

Parental Involvement of Economically Disadvantaged Students in Post-Pandemic Learning

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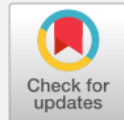
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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the involvement of parents of economically disadvantaged students in post-pandemic learning, a crucial issue considering the demotivation experienced by many students after the COVID-19 pandemic ended. The research employs a descriptive qualitative method, utilizing interviews, observations, and documentation as data collection techniques. The informants include four parents, four students, and one teacher from SDN 2 Cidora, Lumbir Subdistrict, Banyumas Regency. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns of parental involvement. The findings reveal that parents of economically disadvantaged students engage in their children's activities by providing physical facilities, offering motivation, paying attention to their children's assignments, and supporting school activities. However, academic involvement remains low due to a limited understanding of the materials and time constraints. To overcome these challenges, parents rely on assistance from relatives as a form of social capital. The study concludes that economically disadvantaged students are able to compensate for the lack of economic capital through social and cultural capital, facilitating their adaptation to post-pandemic learning.

Keywords: Cultural Capital; Economically Disadvantaged Students; Parental Involvement; Post-Pandemic Learning; Social Capital

1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly altered various aspects of societal life, including educational practices in schools. During the pandemic, Indonesia implemented a home-based learning policy to curb the spread of the virus (Handarini & Wulandari, 2020). However, this policy introduced new challenges, such as decreased student motivation due to difficulties in understanding the learning materials and limited access to learning facilities (Cahyani et al., 2020).

In 2022, the Indonesian government began allowing full face-to-face learning, requiring students to readjust to normal school routines. During this transition period, parental involvement—defined as parents' active participation in their children's educational processes—became a crucial factor in helping students regain their learning motivation and adapt to the post-pandemic school environment.

As a child's first educational institution, the family plays a vital role in guiding and supporting children's education. Parents bear the primary responsibility for instilling foundational values and skills that support their children's development. In the context of formal education, parental involvement has been shown to have a positive impact on students' motivation and academic achievement (Deslandes & Barma, 2016). This involvement may include actions such as providing emotional support, assisting with understanding school materials or participating in school events and activities (Epstein, 2018).

The effectiveness of parental involvement, however, is influenced by factors such as parents' education levels, time availability, and income (Friedman, 2010; Reskia et al., 2014). For instance, at SDN 2 Cidora (*Sekolah Dasar Negeri 2 Cidora* or Cidora Public Elementary School 2), a school located in Lumbir Subdistrict, Banyumas Regency, most parents work as laborers or farmers. These occupations typically involve low income and limited free time, contributing to challenges in supporting their children's education. Furthermore, data from SDN 2 Cidora in 2021 indicate that only 2.2% of parents in the area have attained higher education, while the majority have completed only elementary school or have not completed formal schooling. These limitations hinder their ability to fully understand the educational materials and optimally assist their children during the learning process.

During the online learning period, parental involvement was often limited to supervising and motivating their children. Previous studies have predominantly focused on families with higher education and income levels, who generally have more resources and time to assist their children (Wijayanto et al., 2021; Yulianingsih et al., 2020). However, little attention has been given to families with limited economic and educational resources, particularly in the context of the post-pandemic period.

In the post-pandemic era, parental involvement is essential not only at home but also at school. Parents can collaborate with teachers and school administrators to support their children's education, such as by participating in school activities or contributing to the planning and evaluation of learning processes. In the case of SDN 2 Cidora, these efforts are particularly relevant due to the socioeconomic challenges faced by its community.

This study aims to explore the involvement of parents of economically disadvantaged students in supporting their children's learning both at home and in school during the post-COVID-19 pandemic era. The primary focus is on understanding how limitations in parents' economic conditions, education levels, and time availability affect their ability to assist their children in adapting to face-to-face learning at SDN 2 Cidora.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Parental Involvement in Children's Learning

The family serves as the primary institution for a child's education. Fundamental values are instilled early within the family, which also acts as a foundation for identifying a child's potential and devising strategies to monitor their development. For children, the family is the first place of learning (Jailani, 2014). This educational role is often carried out through home-based activities.

Parents can provide education to their children in various forms:

- 1) Moral Education
Parents build children's moral awareness and shape their worldview, instilling a sense of right and wrong.
- 2) Social Education
Parents teach children how to interact positively with their surroundings, fostering socialization skills and introducing values embedded in their environment.
- 3) Intellectual Education
Parents guide children in adopting effective learning methods and habits.
- 4) Habit Formation
Parents instill regular routines and discipline, teaching children to be responsible and organized.
- 5) Civic Education
Parents nurture patriotism by fostering a sense of national pride and helping children understand the importance of contributing to their country.

Parental involvement is crucial for primary school students' learning processes. Parental involvement is defined as active participation in guiding and supporting children to achieve positive educational outcomes (Eisenberg et al., 2002). Similarly, it can be viewed as the interaction between parents and children aimed at fostering independence as well as optimal growth and development. These definitions highlight that parental involvement includes guidance, monitoring, and active engagement, all of which contribute to the child's holistic development.

Murdoko identifies several roles parents can adopt to engage in their children's education (Murdoko, 2017):

- 1) Teacher Role
Parents educate, guide, and mentor children during their learning process. By taking on this role, parents can explain school materials and assist with homework (Dwiyanti & Febriyanti, 2021).
- 2) Motivator Role
Parents provide encouragement and emotional support to boost children's enthusiasm for learning. Motivation may include rewards such as pocket money or toys to reinforce positive behavior.
- 3) Facilitator Role
Parents provide physical and non-physical resources to support their children's learning. Physical facilities may include books, stationery, and a study desk, while non-physical support can involve enrolling children in tutoring programs or extracurricular lessons.
- 4) Director Role
Parents provide direction and guidance, helping children navigate their learning process effectively.

In addition to these roles, parents can foster open communication with their children. Regular and meaningful communication allows parents to understand their children's academic performance and encourages children to express their feelings or share their experiences at school (Yulia, 2022).

Rahmania et al. describe several methods parents use to support their children's learning, including interactive play, storytelling, and assigning tasks related to school materials. However, when parents are busy or lack the time to assist their children directly, they often delegate this responsibility to relatives such as grandparents, uncles, or aunts. For these parents, entrusting their children to family members is seen as an alternative when they are unable to fulfill their teaching role (Rahmania et al., 2021).

In summary, parental involvement in children's education can take various forms, including guidance, interaction, and participation. Parents may act as teachers, motivators, facilitators, or directors, and their roles can be adapted to their availability and resources. Regardless of the approach, parental engagement is essential for supporting children's learning and fostering their academic and personal development.

2.2. Challenges in Learning for Students from Economically Disadvantaged Families

Learning at home requires active interaction between parents and children. During this interaction, parents are expected to provide and nurture aspirations in their children to encourage optimal learning (Triwiyanto, 2019). Such interactions foster creativity and inspire children to pursue their goals, minimizing the likelihood of failure in both home and school learning environments.

For economically disadvantaged families, education presents a complex dilemma. Poverty limits their ability to support their children's education fully, and conversely, education is often perceived as a factor contributing to their poverty (Triwiyanto, 2019). Education is frequently seen as a burden due to the significant costs involved, such as tuition fees, transportation costs, daily allowances, and essential school supplies, including books, pencils, study desks, and other learning tools (Delvi, 2015).

The inability of parents to provide adequate learning facilities at home can negatively impact their children's academic performance. Learning facilities, including appropriate infrastructure and tools, are crucial to supporting children's studies. A lack of such facilities often correlates with lower academic achievement. Students with adequate learning facilities perform better in school, while those without sufficient resources tend to struggle academically.

Parents with low income often face challenges in providing optimal learning facilities for their children, which subsequently affects their academic performance. To address this, parents may choose to maximize their working hours to earn sufficient income to fulfill their children's educational needs. However, this decision often comes with the consequence of reduced time for supervising, mentoring, and guiding their children during home learning (Prawanti & Sumarni, 2020). Limited time spent with children has been shown to affect their academic performance negatively.

Another significant challenge for low-income families is the low level of parental education. Based on 2021 data from Indonesia's Central Bureau of Statistics (*Badan Pusat Statistik*, BPS), the majority of economically disadvantaged families have low educational attainment: 29.86% did not complete elementary school, 37.74% completed elementary school, 15.05% graduated from middle school, 15.54% graduated from high school, and only 1.81% completed higher education (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2022). Low parental education levels often translate to limited capacity to

understand school materials, making it difficult for parents to assist their children effectively (Yulianingsih et al., 2020).

3. Research Methodology

This study employs a descriptive qualitative method to provide a detailed depiction of parental involvement among economically disadvantaged students in post-pandemic learning. Data collection utilized triangulation techniques, including observation, interviews, and documentation (Sugiyono, 2014).

Observation was conducted to understand the socioeconomic context of Cidora Village. In-depth interviews were held with four parents, four students, and one teacher at SDN 2 Cidora (*Sekolah Dasar Negeri 2 Cidora* or Cidora Public Elementary School 2) to explore experiences, challenges, and strategies related to parental involvement. Documentation involved analyzing statistical data on parents' occupations, educational levels, and income.

The collected data were analyzed thematically through reduction, categorization, and pattern-based conclusion drawing. This thematic approach focused on identifying patterns of parental involvement, challenges faced, and strategies employed.

Informants were selected purposively based on specific criteria, including low income, limited education, and employment in the informal sector. This purposive sampling ensured a deeper understanding of the experiences of parents supporting their children's education in the post-pandemic period.

4. Results and Discussion

The transition from online to offline learning caused students to experience demotivation. They had to readjust to in-person school-based learning environments. Consequently, the roles of parents and teachers became essential in restoring students' motivation and enthusiasm for learning during the post-pandemic period. However, working parents often face challenges when it comes to assisting their children with home learning. This section describes the efforts undertaken by parents to optimize their roles. Below are the characteristics of the informants in this study.

The first informant is Mrs. Suminah, a 47-year-old mother of Andika, a fifth-grade student at SDN 2 Cidora (*Sekolah Dasar Negeri 2 Cidora* or Cidora Public Elementary School 2). Andika has an older sister who is married and no longer lives with the family. Mrs. Suminah and her husband only completed elementary school. She works as a fried snack vendor, while her husband works as a farm laborer. Every day, Mrs. Suminah sells fried snacks in her neighborhood from noon until late afternoon. Their monthly income is less than IDR 1,000,000, which is barely sufficient to cover their daily needs. They save only when they anticipate additional expenses. Meanwhile, Andika helps gather grass after school to feed the neighbor's goats.

Mrs. Suminah's family lives in a wooden house with a dirt floor. The house consists of a single multi-purpose room that serves as a living room, family room, and bedroom. There is also a small kitchen and one separate bedroom.

The second informant is Mrs. Murni, a 39-year-old mother of Manda, a fourth-grade student at SDN 2 Cidora. Both Mrs. Murni and her husband completed only elementary school and worked as farmers. During planting and harvest seasons, Mrs. Murni and her husband work in fields or rice paddies from morning until late afternoon. Outside of these seasons, they tend to other people's gardens. Mrs. Murni usually returns home at midday to manage household chores. Occasionally, she washes clothes in the river located near her house.

Mrs. Murni's family resides in a wooden house with a dirt floor. During the rainy season, the area surrounding their house becomes extremely muddy and slippery, making it accessible only by foot.

The third informant is Mr. Kris, a 51-year-old father of Hani, a third-grade student at SDN 2 Cidora. Both Mr. Kris and his wife have an elementary school education and work as laborers. Their jobs include construction work and farm labor. When there are no job offers, Mr. Kris assists his wife with household chores. He and his wife work collaboratively to manage their household, with Mr. Kris regularly taking on tasks such as sweeping and washing clothes. Mr. Kris works from morning until late afternoon. The family lives at the edge of Cidora Village, requiring Hani to walk approximately 20–30 minutes to school each day.

The fourth informant is Mrs. Nina, a sixth-grade teacher at SDN 2 Cidora, who serves as a supporting informant in this study. She is regarded as a senior teacher at the school due to her older age and longer teaching experience compared to other teachers. As such, Mrs. Nina has an in-depth understanding of the social and economic characteristics of both the parents and students at SDN 2 Cidora.

Parental involvement is a crucial factor in helping children achieve academic success. In the post-pandemic learning context, parents recognize that their engagement in their children's education is essential. This involvement aims to enhance children's academic performance, as they experienced significant demotivation during the pandemic.

From the parents' perspective, their involvement in their children's education is seen as highly important. Mrs. Murni, for instance, expressed that education, both at home and school, is a fundamental foundation for shaping a child's attitude to be obedient, diligent in studying, and goal-oriented toward future success. For her, the role of education is not merely for intelligence but also to secure Manda's future.

Similarly, Mr. Kris emphasized the significance of parental involvement in helping children achieve academic success. He provided a concrete example, explaining that if a child struggles with reading, parents can assist by teaching them gradually until they become proficient. He views this role as an effort to build a stronger foundation for the child's intelligence.

Mrs. Suminah also agreed on the importance of parental involvement in guiding children. She acknowledged that children are often difficult to manage and tend to prefer playing over studying. Through parental involvement, she hopes to instill discipline in her child, helping them develop more structured study habits.

The informants' statements demonstrate that parental involvement is crucial. Such involvement aims to support children's academic achievements and encourage them to be obedient to their parents. Children cannot progress independently without parental guidance and direction. This perception reflects parents' aspirations for their children to become disciplined, high-achieving individuals. Through parental involvement, children can internalize experiences that shape their character (Akbar, 2017).

Parental involvement can take various forms, including assisting children with studying, helping them complete assignments, explaining learning materials, and communicating with them about their academic performance at school (O'Toole et al., 2019). However, parents' education levels often limit their ability to assist with homework or explain school materials (Reskia et al., 2014). The informants' statements provide examples of these practices.

In daily life, parents actively support their children in completing homework, even when faced with knowledge limitations. Mrs. Murni, for instance, explained that she not only gave instructions to her child but also helped answer her child's questions. If she encountered

difficulties, her husband would typically assist, especially in mathematics, as Mrs. Murni felt less confident in that subject.

Mr. Kris adopted a similar approach. He assisted his child, Hani, particularly with simpler subjects, such as Javanese language or basic arithmetic. Although he sometimes struggled to understand the material, Mr. Kris expressed gratitude that Hani could receive learning support from her older siblings and cousins, who often helped Hani with her studies.

For Mrs. Suminah, study assistance was equally important, even though she and her husband felt that the current school materials differed significantly from what they learned in their school days. When encountering challenging topics, Mrs. Suminah encouraged her child to participate in group studies with friends, ensuring that Andika could still grasp the lessons with fewer obstacles.

Based on the informants' statements, it can be concluded that they are unable to fully assist their children with studying due to limited understanding of the learning materials, primarily because their education only extends to elementary school. Despite their academic limitations, one informant, Mrs. Murni, explained that she involves herself in other ways. Each morning, Mrs. Murni diligently prepares her child's school needs, ensuring the school uniform is neat, breakfast is ready, and school supplies are complete. She hopes that this preparation allows her child to attend school with enthusiasm and readiness to learn.

Although Mrs. Murni cannot provide comprehensive academic support for her child's learning, she continues to make efforts to support her child's educational success at school. In other words, parents remain engaged in their children's learning despite their academic constraints (Yamamoto et al., 2016). However, not all informants are consistently able to prepare their children before school. Mrs. Nina, a teacher at SDN 2 Cidora, explained that in her community, not all parents are able to assist their children with learning. Many parents work as laborers or farmers, leaving for fields or forests early in the morning. As a result, children often go to school without breakfast because their parents have already left for work.

As a farm laborer who must work early in the morning, Mrs. Murni makes a consistent effort to prepare her child's school needs in the morning. At the same time, she must also prepare her work equipment and work hard to increase her chances of earning an income. She hopes that her earnings can cover both daily needs and school-related expenses.

Another way the informants support their children's education is by providing learning facilities. According to the informants, meeting their children's educational needs is the parents' responsibility, as it can boost their children's motivation to study.

Parents strive to provide their children with the necessary learning tools despite financial constraints. For instance, Mrs. Murni shared that she has provided her child with writing supplies and a study desk at home. Although her child now owns a mobile phone, internet access remains a challenge. To meet internet needs, they rent Wi-Fi from a relative using a voucher system. The voucher options range from two hours to one week, costing approximately IDR 3,000 per hour or IDR 15,000 per week, which she considers a more economical solution for her child's needs.

Mr. Kris, on the other hand, has equipped his child with basic study materials such as books, pencils, pens, rulers, and drawing books with colored pencils. He makes every effort to provide everything necessary to support his child's learning activities at home.

For Mrs. Suminah, meeting her children's educational needs often requires a step-by-step approach. Textbooks, for example, are obtained from the school and paid for in installments, as lump-sum payments are often burdensome. She mentioned that although her child initially did

not have a mobile phone like their peers, she is now grateful to have been able to purchase one at an affordable price.

When studying, children can easily feel bored or lazy. They may also become distracted by other things, making it difficult for them to stay focused on their studies (Sari et al., 2021).

The informants stated that they scold their children to encourage them to remain diligent in their studies. This is done to help their children excel academically. In addition to reprimands, they are also motivated to keep their children enthusiastic about learning. However, Mrs. Murni and Mr. Kris have their strategies for providing motivation. They give rewards as a way to stimulate their children's enthusiasm for studying.

When dealing with children who are reluctant to study, parents adopt different approaches. Mrs. Murni, for instance, chooses to give her child some time when they feel bored. She believes that children, like parents, sometimes need a break. Thus, she tends to let her children rest for a while before guiding them back to studying when they are ready.

Mr. Kris, on the other hand, makes an effort to encourage his child, Hani, to study every night. He emphasizes the importance of explaining to Hani that studying has positive impacts, such as achieving good performance in school. When Hani shows signs of reluctance, Kris reminds her by motivating her with the importance of achieving good rankings at school.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Suminah adopts a stricter approach. If she notices her child playing excessively and neglecting their studies, she reprimands or even scolds them. For her, reprimands are necessary to instill discipline and ensure that her child does not waste time playing instead of studying.

The efforts of Mr. Kris and Mrs. Murni also include providing tangible motivation, such as giving rewards to boost their children's enthusiasm for learning. By offering motivation, children are more likely to focus and demonstrate optimal performance in school (Keaton & Gilbert, 2020). The provision of physical rewards by Mrs. Murni and Mr. Kris illustrates the importance they place on their children's education, aiming to help them achieve maximum academic success.

The provision of motivation and appreciation for children demonstrates that parents continue to engage in their children's education, even if they are unable to be fully involved academically. By providing encouragement and recognition, parents hope to foster enthusiasm for learning, enabling their children to achieve academic success. Research supports this approach, indicating that providing appreciation can enhance children's academic performance (Melinda, 2018).

In addition to involvement at home, parents can also participate in school activities. These activities include parent-teacher meetings, school committee meetings, and report card collection sessions. These activities are conducted to support the school's infrastructure and facilities as well as to enhance students' academic performance. In this study, the informants participated in several school activities. During these events, the informants demonstrated active participation, particularly in important meetings involving parents.

Mrs. Murni, for example, explained that she always strives to attend every meeting related to her child's schooling. If she is unable to attend due to illness or pressing obligations, she ensures that her husband or the child's grandmother, who lives close to the school, attends on her behalf. According to her, attending school meetings is crucial to keep parents informed about developments and issues at the school.

Mr. Kris expressed a similar commitment, noting that either he or his wife would attend school meetings. The topics discussed typically include school development projects, book payments, scouting activities, and other matters parents need to be aware of.

Mrs. Suminah also endeavors to be present, especially during significant moments such as report card collection. If she cannot attend due to unavoidable circumstances, she entrusts another parent to ensure her child continues to receive full family support.

A teacher at SDN 2 Cidora, Mrs. Nina, provided her perspective on parental participation in school activities. She noted that whenever school events involving parents are held, they consistently participate.

School activities involving parents can serve as a bridge for parents to understand their children's academic performance. These activities also provide opportunities for parents to consult with teachers about their children's behavior and interactions at school. The interaction between teachers and parents is a crucial element in supporting students' academic success. In this regard, teachers can collaborate with parents to support children's education. For example, teachers can guide parents on effective learning methods to assist their children at home. Additionally, teachers can emphasize the importance of literacy and numeracy skills that parents can teach children in grades 1 to 3. This highlights the significant role of teacher-parent collaboration in improving students' academic performance (Yamamoto et al., 2016).

The economic condition of impoverished families forces them to face greater challenges in facilitating their children's education. Economic limitations must be addressed through various strategies to ensure children can learn effectively. Children from low-income families encounter more obstacles in their education, one of which is the parents' inability to comprehend academic material, preventing them from adequately assisting their children with their studies. In this study, the informants had only completed elementary school, which limited their understanding of the school curriculum. They mentioned that the learning materials their children encountered were significantly different from what they studied during their schooling, further hindering their ability to help.

Beyond their lack of academic knowledge, these parents also have limited time to assist their children at home. Most of their time is spent working, and by the evening, they are too exhausted to do anything but rest. In essence, the primary reason they cannot support their children's learning is their need to work to meet daily necessities, including educational needs. This places them in a dilemma: they must work to earn money while also needing to provide academic support to their children.

To address these challenges, the informants employed various strategies to ensure their children could learn effectively. For instance, Mrs. Suminah relied on Andika's friends, Gilang and Andre, to form study groups. However, these study sessions were conducted without parental supervision. Meanwhile, Mr. Kris sought assistance from Hani's older sibling to help with her studies. Additionally, he also relied on other relatives who were more educated to provide further academic support.

The involvement of others in the learning processes of Hani, Andika, and Manda resulted in differing academic performances and outcomes. This disparity was influenced by the varying quality of social capital available to each child. Social capital refers to all resources related to social networks or relationships. At home, Hani was assisted by her older sibling or other relatives with secondary or high school education. In contrast, Manda and Andika relied on their study groups or studied independently. Maximizing the use of social capital can, in turn, enhance the cultural capital of individuals. According to Pierre Bourdieu, effectively leveraging networks allows individuals to develop substantial cultural capital (Margani et al., 2021). As a result, Hani demonstrated strong academic performance at her school.

The socioeconomic conditions of a community significantly influence families' ability to support their children's education, especially for those with weak economic backgrounds.

Mekonnen emphasizes that the educational background of a family impacts students' academic performance (Martono et al., 2020). Families with strong economic capital are capable of providing educational resources, such as books, stationery, and private tutoring, which support children's academic success. In contrast, low-income families often face financial constraints that make it difficult for them to meet their children's educational needs, including paying for extracurricular activities (Sudarsana, 2018). This disparity exacerbates the gap between students from wealthy and impoverished families.

For low-income families, education presents a dilemma: poverty limits access to education, yet without education, it is challenging for them to escape the cycle of poverty (Triwiyanto, 2019). This dilemma is reflected in the informants of this study, where economic constraints were the primary challenge faced by parents. While some informants, such as Andika, Manda, and Hani, received support in the form of educational facilities like books and stationery, their economic capital remained limited. Additionally, symbolic capital, such as housing, posed additional challenges. The informants lived in modest homes with limited facilities, with one informant even having to walk a considerable distance to reach school. However, these limitations did not dampen their determination to learn.

In this context, parents' involvement in education illustrates the interplay of various types of capital that complement one another. According to Bourdieu, economic capital is evident in efforts to meet educational needs despite constraints (Bourdieu, 1986). Social capital manifests through parents' participation in school activities and building relationships with teachers and the community to support their children. Cultural capital is expressed through parental involvement in their children's learning and instilling the importance of education. In contrast, symbolic capital is reflected in parents' efforts to maintain their prestige by supporting their children's school activities. The integration of these forms of capital demonstrates the strategies employed by families to navigate their limitations.

Beyond economic challenges, families in rural areas face barriers to adapting to technology. Not all families have access to the electronic devices necessary for modern learning, unlike urban families, who are often better equipped. This digital divide exacerbates educational disparities between rural and urban areas (Martono et al., 2020). However, these challenges can be addressed through collaboration among schools, families, and communities to maximize children's educational potential despite the limitations.

5. Conclusion

This study concludes that several challenges hinder the implementation of educational processes in low-income families, such as the lack of available time to assist children and low educational backgrounds, which limit parents' ability to be fully involved in their children's academic activities. In this context, parents are unable to explain learning materials or help with school assignments because they lack an understanding of the subjects taught in school. Consequently, they take the initiative to seek assistance from the children's friends or relatives. Additionally, parents maintain communication with teachers and their children to monitor academic performance at school. Furthermore, parents provide motivation and appreciation to encourage their children's enthusiasm for learning and to prevent laziness.

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The authors have declared no potential conflicts of interest concerning this article's research, authorship, and/or publication.

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