

Empowering Her Path: The Impact of Spousal Support on Women's Decisions, Success, and Wellbeing

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Abstract

Over the past few years, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of women taking up entrepreneurship in Tamil Nadu. Many married women have started their businesses, driven by their passion, skills, and desire for financial independence. No study has analyzed spousal support and its impact on women's decision-making, performance, success, and overall well-being, specifically in the Tamil Nadu cultural context. Addressing this gap is essential because businesswomen are intensely embedded in their families and are an imperative force for monetary and communal improvements. The sample of this study was 147 married businesswomen in Tamil Nadu. Researchers assessed various descriptive factors to examine the association between spousal support and business engagements (Hypotheses 1 and 2) and spouses' education and business knowledge (Hypotheses 3 and 4). These factors impact Tamil Nadu businesswomen's performance, success, and psychological well-being. The assessments ranged from a low of 1.03 to a high of 1.09. The chi-square divergence between the interrupt lone model and the model between all predictors entered is significant ($p < 0.05$). Based on the study's findings, it has been observed that the provision of emotional and instrumental support by a spouse has a positive correlation with a female entrepreneur's success, performance, and decision-making abilities.

Keywords: Business Performance, Decision-Making, Forms of Support, Psychological Wellbeing, Spousal Influence, Women Entrepreneurs.

Introduction

In the emerging economic terrain, many women have encountered a decline in employment, prompting them to use previously untapped business resources (1, 2). In 2012, the journal Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice, the top journal in the domain of entrepreneurship, published a special issue on the role played by businesswomen in achieving sustainable development goals. The support from a spouse and family members enables her to triumph over challenges such as limited education, gender discrimination, lack of business skills, and fears of entrepreneurship, thereby facilitating impressive business accomplishments (3). Women require spousal support and guidance to assume the business role with self-assurance (4). Partner support is widely recognized as one of the most

essential social support for advancing women's business careers (5). The theory of spousal support, as put forth by (6), posits that married men possess an additional resource as their wives, mainly if they do not engage in paid employment. These wives can assume domestic responsibilities, such as childcare and assisting their husbands in work-related matters (7).

Consequently, this grant married business managers more time and energy to devote to their work than unmarried men. Conversely, this same theory suggests that married businesswomen will experience a different level of success in their careers than their unmarried counterparts. This disparity arises because of household responsibilities and the lack of equivalent support available to married women compared to married men (8).

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Businesswomen in Tamil Nadu

According to the 2021 Men and Women in India report, Tamil Nadu has the highest percentage of women entrepreneurs (13.5%) among 80.5 lakh business units. The 2016 Sixth Economic Census report reveals that female entrepreneurs in Tamil Nadu start their businesses to attain career satisfaction and flexibility and positively impact the well-being of others through their entrepreneurial accomplishments. Many married women have started their businesses, driven by their passion, skills, and desire for financial independence. Still, women in Tamil Nadu are not involved more in large-scale businesses because they cannot invest more because of a lack of family support and financial situation. Female entrepreneurs in Tamil Nadu exhibit a deficiency in educational attainment and business acumen, significantly impacting their ability to perform effectively and achieve success. Women require the provision of familial backing and guidance to assume the business position with a sense of self-assurance. Positive attitudes and support spouses provide for wives' businesses result in life fulfillment, an improved standard of living, and business success. Spousal and familial help facilitates her ability to surmount obstacles such as insufficient education, gender prejudice, inadequate business acumen, and entrepreneurial apprehensions, enabling the attainment of remarkable business accomplishments (9). The empirical evidence suggests that business failures frequently stem from unsupportive spouses and family members with decision-making power.

The business managed by women has been more focused on in scholars' research; still, they concentrate on issues like the push and pull factors that made women want to get into the business (10) business hindrances (11) work-family balance, and spousal influence and support which are not much experienced in scholar's research. Scholars identified that, to comprehend the business progression of married women, they must contemplate the role played by the spouse to determine the level of spousal influence on women's business (12). The existing research examined the communal, financial, and surroundings of businesswomen (13); conversely, academic research

has hardly investigated the internal and external support provided by spouses to pursue business activities and how it impacts women's decision-making, performance, business success, and overall well-being. Existing studies focused on the partner's influence on monetary risk-taking attitude (14, 15), work-family balance (10), being satisfied with free time, and being female with no partner. More data on the attitudes and support of spouses towards women's entrepreneurship in Tamil Nadu needs to be collected. These research gaps need to be addressed because:

First, businesswomen are a significant force for monetary improvement, especially in developing countries. Women's income enhances domestic revenue and promotes a diverse standard of living (7). Women, like men, also generate business income that benefits their families and communities. Previous studies based on women's entrepreneurship concluded that women need more business knowledge (16) are less competitive and averse to risk (17, 18) and do not have the intention to develop a business-like man (19). Researchers doing studies on married female entrepreneurship slowly gained insights into spouses' support, spousal influence on business, and how it impacts women's business decisions and performance (5, 20).

Subsequently, this research aims to fill the gap in the literature by evaluating the spouse's influence on women's business and how it impacts women's business, decision-making, and overall wellness. The two interconnected research questions addressed below are:

RQ1. What are the various forms of support provided by spouses for women entrepreneurs?

RQ2. How do those support influence women's decision-making, business success, and overall wellness?

It is presented here that spouses provide various forms of backup when wives commence their businesses; consequently, those supports influence their business successes, decision-making, and well-being.

The psychological wellness of women in pursuing business is treated as backing provided by husbands; it is a form of direct and indirect motivation expected by women as entrepreneurs from spouses (17-22) Recognized two kinds of spousal support: emotional

backing, which contains sympathetic understanding, paying attention to her words, advice, and concerns, and creating a network for her business. The second is instrumental backing, which includes sharing domestic duties, childcare, performing business tasks regularly, and offering financial aid that assists women in business activities. Businesswomen expected support from their spouse rather than their families; anticipated women backing from their spouses, specifically in the following business cases, which include a lack of facilities, investment, a skilled workforce, or a lack of business knowledge (20). Subsequently, spousal support is crucial in constructing a business environment for women's businesses (16).

This study focused on understanding the influence of spouses on women's entrepreneurship, which is crucial for several reasons related to gender equality, empowerment, and societal change. Firstly, promoting women's entrepreneurship can significantly contribute to economic growth and development, particularly in developing countries. Providing equal opportunities for women to engage in business activities can lead to an increase in household income, improved living standards, and overall socio-economic progress. Secondly, empowering women through entrepreneurship can help break gender stereotypes and reduce gender disparities, leading to a more equitable society. It can also encourage women to take charge of their lives, make informed decisions, and become more confident in their abilities.

In this literature review, the authors attempted to enlighten readers on the significance of women's business and the various supports provided by their spouses to pursue their business goals. However, this research tried to explore the multiple forms of spousal support offered to women's businesses and how it impacted their business decisions, mental wellness, and marital relationships. A good marriage relationship is treated as a form of social support for businesswomen because it assists women in using resources from their spouses to attain family and entrepreneurial goals (18). Spouses are considered shareholders in female businesses because of the financial bonds of marriage and collective accountability for the clan (9, 19). The spouse may impact his wife's business activities and

accomplishments positively (sharing business knowledge) and negatively (financial pressure). To shed light on the research about married women entrepreneurs, researchers focused on the different backing provided by spouses and spouses' attitudes towards wives' businesses and how they influence women's business performance, decision-making, and well-being.

Theoretical Framework

Various Forms of Support Equipped by A Spouse

Existing literature on forms of support provided by spouses helps us understand their role in women's businesses. Analyzing the existing studies about the spousal influence on a wife's enterprise is predominantly relevant, which gave rise to the proposed research problem. Women entrepreneurs got support through their business networks, household members, and people they met professionally. Researchers noted husbands are one resource of support that aids businesswomen in managing and reducing pressure related to the work-family context (20, 23) and helps improve the standard of living (2). Few studies related to married women entrepreneurs concluded that spouse backing influences the psychological wellness of women (19); some scholars conceived that emotional backing by spouses is considered a significant factor in women's business success (20).

Practical Support in the Context of Business

Sometimes, spouses impact their wives' business activities and execution by delivering hands-on enterprise backing. The husband plays an official role in the wife's business by assuming business tasks daily or assisting her while they demand any business tasks. (17) Emphasized the formal role played and business backing delivered by spouses to their wives who engaged in home-based business. Hands-on support afforded by a spouse enables women to stay back in their businesses for long hours, further motivating them to perform business tasks successfully (24-25) Accentuated partner backing is a form of communal family asset for women's businesses, and it is highlighted as a distinctive value because of its immaterial and

unique personality. For women to sustain and develop new enterprises, they require the active involvement of their spouses in business (26) and positive business backing provided by their spouses to assist women in overcoming the economic hindrances that occur in the initial stage of business (16). Companion-dedicated involvement in women's businesses leads to hands-on support that assists them in performing business effectively and making corrective business decisions (27). Some researchers showed that practical support provided by a spouse also results in negative influence; sometimes, it brings pressure for women to carry over business activities in the way they planned and brings high pressure that impedes women's business success (19).

Spouse Provide Business Ideas, Advice and Creating Networks

Scholars have conceived that a spouse's business knowledge and experience are assets for women engaged in business (17, 24, 25). Marriage connection makes the spouse create strong business networks within the family and outside trustworthy members for his wife's business (26), and a positive marriage relationship makes the spouse build an extensive network that makes her get into the new business confidently (13). Spouses with experience and knowledge provide advice that enhances businesswomen's performance (28). A woman married to a spouse who has educational knowledge and is engaged in business or has previous business experience stimulates her to begin a new business (17). Overall, the above studies confirmed that partner education, business knowledge, and experience significantly improved women's performance in business and assisted them in making better business decisions. Ultimately, it depends on the quality of the information, or the approach executed by businesswomen (29).

Spouse Grant Emotional Backing Along with hands-on support and providing business advice, partners also contribute emotional backing to perform their business activities. Emotional backing up includes attitudes that convey 'understanding, support, and motivation, listening, and paying attention to their words (27). Spouses

with that attitude can enhance businesswomen's self-possession and self-efficacy (30). Past research needs to recognize the significant influence of spousal emotional support on women's business performance. We must acknowledge this crucial factor and incorporate it into future studies (18, 27, 30). Females who do business after marriage often face cultural barriers that hinder their enterprise development. However, they can overcome these barriers with emotional support from their spouses (16, 18). Emotional support received from a spouse assists women in planning tactically and aids in attaining business success (28).

Spouse Provide Financial Assistance

Financial help grants by spouses for women's businesses are considered an easily usable resource (27, 28), which also helped a lot of financial fluctuation or business negligence (24). Females' desires for the creation of businesses diverge according to the financial condition of the family and support granted through spouses and household members (2). Financial help provided by a partner has positively influenced women's business performance, but the spouse is not directly invested in her business. Females aspire to begin a business when they receive financial support from their spouse (13, 31) and subsequently partner with stable remuneration to support their wives' businesses financially. (24, 32) Disputed that sometimes, a spouse doesn't provide financial help to women's businesses rather than utilizing business-women income to meet household essentials. Female entrepreneurs receiving support from their spouses sometimes result in financial and non-financial compulsions that negatively influence their business performance (33).

Spouses Offer Household Assistance

Spousal support significantly impacts women's business activities and performance. Household assistance from spouses influences women to perform better and achieve business success (34, 35). According to a study by (28) research on entrepreneurs has shown that the time women spend with their children reduces their intention to start a business; according to a study by (26) marriages last longer when the husband takes care of the children during the wife's business activities.

Partner expectations towards their wives to perform most household chores with childcare result in work-family disputes and affect business-women performance and well-being (14, 36). Businesswomen manage work and family easily by having a partner who shares household chores and childcare (25) pushing them to spend extra hours in business (21) which helps them attain business success.

Spouse Involvement in Enterprise

Companion interference in business assists them in understanding their role in business, leads to enterprise obligations, and also aids in changing enterprise and household targets (14). Few studies concluded that a spouse's daily work-family disputes influence women's decision-making and performance (24, 26, 34). Suppose businesswomen encounter disputes because of partner involvement

in business regularly, which creates negative influence, detracts interest, affects business performance, and threatens success (20, 37). Women who are not interested in the involvement of their spouses in business try to avoid getting financial assistance from their spouses; therefore, they claim financial support from household members, especially at the start-up stage of business, because they believe that spouse interference regularly influences their decision-making and performance (Table 1) (38).

The following (Figure 1) Theoretical Framework illustrates the spousal help offered to female entrepreneurs. The framework is built upon a thorough analysis of existing literature related to this topic, which helps understand the role of spousal support in women's businesses

Table 1: Findings of the literature on various forms of spousal support for women's business

Author's	Journal	Country	Forms of spousal support
Aldrich & Cliff, (2003)	Journal of Business Venturing	North America	Business engagements
Anderson et.al. (2005)	Family Business Review	Scotland	Business idea, networking and financial assistance
Au & Kwong Kwan, (2009)	Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice	China	Business engagements
Beach, (1993)	Family Business Review	United States of America	Practical and domestic supports
Dyer Nenque, & Hill, (2014)	Journal of Small Business Management	United States of America	Business idea, networking and financial assistance
Hormiga Batista-Canino, & Sánchez-Medina, (2011)	Journal of Small Business Management	Spain	Emotional and practical support
Hsu Wiklund, Anderson & Coffey, (2016)	Journal of Business Venturing	United States of America	Childcare and domestic support
Khayesi George & Antonakis, (2014)	Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice	Uganda	Financial assistance

Lin et.al. (2018)	Small Business Entrepreneurship	Canada	Business idea, networking and financial assistance
Sorenson, (2013)	Family Business Review	United States of America	Business engagements
Van Auken & Werbel, (2006)	Family Business Review	United States of America	Business idea, networking and financial assistance Childcare and domestic support
Welsh Memili, Kaciak, & Ochi, (2014)	Journal of Small Business Management	Japan	Emotional and financial assistance

Source: Prepared by the authors based on the literatures

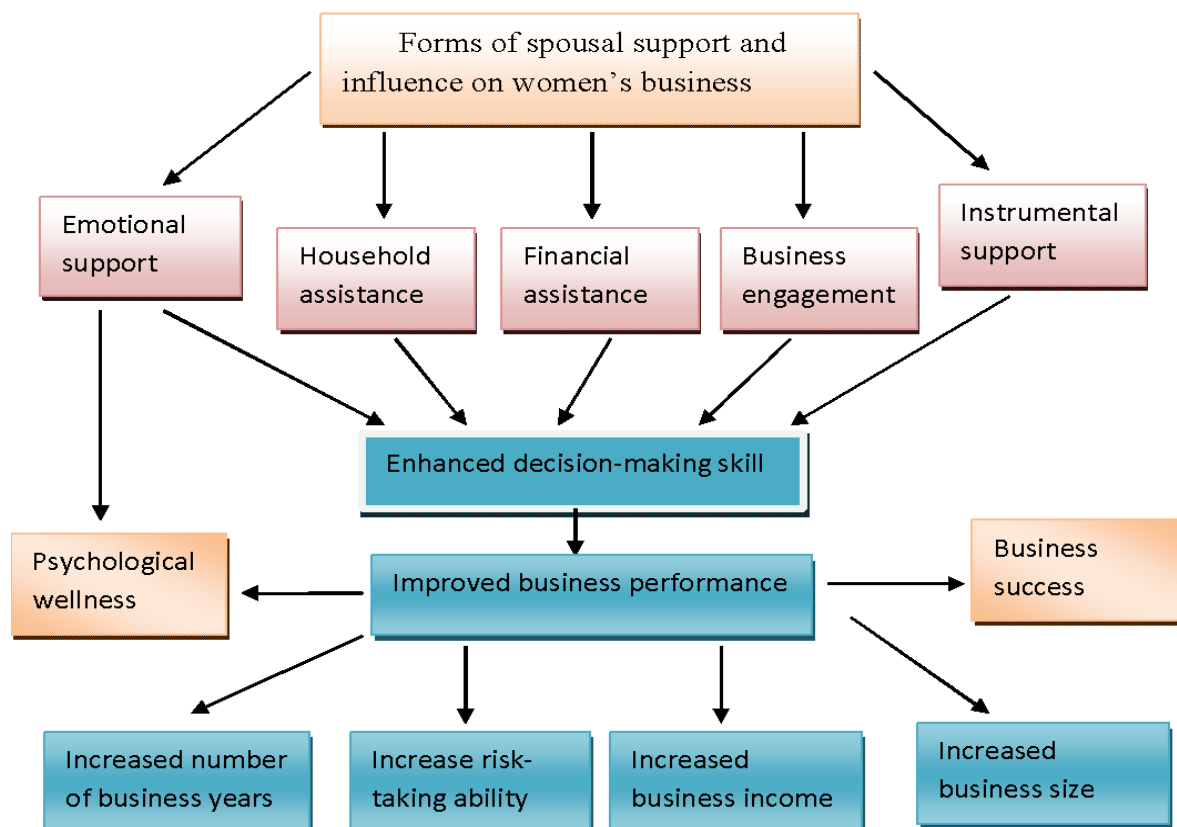


Figure 1: Various forms of spousal support and influence based on literature review

The framework consists of six primary forms of spousal support. Instrumental support involves the hands-on assistance a spouse provides in the wife's business activities, enabling them to perform business tasks effectively and make corrective

business decisions. Providing business ideas, advice, and networks includes the spouse's business knowledge and experience, which are considered assets for women engaged in business. The spouse creates strong business networks and provides

guidance that enhances businesswomen's performance. Emotional backing includes attitudes such as understanding, support, motivation, listening, and paying attention to their words, which can strengthen businesswomen's self-possession and self-efficacy. Financial assistance from a spouse grants women an easily usable resource for their businesses, which helps them manage financial fluctuations and negligence. Household assistance positively influences women's business activities and performance by allowing them to spend extra hours in business and achieve success. Spouse involvement in enterprise assists women in understanding their role in business and changing enterprise and household targets; it can also lead to work-family disputes that affect decision-making and performance. The provision of various supports for women's enterprises leads to a prolonged period of business activities, growth in the scale of business operations, increase in business revenue, and improvement in the risk-bearing capacities of female business owners. The framework (Figure 1) illustrates the interplay between these forms of spousal support and their impact on the psychological well-being, business performance, and overall success of female entrepreneurs. It highlights the importance of emotional support in enhancing psychological well-being, leading to improved business performance. Additionally, it emphasizes the need to consider both the positive and negative influences of different forms of spousal support for a comprehensive understanding of their role in the success of women-owned businesses.

Spousal Influence on women's businesses

Partner support impacts women's business performance and successes positively and negatively (16, 39). Females are not supposed to separate their businesses from their personal lives; most female businesses include spouses and family members (40). This forces women predominantly to evaluate the influence that their business performance has on their husbands and kids (19). Research related to the spouses of businesswomen is, conversely, scarce. Partner support is considered a critical factor that boosts women's business performance (35), but women still can't always receive the expected

business support from partners (1, 3, 18). Emotional backing provided by a partner assists in reducing work-spouse disputes (16), and instrumental support from a partner aids in decreasing business stress and childcare responsibilities that cause job-family disputes (41). Most of the research worked on married women entrepreneurs and addressed the problems arising from women's business and how it impacts the marriage relationship (37, 42-43). Economic challenges, a lack of quality time spent with family, and women's desire for their partners to take part in their business activities, especially during the early stages, can cause conflicts between work and family life and also affect the support provided by the spouse (44).

Hypotheses

Until today, no studies have been done on Tamil Nadu businesswomen and their spousal support. What are the various forms of support they receive from their spouses to carry over their business tasks, and how do those different supports influence business success, performance, decision-making, and well-being? This study attempts to fill this gap; therefore, the researcher proposes that spouses provide other support, are involved in the wife's business, and provide financial assistance to positively and negatively influence Tamil Nadu women's business performance, decision-making, business success, and psychological well-being. The researcher first hypothesized the formal role spouses play in women's business. Hence:

Hypotheses 1

Spouse emotional and instrumental support positively correlates with women entrepreneurs' business performance and success.

Spousal support motivates women to begin new businesses that plan her to perform the role effectively; not receiving spousal support results in job-spouse conflicts that affect women's success and overall wellness. Secondly, researchers hypothesized that spouse business interference regularly proves their interest in wives' businesses; consequently, the regular presence of spouses assists women in making better business decisions, but sometimes it negatively influences their decision-making. Therefore:

Hypotheses 2

Spousal engagements in business activities significantly influence women's success.

Spouses with higher education and business knowledge consider intangible assets for women's businesses. They provide positive support to perform business tasks simultaneously. Spouses lacking education and business experience are mostly traditional-minded; therefore, they don't support [household chores, child care, business interference, financial] women to perform business effectively. They influence negatively [Disturbing during business hours, economic pressure, criticizing business performance, demotivating] ways. Hence:

Hypotheses 3

Spousal education and business experience are positively associated with business performance and success.

Existing literature revealed that husband support modifies the association between self-efficacy and overall well-being. So far, the strength of businesswomen [self-efficacy] and accessibility of support provided by partners has not been observed more in scholarly research. Therefore:

Hypotheses 4

Partner support is positively correlated with the psychological wellness of businesswomen and business performance.

Methodology

Sample

In our study, we employed a combination of quantitative and qualitative metrics to evaluate Tamil Nadu-based women entrepreneurs' business performance and psychological well-being. We considered indicators like revenue growth, profitability, and market share for business performance. We utilized self-reported measures such as job satisfaction, work-life balance, and stress levels to assess their well-being. A deductive approach was used to analyze the spousal influence on women's businesses by testing the hypothesis, and a descriptive approach was used to understand the spouse's attitudes related to the wife's businesses. A self-administered questionnaire was used, and it contains 62 questions that were

translated into both Tamil and English. Two sections also covered the positive and negative influence of spouses related to women's businesses. Sample collection will occur in Tamil Nadu from December 2022 to May 2023, using a direct interview and questionnaire method. Two hundred questionnaires were printed on four double-blinded sheets for this study. After rejecting error and incompleteness questionnaires, one hundred and forty-seven married businesswomen answered the questionnaire and were included in the analyses. Businesswomen's age ranges from 19 to 55 years. Women in the age range of 20 to 29 years are more prominent (33%), followed by those in the age range of 30 to 39 (32%), and those in the age range of 40 to 55 (17%) are covered for this study. Businesswomen are around 60 (6%); 13% are below thirty years old. Women who live with their spouses are 68%, 17% are widows, and 15% are divorced.

Twenty-two percent of women are involved in their family business. Thirty-five percent of women commence a new enterprise solely; five percent start with household members; and forty-nine percent operate a new company with their spouse. Fifty-two percent of females employ less than five members, 37 percent have no employees, and 10 percent employ more than 25 members.

Instruments

Spousal Support Range for Businesswomen

The English and Tamil translation of the partner backup range (45 and 46) was used. It contains 44 items that aid in evaluating the support provided by the spouse. Every item was measured at five points. The Likert scale ranged from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5); in that expected value range of 42 to 200, a high value also specified more accessibility of husband backing. According to (47), internal reliability was 0.83; this study achieved reliability at 0.84 for the whole scale.

Affectometer 2

English translation of Affectometer-2, formerly constructed by (48) with 19 items, was used to evaluate psychological wellness. All the statements range from (1) not all time to (5) all time; the expected possible score ranges from 19 to 95; a high value also indicates enhanced psychological

wellness. The alpha coefficient reported by this study is a value of 0.81.

The Variables

The Dependent Variables

The researcher applied various dependent variables to analyze the different supports provided by spouses and their influence on women's business performance and success. In the first two instances, researchers covered the positive influence of spouses' spousal engagement on women's business. In the third, they included spouses' education qualifications and their impact on women's psychological well-being and business success from the perspective of spousal backing.

Hypotheses 1 contains the dichotomous dependent element, which assesses the emotional and instrumental backing provided by the spouse, which had a significant impact on women's decision-making and business success: (1) The emotional and instrumental support of the spouse impacts the relationship between women and business, helps to overcome business-related stress, makes her bear risk confidently without the fear of getting lost, reduces job-work conflicts, increases the number of women in business, and assists them to make better business decisions that all result in business success. Hypothesis 2: The next dependent element of this study is spouse engagement in women's business, which includes doing business activities daily, handling customers, advertising, sales, providing new business ideas, organizing, planning, and business management. Hypothesis 3 signifies the impact of having a spouse with education and business knowledge. They were also evaluated in two ways: 1. Yes, spouse education and business knowledge have helped me make better decisions. Also, no, it doesn't. Hypothesis 4 measured how spousal influence affects the psychological wellness of businesswomen and their business performance.

Independent Variable

The entire four instances have a similar dichotomous sovereign element (spouse support), evaluated at two stages: 1. the positive support provided by the spouse, which supports women's business decision-making, success, and overall wellness; and 2. the negative influence of the spouse on women's

business and how it affects her business performance.

Control Variables

In this study, three demographic elements are considered controllable due to their impact on the dependent aspects concerning observations (49, 50). Age is a definite element evaluated at four stages: (1) 20–29 years, (2) 30–39 years, (3) 40–49 years, and (4) 50–59 years.

Education is a dichotomous element assessed at four stages: (1) school education, (2) high school, (3) undergrad, and (4) postgraduate. In this education, details of both spouses and wives' are collected.

Nuptial status is a categorical variable that is divided into three groups: (1) married, (2) separated or divorced, and (3) widowed.

Results

Results showed that females who engaged in micro, small, and medium-scale enterprises expected instrumental and emotional support from their spouses to pursue the business role effectively and confidently. To examine the association between spousal support and business engagements (Hypotheses 1 and 2) and the education and business knowledge of spouses (Hypotheses 3 and 4), which influence Tamil Nadu businesswomen's performance, success, and psychological well-being, researchers' assessments of every descriptive factor range from a low of 1.03 to a high of 1.09. Chi-square divergence among the interrupt lone model and the model between every predictor entered is significant ($p < 0.05$). Forecast success ratios are reasonably superior between 67% and 87%; 55–63% expansions are accurate arrangements among the continuous (interpret lone) models. Nagelkerke's R^2 is small, between 0.12 and 0.35. The logistic regression model was operated beside a dependent variable between the controllable variables (the tested model). Afterward, we operated beside the entire model through the controllable and sovereign variables. In all four models, we included the independent variable that shows a modest improvement in both Nagelkerke's R^2 and forecast success ratio. An incremental chi-square test was applied to evaluate the donation from the sovereign variable. The chi-square value for models 1, 2, and 4 is ($p < 0.05$), which denotes that the sovereign

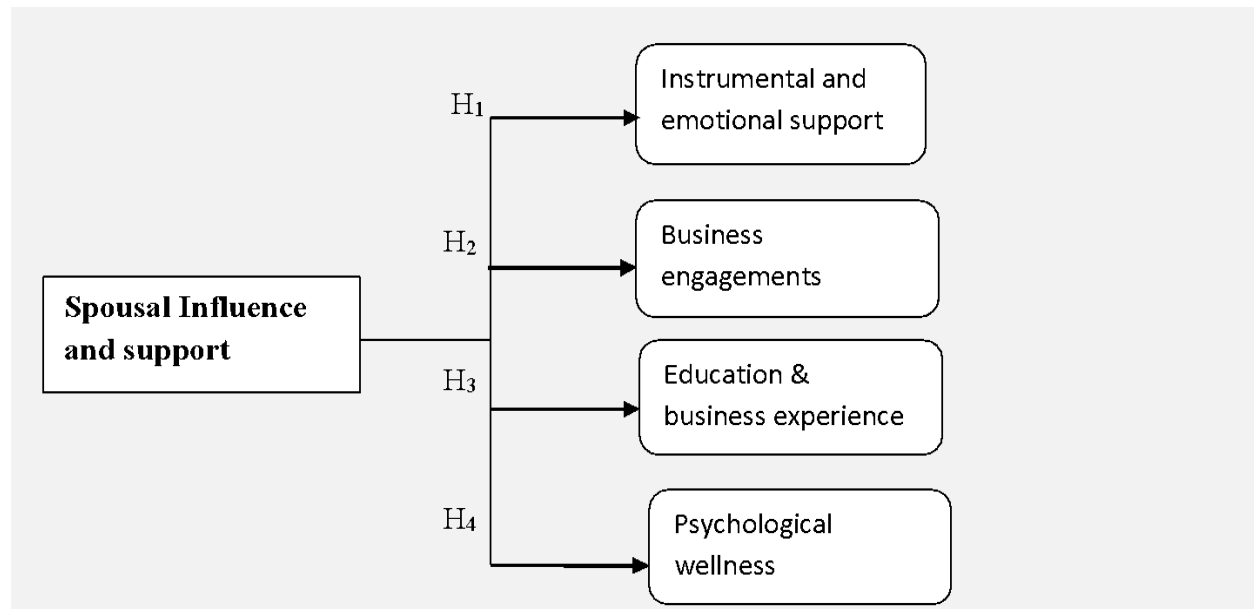


Figure 2: Research Design

element (spousal backup) creates a significant impact on the three dependent factors (business performance, success, and overall well-being).

The first three hypotheses were proved: various forms of support (instrumental and emotional) provided by the spouse assist women in surmounting the business hindrances and achieve business success (H1); positive business engagement, taking part in her business activities daily, and interest in their business makes women take better decisions without fear of failure (H2); and education and business knowledge or experience of the spouse paid women in tackling difficult business situations with confidence that results in business success (H3). On the other side, the upbeat support provided by the spouse has no significant impact on

the psychological wellness of women (H4); entrepreneurs don't bother about the negative attitudes of the spouse towards their business.

In every model, the dependent factor was evaluated consecutively beside the control variable, and the sovereign variable was entered only after the controllable variables. The research designs are described in Figure 2; descriptive statistics with zero-order correlations are explained in Table 2; also, in Table 3, we discuss variations along the education level of spousal on all study variables. Tables 4 and 5 compare spousal support with the level of education using a correlation matrix. In Table 6, we analyzed how education influences business performance and success, and in Table 8,

Table 2: Demographic and socio-economic factors of study participants (N=147)

Demographic and socio-economic factors	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age Group		
20-29 years	20	13.7
30-39 years	62	42.2
40-49 years	36	24.5
50-59 years	31	21.4
Marital Status		
Married	96	65.5
Separated	10	6.8
Divorced	14	9.5

Widowed	27	18.2
Education Level		
School Education	28	19.1
High School	36	24.5
Undergraduate	47	32.1
Postgraduate	36	24.5
Spouse Age		
20-29 years	10	6.8
30-39 years	45	30.7
40-49 years	48	32.7
50-50 years	44	29.8
Spouse Education		
School education	20	13.6
Undergraduate	47	31.9
Postgraduate	80	54.5
Business Experience (Years)		
0-5 years	29	19.7
6-10 years	47	31.9
11-15 years	44	29.8
16-20 years	27	18.5

we discussed the outcome of the binary logistic regressions.

Table 2 describes the demographic and socio-economic factors of the respondents. The study participants' age ranges from 20 to 59 years, with the majority (46%) being between 30 to 39 years old. This suggests that the sample primarily consists of middle-aged businesswomen from the select districts of Tamil Nadu. The participants' education levels vary from school education (22%) to postgraduate % (66%). This indicates that the sample predominantly comprises educated businesswomen, which could influence their access

to resources, decision-making abilities, and spousal support. The study participants' age distribution indicates that the majority (65.5%) are married, while a smaller percentage is separated (6.8%), divorced (9.5%), or widowed (18.2%). The study involves individuals at different stages of their personal lives and relationships, which may impact their business performance and decision-making processes. The study includes married women (67%), with a smaller proportion of separated, divorced, or widowed participants. This highlights the study's focus on married businesswomen and their spousal support.

Table 3: Mean, standard deviations and correlations (N=108)

Variables	Mean	Min	Max	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.Business performance	0.75	0	1	1	0.032	-0.12	0.18*	0.42*	0.06	0.01	-0.12
2.Business engagement	0.20	0	1		1	-0.06	-	0.16*	-0.10	-0.06	-0.20
3.Better decision-making	0.64	0	1			1	0.20*	-0.05	0.07	-0.14	-0.50
4.Psychological wellness	0.46	0	1				1	0.08	-0.01	-0.01	0.31**
5.Spousal support	0.66	0	1					1	0.18*	0.10	0.06
6.Nuptial status	0.67	0	3						1	0.19*	0.07

7.Age	0.46	0	4	1	-0.05
8.Education	0.66	0	4		1

* Correlation is significantly measured at 0.05 level (two-tailed test).

** Correlation is significantly measured at 0.01 level (two-tailed test).

Dependent variables:

1. Business performance: 1 = yes; 0 = no.
2. Business engagement: 1 = yes; 0 = no.
3. Better decision-making: 1 = poor; 0 = good.
4. Psychological wellness: 1 = yes; 0 = no.

Independent variable:

5. Spousal support: 1 = yes; 0 = no.

Control variables:

6. Nuptial status: 0=married; 1= separated; 2=divorced, or widowed).
7. Age: 0=20 to 29; 1= 30 to39; 2=40 to 49; 3=50 to 59 years.
8. Education: 0 = school education;1=high school; 2 =undergraduate; 3= postgraduate.

The age distribution of the participants' spouses suggests that they are spread across different age groups, with a majority being between 30-39 years old. The education levels of the participants' spouses demonstrate a similar pattern to those of the participants, with a higher percentage of postgraduate education (54.5%). The participants' business experience is diverse, ranging from 0-20 years in that (31.9%) of them had a business experience of more than five years. The results of Table 3 show the bivariate correlation among the variables and no problems with the multicollinearity with the explanatory factors; the accurate values of all the correlation coefficients are below 0.30. The VIF of the education status of the spouse helps women perform well and make better business decisions. Women's age and education status have a statistically significant impact on the dependent variables compared to the other controllable

variables. Women 49 or older are handling the obstacles in the business without expecting their spousal support compared to women of a younger age, which is 20 years of age or older. Married women living with their spouse do not have an imperative impact correlated to any dependent variable. Findings show that spouses with a graduate level of education, along with previous business experience or knowledge, reflect more spousal support for women's businesses when compared to those with less education and business knowledge. The results provide significant support for the third hypothesis. Moreover, Tamil Nadu females recognized that commencing a business with a spouse who already has experience or knowledge about the business will assist them in overcoming the business obstacles effortlessly, and they will also make better decisions that will cause business success.

Table 4: Variations beside education level of spousal on all study variables (N = 147)

Variables	School education (12 to 14 years) (n = 20)		Under graduate (16 years of education) (n = 47)		Post graduate (18 years of education) (n = 80)		F
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
Education	20.34	6.01	30.97	7.18	34.11	5.59	4.67
Spousal support	148.22	11.93	160.39	16.63	163.67	13.63	6.38
Business knowledge/ experience	60.52	8.40	64.10	9.94	66.23	9.73	5.28

The interesting fact of this study is that 33% of the women become entrepreneurs to take care of their spouse's old business (while they move to another

business or start another branch of the same business). These situations made them enter the business, and with the spouse's business knowledge,

they are improving their business performance. Spouses who pursue higher education reflect

improved self-efficacy, spousal support, and overall wellness for women's businesses.

Table 5: Correlation matrix of the spouse support variables – School level education

Variables	Practical support	Household assistance	Business support	Emotional support	Instrumental support
Practical support	1	-0.362**	-0.167	-0.047	0.117
Household assistance		1	0.227	0.258	0.116
Business support			1	0.432**	0.175
Emotional support				1	0.224
Instrumental support					1

(**) correlation is significantly measured at $p < 0.01$

Tables 4 and 5 were tested using a correlation matrix for evaluating the support provided by the spouses with school-level education and graduated for testing Hypotheses 3. Results indicate that spouses with school-level education do not offer their partners more emotional and household assistance than spouses with graduate education levels. Table 5 shows that spouses' business, emotional, and instrumental support is statistically significant and positively associated with women's business. The above result illustrates that the mean level of conformity for all the above statements is high, so

businesswomen expect emotional support and business knowledge from their spouses in their business to perform better and make correct business decisions. The value of Table 6 shows that spouses play a crucial role in women's performance and decision-making processes in every stage of business. The statement "Involvement of the spouse in business aids me to improve business performance" received the highest value (4.4); also, the statement "The involvement of the spouse has a positive impact on my business" has a significant difference ($F = 5.8, P = 0.05$), which shows that

Table 6: Correlation matrix of the spouse support variables – Graduated

Variables	Practical support	Household assistance	Business support	Emotional support	Instrumental support
Practical support	1	-0.452**	0.117	-0.022	0.027
Household assistance		1	-0.145	0.008	0.006
Business support			1	0.547**	0.495**
Emotional support				1	0.767**
Instrumental support					1

(**) correlation is significantly measured at $p < 0.01$

Table 7: Statement about partner support (1= strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree)

Variables	All	School education	Graduate	F	P
Level of education of the spouse impact my decision towards business.	2.6	2.7	3.4	2.6	0.16
Emotional support provided by spouse is important for me to make business-decisions.	3.1	3.0	3.4	1.4	0.35
Spouse provides corrective actions that needed for business	3.5	2.7	3.2	0.8	0.32
Involvement of spouse in business aids me to improve business performance.	4.4	4.0	4.4	0.8	0.44
Always seeks advice from my spouse before taking important business decisions.	3.5	3.1	3.9	2.7	0.16
Spouse provides informational support that helps to endeavors business performance.	1.7	1.4	1.9	0.3	0.86
Involvement of the spouse has positive impact on my business.	3.4	3.2	3.5	5.8*	0.05
Spousal support makes me to overcome the business hindrances easily.	2.6	2.2	2.7	4.8*	0.06
Spouse business communications prevents me from business failure.	2.9	2.1	2.7	2.3	0.18

(*) statistical significance at $p < 0.05$

spouses with a high level of education have a positive impact on their wives' businesses compared to those with a low level of education. Also, the statement "Always seeks advice from my spouse before taking important business decisions," interpreted among two groups ($F = 2.7$, $P = 0.16$), proved that women

seek more business advice from their spouse with graduation (3.9) and women seek less advice from their spouse with school-level education (3.1). All the above agreements evidence that women with spouses of graduation level provide more business advice, aid in making better business decisions, and

Table 8: Result of Logistic regression

	Model 1 (N =118)	Model 2 (N = 116)	Model 3 (N = 118)	Model 4 (N = 108)
Sovereign variable				
Spousal support	1.20** (0.61) (H1: confirmed)	1.72** (0.80) (H2: confirmed)	-0.82* (0.50) (H3: confirmed)	-0.64 (0.62) (H4: not confirmed)
Control variables				
Age (below 59 years)	1.19* (0.66)	-0.64 (0.50)	-0.15 (0.42)	-0.22 (0.50)
Nuptial status (married)	0.102 (0.595)	-0.56 (0.50)	-0.05 (0.42)	-0.25 (0.50)
Education (Graduate)	-1.36* (0.70)	-1.01** (0.48)	1.3*** (0.45)	2.5*** (0.50)
Constant	1.52** (0.74)	-1.49* (0.80)	-0.10 (0.52)	-0.11 (0.60)
Log-likelihood chi-square test of the general model (df)	11.00 (4)**	11.82 (4)**	29.52 (4)***	15.42***

Log-likelihood chi-square test for model improvement (df)	3.82 (1)*	6.22 (1)**	1.06 (1)	2.76 (1)*
General % accurate	85.6%	91.5%	75.8%	64.3%
Nagelkerke's R ²	0.15	0.16	0.16	0.32

Regression coefficients:

* p < 0.10; two-tailed test; ** p < 0.05; two-tailed test; *** p < 0.01; two-tailed test.

prevent them from business failures; furthermore, when compared to spouses with school-level education, therefore Hypothesis H3 is accepted. Results indicate that spousal-provided (emotional and instrumental) support (H1), spousal active business engagement daily (H2), and spouse higher education and business knowledge (H3) are positively correlated with business-women performance, decision-making, and success. Furthermore, the upbeat support provided by a spouse (H3) has no significant impact on women's psychological well-being as entrepreneurs. Moreover, Tamil Nadu is a patriarchal state; therefore, businesswomen don't expect more support from their spouses, so the positive and negative attitudes of the spouses have not impacted their business happiness. An incremental chi-square test was applied to evaluate donations from the sovereign variable. The chi-square value for models 1, 2, and 4 is (p<0.05), which denotes that the sovereign element (spousal influence) creates a significant impact on the three dependent factors (business performance, success, and decision-making).

Discussion

Researchers investigated how spouses' assorted support, engagement, and education/experience paved the way for Tamil Nadu businesswomen to attain better performance, decision-making, success, and overall well-being. This study observed connections between spousal support and women's results, which can be attributed to several underlying processes, such as self-efficacy, social support networks, and resource access. Self-efficacy, or the belief in one's ability to execute tasks and overcome challenges, may be bolstered by spouses' emotional and instrumental support. This increased self-efficacy can, in turn, lead to better business performance and decision-making. Additionally, spousal support may expand women's social support

networks, fostering a sense of belonging and facilitating the sharing of resources and knowledge, which can further contribute to their success. Results show that support offered through a spouse for women's businesses has two types of impact: businesswomen's perception and On the one hand, the emotional (being there in difficult times, understanding the situation) and instrumental (financial, genuine advice, marketing, and advertising) support provided by the spouse sometimes leads to poor business performance and decision-making because of the spouse's supremacy, legality, and right to be involved in her enterprise's actions by providing support. Spousal influence and business engagements assist Tamil Nadu businesswomen in improving their business skills, making better decisions without fear of failure, and attaining success through spouse education and business knowledge. The positive attitudes provided by the spouse have no significant impact on the woman's psychological wellness. Existing literature concluded that couples engaged in the same business experienced lots of strain and pressure because of the married business presence (37, 43, and 51). Still, through this researcher's recommendation, the time and effort contributed by the spouse gives women greater confidence that aids them in making audacious business decisions. The above results mentioned that spousal support and business engagements positively correlate with entrepreneurs' business performance, decision-making, and success.

Every four hypotheses were proposed according to the outcomes of the existing literature. All four hypotheses were entirely or partially accepted in the previous studies, indicating that spousal support is significantly needed for women's business performance and success. Businesswomen in Tamil Nadu enormously value the support afforded by their spouses over the help provided by the government (incentives, subsidies, and tax

concessions). Several literature studies show that spouse entrepreneurship motivates women to become entrepreneurs. This study revealed that spousal support is an indispensable factor for women to become successful entrepreneurs. Spousal support is also more desirable for women pursuing entrepreneurship as a career than those who enter business out of necessity.

Various types of help within marriage and involvement in commercial activities are crucial for forming women's businesses. Emotional and instrumental help appear essential for rendering accurate business determinations, as opposed to academic attainment and commercial expertise—Businesswomen who answered the survey questions highly valued the trust and beliefs of their spouses towards their business. Spouses with higher education and business knowledge play a significant role in decision-making and encourage their partners to take risks in business. Spouses in private jobs encourage their wives to pursue business with low or no risk.

Two research questions were addressed in this study: the various forms of support provided by spouses. It is proven that spouses offer multiple forms of support (partial support, household help, financial help, business support, and emotional and instrumental support) (Table 4). This proves that all forms of support help improve business performance and attain success, and women require more emotional and instrumental support than their spouses. The second research question was addressed, and the results of Tables 1, 2, and 4 indicate that spousal support and engagements are the significant variables influencing women's business performance, decision-making, and success.

The study conducted on select districts of Tamil Nadu businesswomen sheds light on the significance of spousal support, engagement, and education/experience in their business performance, decision-making, success, and overall well-being. The results highlight the dual impact of spousal support, which can sometimes lead to poor performance and decision-making due to spousal involvement, but also assists in improving business skills, decision-making without fear of failure, and attaining success through spouse education and

business knowledge. We also employed well-established, validated scales and questionnaires known for reducing the impact of social desirability bias in self-report data. We implemented several measures to minimize the influence of social desirability bias in our study. Participants were assured of anonymity and confidentiality, which could encourage them to provide more honest responses. This research contributes to the existing body of knowledge on spousal support and women's empowerment by emphasizing the crucial role of spousal involvement in women's entrepreneurship. The study also highlights the importance of emotional and instrumental support provided by spouses, which is more critical for women than their education and business expertise. Moreover, the findings demonstrate that businesswomen value spousal support over government incentives and subsidies, indicating the need for policymakers to consider the significance of spousal involvement in women's entrepreneurship.

To promote the success and well-being of women in entrepreneurship, governments and policymakers should recognize the importance of spousal support in women's entrepreneurship and develop policies that encourage and support spousal involvement in business. This may include tax incentives, business training programs, or other initiatives that involve both spouses in the entrepreneurial process. Educational institutions and organizations should focus on raising awareness about the significance of spousal support in women's entrepreneurship. This can be achieved through workshops, seminars, and other educational programs emphasizing the importance of spousal involvement and its benefits to women's businesses. Entrepreneurship support organizations and counseling centers should offer specialized services for couples involved in business. These services can help spouses understand their roles and responsibilities in the business, manage conflicts, and improve communication, leading to better spousal support and engagement. Encouraging spouses to pursue higher education and gain business knowledge can enhance women's ability to support their partners in decision-making and risk-taking. This can be done through targeted training programs, workshops, or scholarships designed explicitly for spouses of entrepreneurs.

Policymakers and entrepreneurship support organizations should strive to balance the involvement of spouses in women's businesses, ensuring that their support empowers and encourages growth without leading to over-dependence or negative impacts on decision-making. This can be achieved by providing resources and guidelines that help spouses understand their roles and maintain a healthy balance between support and autonomy for the businesswomen.

This present study has a few potential areas for improvement. The study focuses on a specific region, Tamil Nadu, which might limit the generalization of the results. This could lead to questions about the applicability of the findings to businesswomen in other areas or countries with different cultural, social, or economic contexts. The study relies on self-reported participant data, which may be subject to response biases. Self-report metrics were utilized in our study to gather insights into the women entrepreneurs' experiences; it is essential to acknowledge their potential limitations. These may include memory issues, individual differences in perception, and the possibility of social desirability bias, where participants may provide responses that they believe are more socially acceptable. To mitigate these limitations, we ensured confidentiality and anonymity, used well-established scales, and complemented self-report data with other sources where possible. Participants might only sometimes provide accurate or complete information about their experiences, feelings, or perceptions. This could lead to correct or complete data, which might affect the overall interpretation and conclusions of the study. The study does not consider other factors that could influence the impact of spousal support on businesswomen's performance, decision-making, success, and well-being. Acknowledging that other factors may influence the relationship between spousal support and women's results is crucial. For instance, personality traits such as resilience, risk tolerance, or cultural and societal norms can shape how women perceive and respond to spousal support. These factors, in combination with self-efficacy, social support networks, and resource access, may collectively contribute to the observed connections between marital support and women's business

performance, decision-making, and success. By not accounting for these factors, the study might not capture the complete picture of how spousal support interacts with these other factors to affect businesswomen's outcomes. The study primarily examines the positive influence of spousal support on businesswomen. However, it does not explore spouses' potential negative influence or attitudes on their partners' businesses. This could lead to an incomplete understanding of the role of spousal support in businesswomen's success, as negative influences also play a significant role in shaping their experiences and outcomes. Moreover, the observed connections between spousal support and women's results may be context-specific and only be generalized to some situations or cultures. The unique socio-cultural context of Tamil Nadu, as a patriarchal state, may influence the nature and impact of spousal support on women's businesses.

To mitigate these potential sources of bias and limitations, researchers can consider the following steps: by including a more diverse range of regions and types of enterprises, researchers can increase the generalizability of their findings and better understand how spousal support affects businesswomen across different contexts. Incorporating qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviews or focus group discussions, can provide richer insights into the experiences of businesswomen and help overcome the limitations of self-reported data. Researchers can better understand the complex interplay between these factors and businesswomen's outcomes by considering additional factors influencing spousal support and its impact. Last, we suggested that the researchers consider how women use the resources offered by their spouses (28) and how they shape spouse support. Investigating the negative influence of spouses on businesswomen's success can help researchers understand how these hindrances can be overcome, ultimately contributing to a more holistic understanding of the role of spousal support in businesswomen.

Future Implications and Conclusion

Therefore, future research should explore various directions to expand on the study's conclusions and

fill in gaps in the literature. These directions include conducting cross-cultural and cross-regional studies to determine the generalizability of findings and identify unique factors influencing the relationship between spousal support and businesswomen's outcomes. Longitudinal studies can track changes in this relationship over time while incorporating qualitative research methods can provide richer insights into the experiences of businesswomen and their spouses. Additionally, examining the impact of technology on spousal support and exploring the role of other social support networks beyond spouses can offer a more comprehensive understanding of the combined effects of various forms of support. Investigating the effectiveness of existing or proposed policies that promote spousal support and involvement in women's entrepreneurship can help inform more effective strategies to support businesswomen and their spouses, ultimately contributing to women's economic independence, autonomy in decision-making, and overall well-being.

Abbreviation

Nil

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Author Contributions

Kiruthika A: Performed the experiments; Conceived and designed the experiments; Wrote the paper; Analyzed and interpreted the data.

Geetha R*: Formal analysis, validation, visualization, supervision, reviewing and editing.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

Ethics Approval

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