Original Article

Exploring the Marketing Dynamics of Products from Small-Scale Enterprises in Latur district

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Abstract

The study explores the marketing dynamics of products from small-scale enterprises (SSEs) in Latur District, focusing on factors that influence customer preferences and business competitiveness. Findings reveal that customers primarily consider product quality, features, and price in their purchase decisions, while brand reputation, convenience services, and promotions also play a significant role. Social listening, customer education, and other factors moderately affect consumer choices. The study emphasizes the importance of these elements in shaping customer-driven marketing strategies and highlights the need for SSEs to adopt innovative practices, effective branding, and digital platforms to strengthen market presence and ensure sustainable growth. The study highlights that understanding these factors can help SSEs tailor marketing strategies, enhance competitiveness, and meet customer needs effectively.

Keywords: Marketing of products, Small-Scale enterprises, marketing strategies, dynamics of products, SSE products

Introduction

Small-scale enterprises (SSEs) play a vital role in Latur district's economy, contributing to employment generation, local development, and innovation. Understanding the marketing dynamics of their products is essential to support growth and competitiveness in both local and broader markets. These enterprises often face unique challenges, including limited financial resources, low brand recognition, and restricted access to modern marketing tools. Despite these constraints, they adopt a variety of marketing strategies to reach customers. Common approaches include word-of-mouth promotion, participation in local fairs and exhibitions, and leveraging social media platforms to expand visibility.

Consumer preferences and perceptions significantly influence product marketing. SSEs in Latur often tailor their products based on cultural, seasonal, and regional demands, which helps in building customer loyalty. Pricing strategies are typically competitive to attract local buyers, while packaging and product presentation are gradually improving with awareness of market trends. The adoption of digital marketing tools, online marketplaces, and e-commerce platforms is gradually transforming how these enterprises connect with customers beyond Latur. Training programs and government support initiatives also play a role in enhancing marketing skills, helping entrepreneurs understand market segmentation, branding, and promotion more effectively.

Objectives based on the study:

- To assess types of Enterprises in Latur district
- To identify the types of products produced by small-scale enterprises
- To examine the key features and benefits of these products
- To explore how SSE products stand out from competitors
- To analyze competitors in the market
- To determine the target audience for SSE products
- To assess marketing strategies adopted by SSEs
- To provide recommendations for improving competitiveness and market reach

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Scope and limitations

The study covers a comprehensive analysis of 236 small scale enterprises (SSEs) in Latur district over the 15-year period from 2005 to 2020. The study focuses mainly on quantitative data, with limited qualitative insights into the operational challenges or personal experiences of entrepreneurs. It explores various dimensions including types of enterprises, Types of Products produced by SSEs in Latur district, Key features and benefits of the produced products, Product standout from Competitors, Competitors in the Market, Target audience and marketing strategies adopted for promotion of products.

Research Methodology

The present study employed a descriptive and analytical research approach, utilizing survey and interview techniques for data collection. The primary data for this investigation was gathered through the use of a questionnaire as the data collection instrument.

Questionnaire design:

A well-structured questionnaire was developed to gather information relevant to the entrepreneurs of small-scale enterprises in Latur district. A total of 491 samples, 236 samples were selected for the study, maintaining ratio of 1:2 from total samples. Out of the total, 236 Questionnaires were distributed and 236 responses were received.
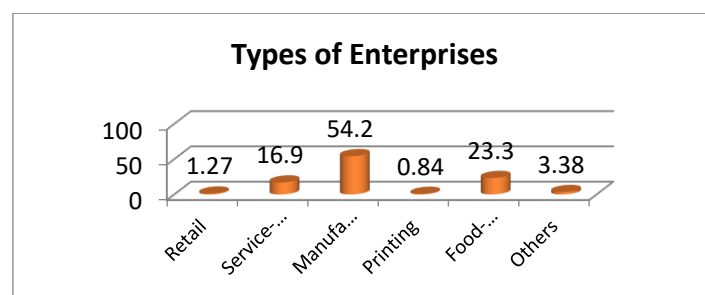
Data Analysis and Interpretation

The collected data have been compiled and analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques to extract the underlying insights. Primary data gathered from samples of small-scale units have been tabulated and categorized, with cross-tabulation performed based on various variables. The data for the current study was entered and analyzed using Microsoft Excel 2007. The data was further examined in accordance with the objectives of the present study and presented in the form of tables, figures, and graphs such as pie charts, bar charts, and line charts, as per the various parameters.

Types of Enterprises

The data suggests a variety of enterprise types among the respondents, with manufacturing being the most prevalent. Analyzing the characteristics of these enterprises offers insights into the products or services they provide, the industries in which they operate, and the potential market forces shaping their marketing approaches.

Table 1: Types of Enterprises

Types of Enterprises	No. of Responses	Percentage (%)	Mean
Retail	3	1.27	
Service-based	40	16.9	
Manufacturing	128	54.2	
Printing	2	0.84	16.6
Food-related	55	23.3	
Others	8	3.38	
Total	236	100	

Types of Enterprises

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100
50   1.27   16.9   54.2   0.84   23.3   3.38
 0
   Retail Service- Manufa  Printing Food-  Others
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Graph 1: Types of Enterprises

The data from above table and graph shows that manufacturing enterprises dominate the sample, accounting for 54.2% of responses, indicating a strong industrial base among the respondents. Food-related businesses (23.3%) and service-based enterprises (16.9%) also have notable presence. Other types like retail (1.27%), printing (0.84%), and others (3.38%) contribute minimally. The mean value of 16.6 may reflect an average score or index not directly explained here. Overall, the findings suggest that economic activity manufacturing is the primary, with food and service sectors also playing important roles in enterprise distribution.
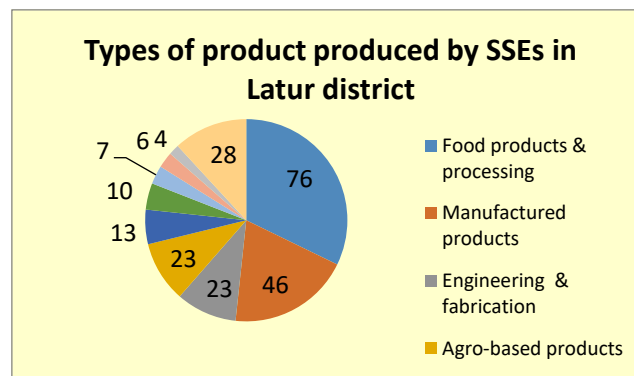
Types of Products produced by SSEs in Latur district

The present data highlights on the key product categories produced by Small scale enterprises in Latur district. The types of products directly relate to marketing by identifying the product categories, target markets,

and potential customer segments. These diverse product categories highlight the

entrepreneurial spirit and cultural richness of Latur district's Small-scale enterprises.

Table 2: Types of products produced by SSEs in Latur district

Sr. No.	Types of product produced by SSEs in Latur district	No. of Responses	Percentage (%)
1	Food products & processing	76	32.2
2	Manufactured products	46	19.4
3	Engineering & fabrication	23	9.74
4	Agro-based products	23	9.74
5	Electrical & electronics	13	5.50
6	Paper & Printing related	10	4.23
7	Chemical and health related	7	2.96
8	Clothing & garments	6	2.54
9	Furniture & wood related	4	1.69
10	Others	28	11.8
Total	236	100	

Graph 2: Types of product produced by SSEs in Latur district

It can be seen from above table and graph that the largest share of entrepreneurs (32.2%) are engaged in food product businesses, followed by 19.4% in manufacturing-related products. About 11.8% fall under the "others" category, including computer, transport, and technical activities, while 9.74% each produce engineering & fabrication and agro-based products. Smaller proportions are involved in electrical/electronics (5.5%), paper/printing (4.23%), chemicals/health (2.96%), clothing/garments (2.54%), and furniture/wood products (1.69%). Overall, the findings indicate a strong focus on food and manufacturing, with other sectors having comparatively fewer participants.

The evidence suggests that small-scale industries in the region are upholding high standards in their product manufacturing processes. The data indicates that small-scale enterprises in Latur District comprehend the importance of diverse product offerings and

fostering strong customer relationships by establishing a robust market presence.

Key features and benefits of the produced products

The table 5 provides insights into the unique selling points and advantages of their offerings. It likely outlines the distinguishing characteristics of these products and highlights the value proposition they offer to consumers. The key features and benefits of a product are directly tied to marketing as they form the foundation of value propositions communicated to customers. By highlighting these features and benefits, marketers can attract and engage the target audience by addressing their needs and preferences differentiate the product from competitors in the market.

Table 3: Key features and benefits of the produced products

Sr. No.	Items	Yes		No	
		N	%	N	%
1	The product is according to customer needs and wants	224	94.9	12	5.08
2	Product quality	231	97.8	5	2.1
3	Market offerings & demands	218	92.3	18	7.6
4	Value and satisfaction	227	96.1	9	3.8
5	exchanges and relationships	221	93.6	15	6.3
6	Promotion and discounts	204	86.4	32	13.5
7	Convenience service	211	89.4	25	10.59
8	Others	156	66.1	80	33.89
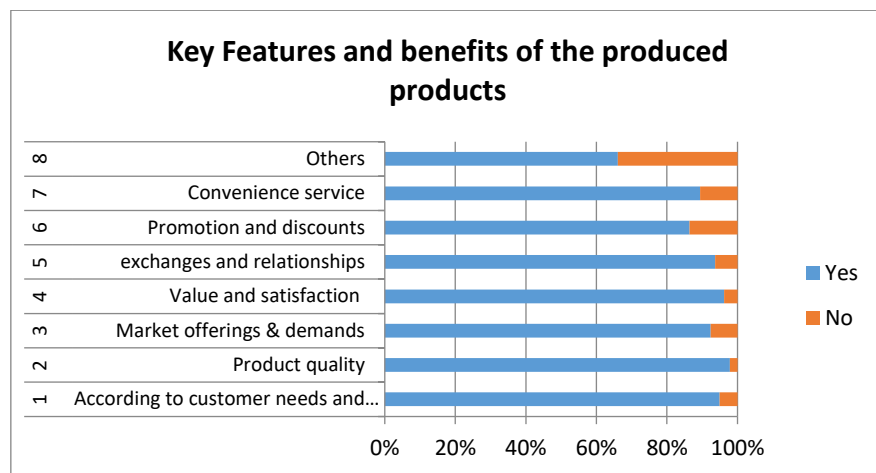
Graph 3: Key features and benefits of the produced products

It can be seen from above table and graph that an overwhelming majority of respondents (94.9%) believe small-scale industry products in Latur align with their needs, and 97.8% affirm their quality, reflecting high manufacturing standards. Similarly, 96.1% are satisfied with the value for money, while 93.6% note that these products help build customer relationships. A strong majority (89.4%) also appreciate the convenience of services provided. However, 7.6% feel the products do not fully meet market demands, and 13.5% do not perceive promotional efforts, pointing to areas for improvement. Overall, the results highlight strengths in quality, value, and customer satisfaction, with scope for better market alignment and enhanced visibility of promotions.

Overall, the interpretation highlights several strengths of the products from small-scale industries in Latur district, including alignment with customer needs, quality, value, and convenience. However, there are also areas where improvements could be made, such as meeting market demands more effectively and enhancing visibility of promotional activities.

Product standout from Competitors in form of Quality and uniqueness

The comprehensive analysis presented in Table 6 enables small-scale enterprises in Latur District to identify the strengths, areas for improvement, and opportunities for differentiation within the competitive marketplace, based on an assessment of product quality and uniqueness. Quality focuses on reliability, durability, and performance, appealing to value-conscious buyers through trust and dependability. Uniqueness emphasizes creativity, exclusivity, and innovation, attracting trend-seekers by showcasing distinct features and originality in marketing.

Table 4: Product standout from Competitors

Sr. No.	Items	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Unique selling proposition (USP)	45	19.0	142	60.1	34	14.4	10	4.2	5	2.1
2	Quality and reliability	51	21.6	132	55.9	45	19.0	8	3.3	0	0
3	Price differentiation	47	19.9	156	66.1	28	11.8	4	1.6	1	0.4
4	Packaging and presentation	40	16.9	114	48.3	67	28.3	15	6.3	0	0
5	Target market focus	39	16.5	105	44.4	86	36.4	4	1.6	2	0.8
6	Social responsibility	62	26.2	98	41.5	58	24.5	12	5.0	6	2.5
7	Environmental friendly products	37	15.6	143	60.5	50	21.1	6	2.5	0	0
8	Partnerships and collaborations	22	9.3	80	33.8	95	40.2	35	14.8	4	1.6
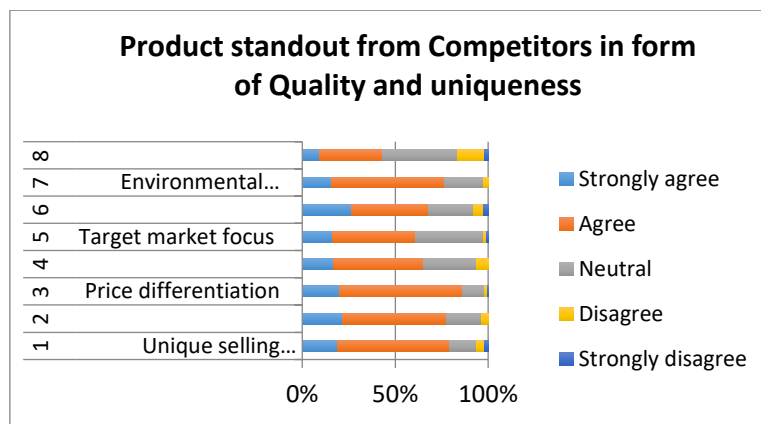
Graph 4: Product standout from Competitors

It can be seen from above table and graph that the most respondents (79.1%) agree that products have a unique selling proposition, while 77.5% acknowledge their quality and reliability, showing strong product standards. A large majority (86%) also recognize price differentiation, reflecting effective pricing strategies. Positive perceptions are noted in social responsibility (67.7%) and environmental friendliness (76.1%), highlighting industries' commitment to sustainability. However, packaging and presentation (34.6% neutral/disagree), target market focus, and partnerships (55% neutral/disagree) emerge as weaker areas. Overall, small-scale industries demonstrate strengths in quality, value, and responsibility but need to improve in market targeting, collaborations, and packaging appeal.
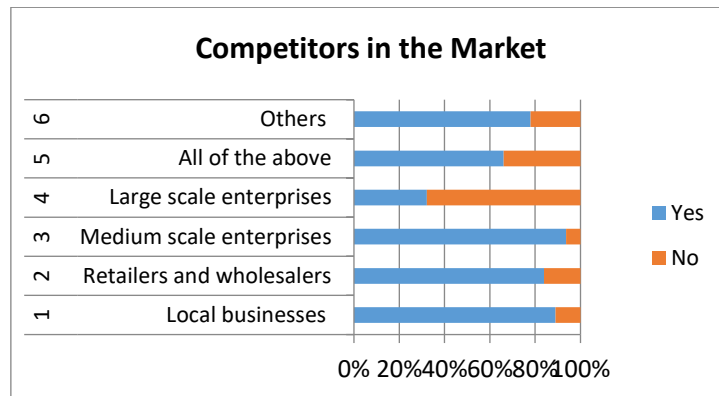
Competitors in the Market

The table 7 highlights intense competition, with a significant number of enterprises operating in various sectors. Competitors in the market are businesses offering similar products or services, vying for the same target audience by leveraging factors like pricing, quality, branding, and innovation to gain a competitive edge. It covers local businesses, retailers and wholesalers, medium scale enterprises, large scale enterprises and all of the above. Overall, the competitive landscape in Latur District presents both challenges and opportunities for small-scale enterprises.

Table 5: Competitors in the Market

Sr. No.	Items	Yes		No	
		N	%	N	%
1	Local businesses	210	88.9	26	11.0
2	Retailers and wholesalers	198	83.8	38	16.1
3	Medium scale enterprises	221	93.6	15	6.3
4	Large scale enterprises	76	32.2	160	67.7

| 5 | All of the above | 156 | 66.1 | 80 | 33.8 |
| 6 | Others | 184 | 77.96 | 52 | 22.03 |

Graph 5: Competitors in the Market

It can be seen from above table and graph that the most respondents perceive competition mainly from local businesses (88.9%), retailers/wholesalers (83.8%), and especially medium-scale enterprises (93.6%). In contrast, only 32.2% view large-scale enterprises as competitors, while a majority (67.7%) do not. Additionally, 66.1% believe all mentioned entities pose competition, though 33.8% disagree, and 77.9% identify other competitors as well. These results suggest that small-scale enterprises in Latur face stronger competition from local and medium players rather than large-scale industries. Overall, enterprises adopt strategies like pricing, differentiation, and marketing to stay competitive, but must continuously adapt to market dynamics for sustainable growth.

This interpretation provides insights into the perceived competition faced by small-scale enterprises in Latur district from various types of businesses, including local businesses, retailers/wholesalers, medium-scale enterprises, and large-scale enterprises. Enterprises employ different strategies to position themselves within the market, including pricing, product differentiation, and marketing tactics.

Target audience

The target audience represents a specific demographic most likely to purchase a product or service, based on factors like age, location, interests, and purchasing habits. Table 5.18 examines the target audience for small-scale enterprises operating in Latur District and their marketing approaches.

Table 6: Target audience

| Sr. No.	Items	Yes		No	
		N	%	N	%
1	Local community/residents	232	98.3	4	1.6
2	Tourists/visitors	56	23.7	180	76.2
3	Online customers	205	86.8	31	13.1
4	Other businesses (B2B)	190	80.5	46	19.4
5	Others	39	16.5	197	83.4
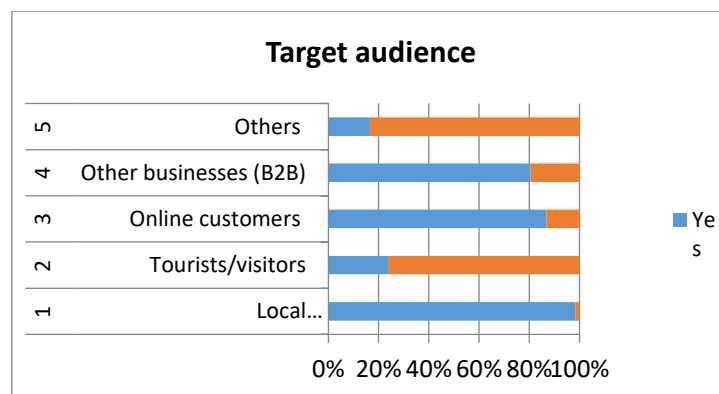
Graph 6: Target audience

It can be seen from above table and graph that an overwhelming majority (98.3%) of small-scale enterprises in Latur District target the local community, highlighting their strong focus on serving residents. A significant share (86.8%) also target online customers, reflecting the growing importance of e-commerce, while 80.5% engage in B2B markets for collaborations and partnerships. In contrast, only 23.7% consider tourists as their audience, indicating limited reliance on tourism. A smaller portion (16.5%) caters to other niche or specialized groups. Overall, the findings emphasize diverse targeting strategies, with priority given to local markets, digital platforms, and B2B interactions.

Customer-driven marketing strategy

The table 5.37 details the approach adopted by small-scale enterprises in Latur district to align their marketing efforts with consumer preferences and needs. This strategy emphasizes understanding and responding to customer feedback, preferences, and behaviour to tailor products, services, and marketing initiatives accordingly. It may include elements such as market research findings, customer segmentation, targeted messaging, product customization, and engagement tactics.

Table 7: Customer-driven marketing strategy

Sr. No.	Items	Most often		Often		Sometimes		Rarely		Never	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Product quality & features	110	46.6	65	27.5	52	22.0	9	3.8	0	0
2	Brand reputation	102	43.2	82	34.7	35	14.8	10	4.2	7	2.9
3	Product price	136	57.6	70	29.6	24	10.1	4	1.6	2	0.8
4	Convenience service	93	39.4	106	44.9	36	15.2	0	0	1	0.4
5	Promotion and discounts	56	23.7	132	55.9	43	18.2	5	2.1	0	0
6	Social listening	75	31.7	60	25.4	46	19.4	35	14.8	20	8.4
7	Customer education and support	55	23.3	71	30.0	52	22.0	40	16.9	18	7.6
8	Others	9	3.8	30	12.7	190	80.5	5	2.1	2	0.8
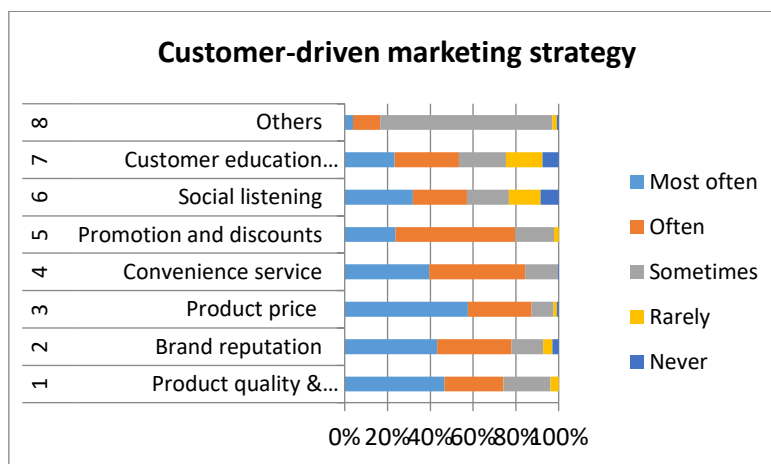
Graph 7: Customer-driven marketing strategy

The data shows that 46.6% of respondents most often and 27.5% often consider product quality and features, while 43.2% most often and 34.7% often consider brand reputation. Product price is prioritized by 57.6% most often and 29.6% often, and convenience services by 39.4% most often and 44.9% often. Promotions and discounts are

The data reveals that various factors play a role in the customer-driven marketing strategy of small-scale enterprises in Latur District. Understanding these factors can help small-scale enterprises tailor their marketing efforts to meet customer needs and preferences effectively.

often considered by 55.9%, while social listening and customer education/support are moderately considered by 25.4%–30% of respondents. Other unspecified factors are sometimes considered by 80.5%. These insights highlight the key elements shaping customer preferences, helping enterprises tailor marketing strategies effectively.

Major findings

- The study revealed that small-scale enterprises in Latur produce a diverse range of products, including handicrafts, textiles, and agro-based items, often tailored to local preferences.

- Most products possess unique features that help differentiate them from competitors, though limited branding and marketing restrict wider recognition.
- Competitors include both local and regional enterprises offering similar goods at competitive prices.
- Digital marketing adoption is still low, with traditional promotion methods dominating.
- Target customers are primarily local buyers, but there is potential to reach broader markets through online platforms.
- Overall, skill gaps and resource constraints remain key challenges for growth and competitiveness

Suggestions & Recommendations

Based on the analysis of the demographic and enterprise-related data of the respondents, several key areas have emerged that require attention for improving the performance, inclusiveness, and sustainability of small-scale enterprises.

The following suggestions are aimed at addressing the identified gaps and enhancing the overall impact of these enterprises in contributing to economic development.

- Differentiate products through unique features, quality, and regional significance.
- Conduct market research to align products with customer preferences and stay competitive.
- Utilize digital marketing and e-commerce platforms to expand market reach.
- Enhance product appeal through attractive branding and packaging.
- Use targeted promotion and participate in trade fairs to increase visibility.
- Develop skills and collaborate with local networks to strengthen business capabilities.
- Adopt sustainable practices to attract environmentally conscious consumers.

Conclusion:

The marketing dynamics of small-scale enterprises in Latur district reflect a blend of traditional practices and emerging digital strategies. Supporting these enterprises with resources, skill development, and market access can further enhance their competitiveness and sustainability in today's dynamic business environment.

The study concludes that the marketing dynamics of small-scale enterprises in Latur District are largely shaped by customer-driven factors such as product quality, features, and price, which remain the primary determinants of purchase decisions. Brand reputation, convenience services, and promotional offers further enhance customer engagement, while social listening and customer education play a moderate but growing role. Despite their potential, SSEs face challenges like limited resources and low adoption of modern marketing practices. To remain competitive and achieve sustainable growth, SSEs must focus on product differentiation, branding, digital marketing, and customer-centric strategies that align with evolving market demands.

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Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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