

The acculturation process of old Mrs. Pan reflected in Pearl S Buck's *The Good Deed*

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Received:
24 February 2023

Revised:
24 July 2023

Accepted:
2 August 2023

Published:
31 August 2023

Abstract

Diaspora still becomes one of the big issues in sociological aspect. Acculturation has been relevant to the topic of diaspora. The issue raised in this study is acculturation process which is experienced by people who do migration by leaving their homeland to a new country caused by any condition happens in their homeland. This study attempts to analyze the acculturation process experienced by old Mrs. Pan in Pearl S Buck's short story "The Good Deed". This study applied descriptive qualitative method and several steps used in organizing the data; reading the short story, identifying the data, classifying the data, reducing the data, analyzing the data and finally the data analysis presented in descriptive form. In conducting this study, primary data and secondary data were used. The primary data were taken from The Good Deed short story by Pearl S. Buck published in 1953 and the secondary data were taken from journals, e-journals, books, e-books. In conclusion, this study found that acculturation process reflected in old Mrs. Pan as the main character. She experienced the acculturation process as she moved to America because of the conflict which happened in China. She faced the acculturation process in her movement to the new country such as acculturative stress and separation as one of acculturation's strategy she encountered.

Keywords: *acculturation process, acculturative stress, separation, diaspora*

INTRODUCTION

Migration is known as one of old phenomena in history. In general term, migration defines as the movement of people from one usual area to another. (Kok,1999). This movement can be carried out by an individual or group of people moves out from their origin country and settled in other countries such as Indians, Chinese and others who decide to leave their origin country to live and settle in a new country. According to International Organization for Migration (IOM), the number of IOM membership has increased for two decades, which is from 76 states in 2000 to 176 states in 2019 (Commey, 2021). Jr and Wong

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(2016) stated that Chinese are the biggest immigrant from Asia. Around 2011, over 40.3 million overseas Chinese were residing in 148 countries of the world.

People who are displaced from their native land through migration, immigration or exile called diaspora. On the other hand, diaspora as a movement can be explained as a place from a discrete geographic location that is definitely linked to the native land of the diaspora subjects (Raj, 2014). Braziel and Mannur noted that etymologically, the term "diaspora" comes from *diasperien*, the Greek verb which is a composite of *dia* and *sperien*. *Dia* means "across" and *sperien* hints "to sow or scatter seed" (Kafle, 2010). In addition, the term of diaspora, explained in Brubaker's article, was first associated to the history of the Jewish community living away from their country. In recent literature, the term diaspora that once described as dispersion of Jewish or certain communities, has been extended its meaning with a larger context including immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guest-worker, exile community, overseas community and ethnic community (Brubaker, 2005).

John Kha Lee and Katherine Green (2010) define that acculturation is a phenomenon as a result of social interaction and communication response that individuals adapt when they interact with individuals and groups from other cultures. An individual interaction process to another culture, to communicate or to adapt in a new culture is not easy as they thought. Another definition of acculturation is given by Briones, Montgomer and Shwarts that acculturation can be understood as the process of cultural change and adaptation the new situation that emerges as a result between contacts of two or more different cultures (2006). Immigrants who leave their homeland to move to their new country will find unfamiliar things in the host land. Moreover, people with different cultural background make contact with other groups; they may or may not accept each other's cultures. In line with the previous definition, Redfield, Linton and Herskovits state "phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both group" (Lakey, 2003). It can be inferred that the immigrants who spread to other countries bring and represent different region, language and culture that they have been raised to unfamiliar culture. The immigrants have to engage a new adaptation process since they settled in a new country and face many changes. The experiences encountered by the immigrants may be different from each other. They may be have the same way to undergo the process, and may be have different way to engage the process. However, the immigrants can undergo the consecutive processes of acculturation like acculturative stress and pursue acculturation's strategy.

People who called as the first generation of immigrant are foreign-born people who have immigrated to the new country and do not have country's citizenship at birth (Papademetriou et al., 2009). Therefore, the first generation is permanent resident in a new country to adjust with a new culture. The first-

generation will experience a phase where he feels confused in interacting or communicating. This situation is called acculturative stress or commonly named culture shock. It means that a person is unable to achieve successful adaptation during the process of acculturation, feels stress and subsequent adaptation problem (Yu and Wang, 2011). Additionally, Berry (2005) explained that acculturation can be reactive as non-dominant groups reject the influence of dominant group culture. They prefer to keep the traditional way of life, rather than have a great similarity to the dominant culture. Acculturation is pointed by physical and psychological changes as the consequence of the adaptation required in climate, housing, diet, norm, interacting style and values of the host land (Berry as cited in Yu and Wang, 2011). When the adaptation is not achieved, acculturative stress may occur, which refers to a form of stress in the process of acculturation.

Moreover, Kim and Kim (2013) stated that in adapting process to a new culture and society, an immigrant may be faced with numerous challenges, such as cultural and ethnic differences, cultural conflict and language barrier. Acculturation process involves a certain level of stress that emerges because of a cultural gap between the origin culture and the host culture. If the gap is expanded, the level of stress may be increased, which negatively affects immigrant's health.

Immigrants will also face acculturation strategies in which individuals will experience one or all of the four acculturation strategies described by Berry, namely "integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization" (Lee and Green, 2010). Furthermore Berry stated that assimilation strategy defines once individuals do not wish to maintain their heritage culture and seek daily interaction with other cultures, indeed they prefer to absorb with new culture. On the other hand, separation strategy defines when individuals want to maintain or hold on to their heritage culture and avoid interaction with other cultures. Then, integration strategy defines as individuals having interest maintain their heritage culture but at the same time they seek daily interaction with other cultures. Lastly, marginalization strategy showed that there is a little interest to maintain their heritage culture and having relation with other cultures (2005).

An American legendary writer, Pearl S. Buck, is the author of over 100 works. One of the famous stories of Buck's is *The Good Deed*. This short story was first published in 1953. The strength of the story lays in its characterization, particularly in the main character, old Mrs. Pan. In the beginning of the story, she is drawn as a lonely old lady who moved from her homeland to New York, and feels physically and emotionally down. She feels isolate and unable to adjust to American culture. The experience of the immigrants' life as a native Chinese in America is very important to be discussed. Considering the issue of migration still becomes an important issue around the world. They face some problems, such as the language, meet with strangers and cope with an unfamiliar culture. However, the immigrants have an important role and make fundamental contribution in

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the development of the host culture in many aspects of the host cultures' live such as culture, culinary, education and many others.

METHOD

This research used descriptive qualitative method. It is the method of gathering the data qualitatively and reporting the data descriptively. According to Almeida, Daniel and André (2017) "Qualitative research is not concerned with numerical representatively, but with the deepening of understanding a given problem." This descriptive qualitative method was used as a comprehensive or strategy to find or to obtain the data needed, to get the results in accordance with the study objectives. Moreover, the purpose of this descriptive qualitative method was to get deeper understanding toward reality through description, interpretation, and evaluation.

In organizing the data, this research used four steps, those were: 1) Reading the short story, 2) Identifying the data, 3) Classifying the data, 4) Reducing the data. The first step in collecting data was reading *The Good Deed* short story. After reading the short story for several times, the second step was identifying the data. In this step, the researcher identified the data by underlining some text of the object to find out the parts of the short story that were going to be analyzed. The data could be in a form of narrative, descriptive, direct or indirect dialogues and monologues. The third step was classifying the data. Classifying was defined as categorizing the underlined data based on problem formulation in this research. The fourth step in organizing the data was reducing the data. Reducing the data was the process of taking out the data that did not have any correlation with the issue and needed to reduce. Finally, the analyses of data were presented in words as descriptive analysis representation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This story is about Old Mrs. Pan, a Chinese immigrant who left her homeland Szechuen, China to New York, America. Mr. Pan, her son, had previously moved to America with his father looked for a better livelihood in this country. After the conflict occurred in their homeland, Mr. Pan decided to bring his mother to America and lived together with his family. Mr. Pan who had been living there for a long time thought that America was the best place that his mother should be living. After old Mrs. Pan came to America, she felt the contrast between both culture and lifestyle. She was sad, because it was very hard to accept a new culture and not surrounded by her own culture. She wanted to hold her own culture although her son, her daughter in law, and her grandchildren were totally blended into American culture. Old Mrs. Pan believed that as a Chinese, they should maintain their heritage culture especially for people who left their homeland. As old Mrs. Pan did, she kept maintaining her culture and could not try to blend with the American culture. It became one of the things that made difficult for her to survive in this country. As time passed, Mr. Pan and his wife realized that their mother was very ill and became very thin. She always recalled the memory of her hometown and compared it with the situation in America. Mr.

Pan and his wife worried about their mother's condition because every day she was getting worse. So, they decided to introduce her to a Chinese descendant who can speak in Chinese well. They hope that their mother would be better if she met someone who can understand her. Mr. Pan and his wife asked one of their friends named Lili Yang, a single 27 year old woman, who was the one that they can rely on to help them. Lili agreed to meet their mother. A week later, Miss Lili visited old Mrs. Pan and had some conversations with her. They talked about their hometown, family and marriage. During the conversation, old Mrs. Pan was interested in the issue of marriage. She was shocked by the Americans that did not arrange marriage like Chinese. Old Mrs. Pan believed that marriage arrangement in Chinese was the parents' duty to their children's life. Old Mrs. Pan who was loyal to her own culture wanted to re-awake her own culture through Miss Lili's case. She began to find someone with criteria that matched the personality of Miss Lili who was considered as a kind-hearted girl. In short, she found a man named Mr. Lim and planned to match these two people. By the initiative of old Mrs. Pan, these two people met. They had a good conversation and made an appointment to get to know each other more. On the other side, old Mrs. Pan talked with Mr. Lim's senior to make an arrangement for Miss Lili and Mr. Lim's junior. At the end of the story, old Mrs. Pan was happy that she thought she could re-awaken Chinese culture even though she was in America.

The issue in this research deals with a phenomenon of diaspora whose character is an old Chinese lady namely old Mrs. Pan. She is an ideal type of individual who suffers from shifting into a foreign country. She migrates and lives outside her homeland to run off from her ancestral village in Szechuen, China and then settles in American household. Old Mrs. Pan as the main character experiences diaspora because the conflict happened in her homeland. It shows through the following quotation:

... he had thought that once he got her out of his ancestral village in the province of Szechuen and safely away from the local bullies, who took over when the distant government fell, his anxieties would be ended.... Mrs. Pan. She did not even appreciate the fact, which he repeated again and again, that had she remained in the village, she would now have been dead, because she was the widow of 32 the large landowner who had been his father and therefore deserved death in the eyes of the rowdies in power. (Buck, 1953).

The conflict happens in her homeland caused by the local bullies who attack the government and the people with a great deal of assets and money. It makes old Mrs. Pan leave the homeland and move outside her country. The situation happened to old Mrs. Pan in line with the background of Chinese migration phenomenon. According to Jennifer Lynn Cucchisi (2002), she explained that from 1927 to 1949 the country was in chaos. China suffered from internal conflict or "civil wars" between The Kuomintang (KMT) and The Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The Chinese CCP won government control in China.

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After the war, China was destroyed, and the people and economy were devastated. The unstable social and political condition with the success of CCP won the civil war caused a mass migration. This causes China to have the largest number of migrants living abroad. After the civil war, Chinese's government at that time was politically and economically unstable and certainly became the main driver why Chinese do migration. Thus, many Chinese migrated to another country and chose to avoid the conflict that happened in their homeland, and America became one of the destination countries for the Chinese immigrants. In this story, old Mrs. Pan experienced problem when a Chinese abroad, faced displacement and adhered to native culture.

Acculturation

Old Mrs. Pan's character in the story is trapped in a problematic situation to accommodate her since she should deal with a new condition in a new place. People who move to another country may encounter a process of diaspora that is called as diaspora experiences. As the first generation of China, living in a foreign country with a new culture makes her struggle becomes the main theme. Old Mrs. Pan experiences different cultures which lead her to encounter the process of acculturation. Moreover, when the acculturation is getting more problematic, it leads to the experience of acculturative stress. Further, if the Diasporas cannot adjust with the new culture and choose to maintain their own culture, the Diasporas will experience one of acculturation strategy which is separation.

Acculturation can be understood as the process of the cultural change and adaptation to the new situation that take place as a result between a contact of two or more different culture. It can be seen through the experience of old Mrs. Pan when she meets with her grandchildren from the quotation below:

The disobedience of the children was another grief to old Mrs. Pan. She did not understand how it was that four children could all be disobedient, for this meant that they had never been taught to obey their parents and revere their elders, which are the first lessons a child should learn. "How is it," she once asked her son, "that the children do not know how to obey?" Mr. Pan had laughed, though uncomfortably. "Here in America the children are not taught as we were in China," he explained. "But my grandchildren are Chinese nevertheless," old Mrs. Pan said in some astonishment. "They are always with Americans," Mr. Pan explained (Buck, 1953).

From the quotation above, old Mrs. Pan grieves after seeing her grandchildren unable to understand the Chinese culture. They do not behave in Chinese custom and it makes her disappointed. According to her, the children must be taught to obey the elders and their parents. Her experience in living with people that have different culture leads her facing the process of acculturation. She tries to adjust herself and adapts with two cultures, they are American culture and her own culture. Since old Mrs. Pan is a new immigrant, she needs to face the cultural changes and adjust to the new situation, even though she gets worried if her

family lost their Chinese identity. This refers to the manner which individual tries to negotiate or adapt with two or more cultures.

Berry explains more about acculturation that at the individual level, one must consider the psychological changes that may emerge as the consequence of their way to do an adaptation to the new situation (2005). Here in the short story, old Mrs. Pan shows the psychological changing that occurs as she adapts with host culture through the quotation:

She felt lonely and there was no one who understood the things she felt and she was quite useless. That was the most difficult thing: She was of no use here.... So she gave up and sat uselessly all day, not by the window, because the machines and the many people frightened her. She sat where she could not see out; she looked at a few books, and day by day she grew thinner and thinner until Mr. Pan was concerned beyond endurance. (Buck, 1953).

As the individuals have different cultural backgrounds and must go through an adaptation in a host culture, they make an adjustment in a different way with others. Instead of old Mrs. Pan achieves success through the adaptation with the host culture, on the contrary, she feels lonely and useless. However, an individual has a probability to adjust or to avoid a new culture in the host country. An individual may face their adaptation to a new situation by simple behavior shift (e.g. eating, dressing, speaking and in one's cultural identity), but it can be more problematic that they have to go through an acculturative stress such as anxiety and depression (Berry, 2005). As for old Mrs. Pan, she encountered an acculturative stress because of psychological changing that happened to her.

Another difference culture experienced by old Mrs. Pan is about marriage.

Marry unless they are compelled to do so to provide grandchildren for the family. It is necessary to make laws and create customs so that a man who will not marry is denounced as an unfilial son and one who does not fulfill his duty to his ancestors.

Here the ancestors are forgotten and parents are not important," Lili said unwillingly. "What a country is this," Mrs. Pan exclaimed. "How can such a country endure?" (Buck, 1953).

Old Mrs. Pan shows that she is confused with the country that she lives in. The people of the country do not concern with such a marriage regulation like Chinese does. According to the Chinese custom, it is very important for the elders to arrange the younger marriage. It becomes such an important matter since the law denounced a man who will not marry as an un-filial son. Thus, she is questioning a regulation in America for marriage couple as a sign that she wants to keep her culture tightly.

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Acculturative Stress

When the acculturation is getting more problematic, it leads to the experience of acculturative stress. Acculturative stress is known as the difficulty and stress during the process of acculturation. If the acculturation process is successful, the individuals are able to adapt to the new culture. However, individuals have different experiences when they respond the cultural changes. When they experience serious challenges and are not able to adjust with the changes easily, they will change one behavior then result acculturative stress (Sam and Berry, 2010).

Acculturative stress can be experienced by people who are in the process of acculturation to the dominant culture. Furthermore, Berry states "The term "culture" implies that only one culture is involved, whereas the term "acculturation" draws our attention to the fact that two cultures are interacting, and producing the stress phenomena" (2005). In this case, the individual understand that they are facing problem resulting from intercultural contact and it is not easy to adjust a new culture. The process of acculturation can be a fairly smooth, but it might be very stressful for others. Interaction individual in a new country is one thing that will burden immigrants especially those who cannot adapt well in the midst of a new culture. This process causes an imbalance in individuals, causing depression, helplessness, anxiety, homesickness, confusion, irritability, isolation, intolerance, defensiveness, etc. (Gallois, Shuang and Zala, 2014). Hence, for some people trying to adapt to a host culture and maintaining their own culture, they need longer time to deal with the process of cultural changes.

The diaspora experience is getting worse if the Diasporas are unable to deal with the new culture and cannot adapt well during the acculturation process. Acculturative stress may occur which identified as a form of stress that the individual must deals with it. Further, it can be seen in the quotation below:

Old Mrs. Pan listened to this without reply, but her eyes, looking very large in her small withered face, were haunted with homesickness. "There are many things worse than death, especially at my age," she replied at last, when again her son reminded her of her good fortune in being where she was. (Buck, 1953).

The difficulties for other culture acceptance to an individual lead the Diasporas get homesickness. It can be seen through old Mrs. Pan, she even did not appreciate the fact she has to move to America. In the midst of a new culture, the Diasporas who cannot adapt well cause an imbalance in individual such as depression, helplessness, anxiety, homesickness, confusion, irritability, isolation, intolerance, defensiveness, etc (Gallois et al, 2014).

The difference between old Mrs. Pan's cultures with the host culture produces a feeling of distress as a negative side effect. It can be seen through the moment of her grandchildren speak fluently in English rather than their own language and it is strange for her. Old Mrs. Pan believes that the children cannot lose the sign or the identity as a Chinese and language is one of important thing

that shows the identity of a Chinese. The experience of losing the sign as a Chinese happens to old Mrs. Pan's grandchildren, "She was afraid of the children. They went to an American school and they spoke English very well and Chinese very badly, and since she could speak no English, it distressed her to hear her own language maltreated by their careless tongues" (Buck, 1953). She is unable to communicate with her grandchildren. Thus, the difference of the language becomes the reason of old Mrs. Pan's anxiety which also as the sign that she has faced acculturative stress. Language barrier becomes a problem that will often be faced by the Diasporas. The lack of ability to speak in English has driven old Mrs. Pan to feel anger, distress, and dissatisfaction to her grandchildren.

Separation

The story presents old Mrs. Pan as the evidence of immigrant life, her displeasure, her struggle, and how she is deeply crushed under the burden of alienation. She attempts to separate because of the cultural differences. During acculturation process, there are differences how individual faced a new culture in the host land. At the cultural level, the two groups that make contact usually aim to combine the two existing cultures. The purpose of combining culture also influences the strategy that will be used. At the individual level, behavioral changes and acculturation stress phenomena are seen as a function used by group members to determine the strategies to be used.

As stated by Berry (2005), acculturation strategies are carried out as an effort to adapt to new cultures and avoid stress acculturation. Acculturation can be done with several strategies and there are four types of acculturation strategies such as assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization. Some individual possesses the strategies that allow them to adapt to acculturation successfully. There are various factors include age, gender, education and language, intercultural and contact behind the strategies that experienced by individual (Kim and Berry, 2013). Since the concern of this study is related with the Chinese, "The Chinese, who left their country of origin and settled in other lands, have held strongly on to their traditions for fear of losing their identity. As a result, they continue to practice or observe traditions that have been long discarded in their motherland" (Leigh, 2011). They strongly hold on to their traditions because they want to keep maintaining their heritage culture as their identity than losing it. Therefore, the Chinese in the host country experience an acculturation process, they may go through separation when they maintain to their origin culture which eventually makes distance with the host society. Separation also has the same meaning with an extremely holding on to their original culture and wish to avoid interaction with other (Berry, 2005).

Old Mrs. Pan is unable to face American culture; therefore she has preference to avoid interaction with the host culture. It is not easy for old Mrs. Pan, as a new comer to get close with the host culture and the people around her. That is why, instead of adjusting herself to the host culture, she prefers to get separation. It can be seen from her actions that she chooses value on holding on to their original culture. As a Chinese lady, she was born and raised in China, and also she is familiar and accustoms with the Chinese culture. Since her

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ancestor comes from that land, it is not easy for her to let her culture and to get close with other cultures when she moves to America. Old Mrs. Pan's reaction, who wants to keep her Chinese custom though she is in the middle of American society, is shown by her believe in Chinese regulation for marriage:

Old Mrs. Pan would not agree to this. She shook her head with decision. "It is the duty of the parents to arrange the marriage of the children. When death approached, they should have attended to this for you. Now who is left to perform the task? Have you brothers?" "No," Lili said, "I am an only child. But please don't worry yourself, Madame Pan. I am earning my own living and there are many young women like me in this country." Old Mrs. Pan was dignified about this. "I cannot be responsible for what other persons do, but I must be responsible for my own kind," (Buck, 1953).

She prefers to use her local custom which is Chinese and shows her act of separation as one of experiences that old Mrs. Pan encounters. Thus, the Diasporas who cannot adjust to a new culture and choose to retain their ethnicity, they will experience one of the strategies of acculturation, separation. Old Mrs. Pan prefers to get a separation when she would not be able to escape from the traditions in her village. One of the moments is when old Mrs. Pan having conversation with Miss. Lili, she adheres to reject the American culture about marriage. She stands with her thought that in her own kind, as a Chinese. Marriage is an important matter and it should be arranged by parents. This is how she retains the heritage of her own culture and she must be responsible for her own kind. Old Mrs. Pan was dignified about this.

I cannot be responsible for what other persons do, but I must be responsible for my own kind," she declared. "Allow me to know the names of the suitable persons who can arrange your marriage. I will stand in the place of your mother. We 45 are all in a foreign country now and we must keep together and the old must help the young in these important matters (Buck, 1953).

Her daughter in law introduces old Mrs. Pan to a woman named Lili Yang, she is a Chinese who lived in America in her entire life. After they had a conversation, old Mrs. Pan talked to Ms. Lili that she wants to defend about what her belief relates to marriage arrangement. Based on Chinese culture, marriage is "important matter" and the parents have responsibility to arrange the children marriage. Further, she believes that although her parents died, someone or the elders must be a guardian to do this important matter. Old Mrs. Pan stands to avoid the existence of American culture that does not regulate marriage like in the Chinese culture way. This shows the act of separation when it comes to avoid the existence of other cultures in her life. When she keeps her culture by tightly upholding the culture of her origin and does not want to know or accept the cultures as rules in the host country.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research is to show the process of acculturation encountered by old Mrs. Pan, as the immigrant in America. The phenomenon of movement usually happens to the new immigrants who leave their homeland to a new country that can be found through old Mrs. Pan as the major character in Pearl S. Buck Short Story's *The Good Deed*. As one of the biggest ethnic that have done diaspora, Chinese do migration in order to get a better life in the host land. In the short story, old Mrs. Pan migrates because of conflict in China. This conflict is caused by the fall of Szechuen government. Throughout her movement to America, she faces some challenges experiences. The experiences encountered by old Mrs. Pan may be different from each individual. They may be have the same way to undergo the process, and may be have different way to engage the process. However, the individual can undergo the consecutive processes of acculturation such as acculturative stress and pursue acculturation's strategy, one of them is separation. This study finds that old Mrs. Pan experienced acculturation when she is trying to cope with the American culture even though she still believes and applies her Chinese culture. Furthermore, she experiences acculturative stress shows when she faces some new problems dealing with language and marriage regulation, between Chinese and American. In addition, she also still remembers all of the memories and the experiences when she is in China. As she wishes to maintain her own culture and avoid the host land culture, old Mrs. Pan has encountered separation as one of the acculturation strategy.

AUTHOR STATEMENT

Destary Praptawati: Conceptualization, data collection and management, data analysis, writing the abstract, introduction, methodology, results and discussion, and conclusion. Nevita Rizki Ariyani: supporting results writing, editing and refining the overall manuscript, reference management software and proofreading.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author would like to extend the highest appreciations to English Literature Study Program, Faculty of Language and Communication Science, Sultan Agung Islamic University Semarang, Indonesia for the support.

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How to Cite (APA Style):

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Conflict of Interest Statement: The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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