping with work stress, addressing problems with creativity, navigating uncertain and unpredictable work environments, committing to training and learning efforts, demonstrating interpersonal adaptability, exhibiting cultural adaptability, and showing physical adaptability. Each dimension was scrutinized to uncover key themes, such as swift decision-making and proactive responses in emergency management, maintaining calm under pressure, and encouraging innovation in creative problem-solving.

The antecedents identified by Park and Park (2019) were systematically integrated with these adaptive performance dimensions. Adaptability is influenced by various individual, job, group, and organizational characteristics. At the individual level, traits such as personality, knowledge, skills, motivation, and self-leadership play a key role in enhancing adaptability. Job-related factors, including autonomy in decision-making, discretion, job uncertainty, social connections, and task interdependence, enable employees to adjust their methods effectively. On a group level, coworker and supervisor support, a team learning climate, and transformational leadership are vital for managing stress and navigating uncertainties. At the organizational level, factors like a clear vision, an innovative climate, organizational support, and a culture of learning provide the resources and environment needed for continuous development and adaptability.

The synthesized findings led to the development of a conceptual framework that integrates the dimensions of adaptive performance with their antecedents. This framework highlights the dynamic interplay between individual traits, job characteristics, group dynamics, and organizational factors in fostering adaptive performance. It provides a theoretical basis for future empirical research and practical applications aimed at enhancing adaptive performance in law enforcement and other high-stakes environments. This conceptual analysis thus offers comprehensive insights that can guide future research and practical interventions to enhance adaptive performance in various organizational contexts.

DISCUSSIONS

The final framework for adaptive performance integrates dimensions constructed by Pulakos et al. (2000) and Charbonnier-Voirin and Roussel (2012) with the antecedents identified by Park and Park (2019). This framework integrates key concepts from existing research to give an extensive understanding of adaptive performance and how it can be fostered within organizations. The framework is particularly relevant for high-stakes environments like law enforcement, where adaptability is crucial for success.

The framework posits that the dimensions of adaptive performance are influenced by the antecedents across individual, job, group, and organizational levels. For instance, an individual's personality traits may enhance their capacity for managing work stress and solving problems creatively, while a supportive team environment can foster interpersonal adaptability. The multifaceted character of adaptive performances

enables a nuanced comprehension of adaptive performance, resulting in a more comprehensive understanding of the intricate nature of police work (O'Neill, 2014).

Furthermore, the interaction between these dimensions and antecedents emphasizes a systemic approach to enhancing adaptive performance. Organizations can leverage this framework to identify specific areas for intervention, such as providing training programs that enhance individual skills, fostering a supportive team culture, or establishing clear organizational goals that inspire adaptability. This is merely important for organizations to have targeted areas of improvement. Sound training and coaching could encourage an autonomy-supportive learning climate, fostering individual improvement in technical and tactical (Staller, 2021). These resolutions are essential for action capabilities and resources. In the same vein, Di Nota and Huhta (2019) highlight that training and practice could help build mental and physical toughness among the police. These skills are recognized as impetus to sound decision-making and to perform their field task effectively. For instance, team-building helps in enhancing interpersonal and cultural adaptability, meanwhile, case studies train the ability to intercede in emergencies (Bako & Mashi, 2023).

In law enforcement agencies, organizational characteristics are essential to foster a supportive ecosystem with clear vision and innovation. In this context, leadership is critical in leading the direction, shifting from a traditional structure to a flexible and learning organization. In light of the Covid-19 pandemic, research on police performance protocol in public health emergencies posits that inter-organizational coordination, clear strategic plan, and information sharing are critical during this tension period (Chand et al., 2023). In addition, enhancing police performance can be achieved by boosting service innovation, which can be further bolstered by fostering creative leadership (Alnuaimi & Abdulhabib, 2023). Conversely, the power dynamics within police agencies resulted in female police officers being a minority. In his proposal, Chirambwi (2017) suggests that by reevaluating and reorganizing the duties of the police force, their abilities and resources might be maximized.

In conclusion, the newly developed framework offers a comprehensive approach to understanding and fostering adaptive team performance among law enforcement teams. The combination of theoretical and practical applications could help academicians, trainers, and law enforcement agencies in building an adaptive, effective, and resilient team. Table 1 shows the Adaptive Performance Framework.

Table 1: Framework for Adaptive Performance

Framework Component	Description	Source
Dimensions of Adaptive Performance		
Handling Emergencies and Crises	Emphasizes rapid decision-making and focused action in high-pressure situations.	Pulakos et al. (2000)
Managing Work Stress	Involves maintaining composure and effective coping strategies during periods of change and uncertainty.	Pulakos et al. (2000)
Solving Problems Creatively	Encourages innovation through diverse information sources and challenging established norms.	Charbonnier-Voirin & Roussel (2012)
Dealing with Uncertain and Unpredictable Situations	Highlights flexibility and the ability to reorganize tasks swiftly in response to changing circumstances.	Charbonnier-Voirin & Roussel (2012)
Training and Learning Effort	Focuses on continuous improvement through ongoing education and proactive engagement with new developments.	Pulakos et al. (2000)
Interpersonal Adaptability	Stresses the importance of effective communication and relationship building within teams.	Charbonnier-Voirin & Roussel (2012)
Cultural Adaptability	Involves adjusting behaviors to align with diverse work practices and cultural contexts.	Charbonnier-Voirin & Roussel (2012)
Physical Adaptability	Addresses the ability to perform effectively under varying physical conditions.	Pulakos et al. (2000)
Antecedents of Adaptive Performance		
Individual Characteristics		
Personality	Traits such as openness and emotional stability that influence adaptability.	Park & Park (2019)
Knowledge	Expertise relevant to job roles that facilitates effective problem solving.	
Skills and Abilities	Competencies necessary for task execution.	
Prior Experience	Previous experiences that shape adaptability.	
Motivation	The drive to achieve and excel in changing environments.	
Job Characteristics		
Decision-Making	Empowerment to make decisions independently.	Park & Park (2019)
Autonomy		
Discretion	Freedom in how work tasks are completed.	
Job Uncertainty	The level of predictability within the job role.	
Group Characteristics		
Support from Co-workers and Supervisors	Availability of assistance and encouragement within the team.	Park & Park (2019)
Team Learning Climate	An environment conducive to shared learning and development.	
Organizational Characteristics		
Clear Vision	The organization's direction and goals, which guide employee actions.	Park & Park (2019)
Climate for Innovation	An organizational culture that encourages experimentation and adaptation.	
Organizational Support	Resources and backing provided to facilitate employee performance and innovation.	

CONCLUSION

This conceptual paper aims to synthesize the previous literature in generating a framework for adaptive team performance, fostering understanding in the law enforcement team's context. The framework adopts a holistic perspective by encompassing a wide range of multidimensional aspects of adaptive performance. These dimensions include managing emergencies and crises, effectively handling work-related stress, approaching problem-solving with creativity, navigating uncertain or unpredictable situations, committing to training and learning efforts, demonstrating interpersonal adaptability, embracing cultural adaptability, and maintaining physical adaptability. Additionally, the framework integrates a diverse set of antecedents that operate across different levels, including individual, job, group, and organizational characteristics. This comprehensive integration highlights the dynamic interplay between these dimensions and antecedents, which collectively influence how teams adapt and respond to ever-changing and complex environments. By addressing these interconnected factors, the framework provides a robust foundation for understanding and enhancing team performance in dynamic settings.

The framework offers several practical implications. First, the framework features the need for multi-level interventions to understand and measure team adaptability. Policing has always been complex and unpredictable hence, testing numerous antecedents in this context is seen as comprehensive and critical. Secondly, the results alert law enforcement agencies in manpower selection, training, job design, and fostering a positive organizational culture to encourage team adaptability. It helps the agencies to build an ecosystem that supports and nurtures adaptive performance among the teams. Besides, the result of this paper contributes to the growing body of knowledge in adaptive team studies, specifically tailored to law enforcement teams.

Nevertheless, although the paper serves as a solid foundation for the framework, it also has limitations thus, requires future directions. The framework has yet to be tested and empirical validation is essential to test the applicability of the framework within a given context. In essence, quantitative studies are required to test the operationalization and the proposed dimensions and antecedents.

In a nutshell, this framework served as a foundation for future research to explore and enhance the adaptive team performance in law enforcement agencies. Any new findings would refine the framework and become a guideline for further development for stronger, effective, and resilient law enforcement teams.

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Author contributions

The authors collaborated closely in the development of this article. Author 1 was responsible for drafting the paper based on the ideas and structure outlined by Author 2. Author 2 reviewed the paper and supervised its overall coherence and flow. Author 3 refined the language and further enhanced the article's clarity and readability.

Conflict of interest

No conflict of interest associated to this publication.

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