

Islamic Counseling for Identifying Students' Talents: A Comparison of STIFIn and EduTalent

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ABSTRACT

This study compares the integration of fingerprint-based talent assessment within Islamic Guidance and Counseling through STIFIn and EduTalent models. Employing a qualitative comparative design with interviews, observation, and documentation, this research finds both models effectively support student self-awareness and career alignment from an Islamic perspective. However, STIFIn emphasizes a single dominant intelligence for rapid results, while EduTalent offers a multidimensional analysis combining Multiple Intelligences and personality theories for a holistic profile. Both approaches frame talent as a divine trust (*amanah*) requiring diligent effort (*ikhtiar*), fulfilling preventive and developmental counseling functions. The study concludes that such assessments are valuable supportive tools when ethically contextualized to foster balanced personal growth (*tawazun*) in line with Islamic principles.

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KEYWORDS

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INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the most fundamental human needs and has played a central role in the development of civilization throughout history (Mahmud, 2019). From an Islamic perspective, its significance is paramount, as reflected in the first divine command to "Read" (QS. Al-'Alaq: 1), establishing knowledge as the foundation for human progress (Nata, 2020). However, contemporary educational realities present a stark contradiction. A significant number of students experience confusion and dissatisfaction with their academic and career paths, a

phenomenon exacerbated by limited self-awareness and external pressures (Abdul Rachman, 2023). In Indonesia, data indicates that approximately 87% of university students feel enrolled in the wrong major, while only about 20% of graduates work in fields aligned with their academic background (Zulfikar, 2021; Tim Redaksi, 2023). This widespread misalignment underscores a critical failure in guiding adolescents, a stage marked by intense identity exploration, toward informed decisions that affect their lifelong well-being (Anwar, 2019).

This situation highlights an urgent need for systematic intervention within educational guidance. When students select majors and careers without a clear understanding of their innate talents and interests, the consequences often include academic difficulties, psychological stress, and diminished motivation (Nata, 2020). From a guidance and counseling perspective, this phenomenon signals the necessity for holistic approaches that can effectively assist students in developing self-awareness and making realistic, fulfilling life choices (Abu Bakar M. Luddin, 2010). The search for reliable assessment tools to uncover inherent potential has thus become a priority in both educational and counseling contexts.

Literature Review

The role of guidance and counseling in facilitating career development and self-understanding is well-established. Previous studies emphasize its importance in helping students recognize their talents, interests, and competencies as a basis for future planning (Rohmah, 2018). Within Indonesia, Islamic Guidance and Counseling has been developed as a distinct paradigm that integrates psychological, spiritual, and moral dimensions to foster holistic well-being, aiming for happiness in both worldly life and the hereafter (Harita, Laia, & Zagoto, 2022). This approach is rooted in the goal of helping humans develop according to their natural disposition (*fitrah*) to fulfill their role as caliphs on earth (Tarmizi, 2018). Scholars like Aunur Faqih argue that the ultimate objective is to assist individuals in realizing themselves as whole human beings (Anwar, 2019).

Assessment is a crucial component of this process, enabling counselors to understand students' conditions, needs, and potentials (Rohmah, 2018). While traditional psychological tests have been widely used, recent years have seen the emergence of alternative methods, including fingerprint-based analysis grounded in dermatoglyphics. This approach is predicated on scientific findings linking unique fingerprint patterns, formed during fetal development alongside the nervous system, to innate abilities and learning tendencies. Institutions such as STIFIn and EduTalent have popularized this method in Indonesia, positioning it as a tool for early talent identification. Proponents suggest it can map intelligence, personality, and career potential, thereby complementing conventional psychological assessments (Misbach, 2010).

The theoretical underpinnings of these two institutions differ. STIFIn employs the concept of a "Single Intelligence Machine," focusing on identifying a dominant brain operating system (Sensing, Thinking, Intuiting, Feeling, Instinct) to explain behavior and potential (Nursyaidah dan lili nur indah sari, 2021). In contrast, EduTalent integrates multiple frameworks, including Howard Gardner's

Multiple Intelligences Theory, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), and learning style models, to produce a more composite and nuanced profile. The counseling process within an Islamic framework further interprets these results. Counselors may view their role as an extension of *da'wah bil irsyad* (guidance-oriented propagation), using the assessment as a starting point for reflective dialogue and value-based mentoring (A Gazali, 2022). The potential revealed by the test is seen not as a fixed destiny but as a trust (*amanah*) from Allah SWT, which must be developed through personal effort (*ikhtiar*), discipline, and ethical responsibility (Kusmawati, 2019; Qurrotu Ainia, 2020). The process aims to achieve balanced development (*tawazun*) across intellectual, emotional, and spiritual dimensions (Endriani & Karneli, 2020).

Research Gap

Despite the growing application of fingerprint tests and the established principles of Islamic counseling, significant gaps remain in the scholarly literature. First, while studies on fingerprint assessments often focus on their technical or psychological validity, there is limited research examining their specific integration into the practice of Islamic Guidance and Counseling. The ethical, spiritual, and methodological implications of using a biometric tool within a value-laden counseling framework are underexplored (Khairunnisa & Hengki Satrianta, 2021). Second, a comparative analysis between the two prominent models of fingerprint testing, STIFIn and EduTalent, is notably absent. Existing literature tends to discuss each model in isolation, lacking a critical juxtaposition of their differing theoretical bases, implementation processes, and the nature of their outcomes. More importantly, there is no research that systematically compares how these differing models are operationalized and interpreted from the perspective of Islamic counseling objectives and principles.

Finally, there is a gap concerning the critical positioning of these tools. The scientific basis of dermatoglyphics for predicting specific intelligences or career aptitudes remains contested, with most evidence being correlational rather than causal. This necessitates a cautious approach to avoid deterministic interpretations that could contradict Islamic principles emphasizing free will, growth, and the holistic nature of the human being (*insan kamil*). Research is needed to investigate how counselors navigate these scientific limitations and frame test results in a way that promotes agency, effort, and spiritual reflection, rather than fostering a fixed mindset.

Aims and Contribution

This study aims to address the identified gaps by conducting a comparative analysis of fingerprint-based talent identification as practiced by STIFIn and EduTalent, explicitly viewed through the lens of Islamic Guidance and Counseling. The research seeks to achieve two main objectives. First, it aims to describe and compare the implementation processes, theoretical foundations, and output characteristics of both models. Second, it intends to analyze how each model, within its counseling practice, assists students in understanding their

innate potential and supports them in making informed academic and career decisions that align with holistic development principles in Islam.

The contributions of this study are twofold. Theoretically, it enriches the discourse of Islamic Guidance and Counseling by exploring the integration of an alternative, biometric assessment method. It examines how this modern tool can be reconciled with classical Islamic counseling principles, thereby expanding the conceptual toolbox available for Islamic counselors. Practically, the study provides valuable insights for practitioners such as counselors, educators, and parents. By comparing two prevalent models, it offers a nuanced understanding of their respective strengths, limitations, and ethical considerations. This enables stakeholders to make more informed decisions about utilizing such assessments as supportive (rather than definitive) tools within a holistic, value-based counseling framework that ultimately seeks to guide students toward a balanced and purposeful life (*tawazun*) in accordance with their *fitrah*.

METHODOLOGY

Research Approach

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to obtain a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. A qualitative design was deemed appropriate as it facilitates the exploration of participants' experiences, interpretations, and the meanings they ascribe to processes within their natural settings (Sadiyah, 2014). Given the research objective to compare the implementation and outcomes of fingerprint testing within two distinct institutional frameworks from the perspective of Islamic Guidance and Counseling, this approach allows for a rich, contextual analysis. It enables the researcher to capture the nuances of counseling interactions, institutional practices, and the subjective experiences of counselors, students, and parents, which cannot be quantified through numerical data alone.

Data Sources and Data Collection Techniques

The research was conducted at two institutions providing fingerprint-based talent identification services: STIFIn and EduTalent. The primary data sources consisted of three key participant groups: counselors from each institution, twelfth-grade students who had undergone the fingerprint testing and counseling process, and their parents. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, a technique aimed at selecting individuals who are directly involved with and possess rich information about the phenomenon being studied, ensuring data relevance and depth (Abu Bakar, 2021).

Data were gathered through three main techniques to ensure triangulation and strengthen credibility. First, observation was employed to directly examine the implementation procedures of fingerprint testing and the dynamics of counseling sessions between counselors, students, and parents. This provided insights into the practical, non-verbal aspects of the service delivery. Second, in-depth interviews were conducted with counselors, students, and parents to explore

their perceptions, personal experiences, and interpretations of the assessment process and its outcomes. These semi-structured interviews allowed for probing and clarification to gain a deeper understanding. Third, documentation was utilized to collect supplementary data. This included institutional records, administrative documents, photographs of activities, and the formal fingerprint assessment reports generated for the students (Abu Bakar, 2021). This multi-method strategy provided a holistic view of the phenomenon from multiple angles.

Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman, which involves three concurrent and iterative stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Nanny Mayasari dkk, 2025). In the data reduction stage, raw data from interviews, observations, and documents were selected, simplified, and focused to distill the most relevant information pertaining to the research questions. This involved coding and categorizing the data. Subsequently, in the data display stage, the organized data were presented in the form of structured narratives, matrices, and thematic tables. This visual and textual organization facilitated the identification of patterns, relationships, and comparisons between the practices of STIFIn and EduTalent. Finally, the stage of conclusion drawing and verification involved interpreting the displayed data to draw meaningful conclusions. These conclusions were continuously verified by checking for consistency across different data sources and revisiting the raw data as needed to ensure the interpretations were firmly grounded in the evidence collected.

Research Ethics

Ethical considerations were rigorously observed throughout the research process to protect the rights and well-being of all participants. Prior to participation, all individuals: counselors, students, and parents, were fully informed about the study's objectives, procedures, potential benefits, and any foreseeable risks. Informed consent was obtained from each participant, ensuring their participation was voluntary and based on a clear understanding (Syamsidar, 2020). For student participants, consent was also secured from their parents or guardians. The principle of confidentiality and anonymity was strictly maintained. All personal identifiers and sensitive information were safeguarded; participants' names and any details that could reveal their identity were anonymized in the data transcripts and final report (Juliani, Syahbudin, n.d.). Furthermore, the researcher demonstrated ethical sensitivity, particularly when engaging with personal, educational, and spiritual issues discussed during counseling sessions, ensuring a respectful and non-intrusive approach throughout the study (Syamsidar, 2020).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The comprehensive analysis of data gathered through in-depth interviews, observations, and document reviews yielded substantial findings, organized into three core sub-findings that delineate the implementation, philosophy, and outcomes of fingerprint-based talent identification within the frameworks of STIFIn and EduTalent, as viewed through Islamic Guidance and Counseling.

Divergent Conceptual and Philosophical Foundations in Islamic Counseling Integration

The integration of fingerprint testing is not merely a technical add-on but is deeply rooted in distinct conceptualizations of Islamic counseling within each institution. This difference shapes every subsequent interaction, from test interpretation to final recommendations. At the STIFIn Institute, the Islamic counseling concept is operationalized with a focus on functional self-awareness aligned with human purpose. Counselors emphasize that recognizing one's inherent potential, as revealed through the fingerprint, is a fundamental step toward understanding one's role as a *khalifah* (vicegerent) on earth. This perspective is deeply informed by the Islamic ontological view that humans are created with a specific nature and purpose. The fingerprint, in this context, is seen as a unique "divine code" or "barcode" that holds clues to this inherent design.

The counseling process, therefore, aims to translate this code into actionable self-knowledge. This aligns with scholarly discourse, such as that cited by Tarmizi (2018), which posits that the ultimate goal of Islamic guidance and counseling is to assist individuals in developing in harmony with their *fitrah* (primordial disposition), thereby enabling them to fulfill their existential purpose and achieve holistic success (*falah*) encompassing both worldly contentment and eternal salvation. The STIFIn test, by pinpointing a single dominant "intelligence machine" (be it Sensing, Thinking, Intuiting, Feeling, or Instinct), provides a clear, actionable archetype. Counselors then frame this archetype within an Islamic narrative: a "Thinking" dominant individual, for example, might be guided to see their analytical prowess as a tool for solving community problems (*maslahah*) and contributing to intellectual discourse in Islam, thereby turning a psychological trait into a form of worship (*ibadah*) through their profession and daily conduct.

Conversely, the EduTalent Institute builds its practice on a more explicitly contemplative and spiritually-infused model of Islamic counseling. The foundational principle here is *ma'rifat an-nafs* (knowledge of the self), which is rigorously treated as the essential precursor to *ma'rifatullah* (knowledge of God) (Prasetya, 2014). This is not a passive acknowledgment of traits but an active, reflective journey of self-discovery with direct spiritual implications. Counselors articulate their role as practitioners of *da'wah bil irsyad*, propagation through gentle, personalized guidance (A Gazali, 2022). The fingerprint analysis is the starting point for a prolonged dialogic process. Crucially, results are meticulously framed to avoid any notion of predestination or biological determinism. Counselors explicitly teach that the fingerprint pattern indicates inherent *potential* and *inclination*, not fixed destiny or limitation. This potential is characterized as a

sacred trust (*amanah*) from Allah SWT (Qurrotu Ainia, 2020). The subsequent obligation on the individual is *ikhtiar* to develop that potential with discipline and ethical responsibility (Kusmawati, 2019). This effectively embeds the concept of free will and effort at the heart of the interpretation.

The counseling sessions thus become spaces for spiritual reflection (*tadabbur*), where students are encouraged to ponder questions such as, “How can the multiple intelligences shown in my report be utilized in service to my community?” or “How does my MBTI personality type influence my social interactions in a way that aligns with Islamic manners (*akhlaq*)?” The overarching aim is to guide the student toward *tawazun* a balanced, integrated development of the intellect (*aql*), heart (*qalb*), and soul (*ruh*) and ensuring that talent development is inseparable from spiritual and moral growth (Endriani & Karneli, 2020).

Contrasting Operational Processes: A Trade-off Between Standardized Efficiency and Flexible Depth

The philosophical differences between STIFIn and EduTalent materialize distinctly in their operational procedures, creating two different user experiences centered on the trade-off between speed/standardization and depth/customization. The STIFIn process is engineered for maximum efficiency, scalability, and consistency. It utilizes a proprietary digital scanner that captures fingerprint images, which are instantly uploaded to a centralized server for algorithmic analysis. This fully online and systematized process yields results in a remarkably short timeframe of 10–15 minutes. This model emphasizes predictability and uniform service delivery. The speed is a key selling point, designed to provide immediate feedback and maintain engagement. The process implies a belief in a standardized, universally applicable interpretive algorithm that can reliably decode the “intelligence machine” from the biometric data with minimal human intermediary intervention during the analysis phase.

In stark contrast, the EduTalent methodology prioritizes comprehensiveness and contextual adaptation over speed. It employs a flexible service model, offering testing through home visits, collective sessions at schools, or appointments at their centers. After fingerprint collection, the samples undergo a laboratory-based analysis period that lasts approximately one week. This extended timeframe is dedicated to a more granular, multi-layered analysis that purportedly integrates dermatoglyphic patterns with a broader suite of psychological theories. The process is less automated and involves more expert human judgment in correlating patterns with psychological constructs. This approach suggests a view of talent as complex and multidimensional, requiring careful, unhurried interpretation that cannot be rushed by a fully automated system. This fundamental procedural dichotomy has a direct and cascading impact on the nature of the output and the counseling dynamic, as systematically compared in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Comparative Analysis of Fingerprint Testing Implementation at STIFIn and EduTalent

Aspect	STIFIn	EduTalent
Core Theoretical Basis	Single Intelligence Machine (Dominant Brain Operating System)	Synthesis of Multiple Intelligences, MBTI, and Learning Style Theories
Focus of Analysis	Identification of a single, dominant intelligence center and its associated behavioral and cognitive style.	Multidimensional profiling of cognitive strengths, personality preferences, motivational drivers, and optimal learning modalities.
Result Delivery Time	10-15 minutes (Immediate, automated).	Approximately one week (Deliberate, analysis-intensive).
Report Format & Detail	Concise, structured, and graphic-heavy. Designed for quick comprehension, often requiring counselor explanation to fully contextualize.	Extensive, narrative-driven, and highly detailed. Often includes lengthy explanatory sections, making it more self-explanatory.
Counseling Style Post-Test	Efficient, directive, and archetype-focused. Counselors explain the implications of the dominant intelligence clearly and link it directly to behavioral tendencies and career fields.	Systematic, exploratory, and dialogic. Sessions involve co-reflection, where counselor and student explore the nuances of the multi-faceted report and its life implications.
Accessibility & Cost Model	Standardized national pricing, emphasizing uniformity and brand consistency.	More flexible and often tiered pricing (e.g., basic vs. premium report), potentially offering greater affordability and adaptation to client circumstances.

Commonalities in Foundational Goals and Critical Differentiators in Results & Interpretation

Despite their methodological divergence, both STIFIn and EduTalent converge on several core outcomes that resonate with the objectives of Islamic Guidance and Counseling. Simultaneously, the substantive differences in their results reveal contrasting views on human potential. A primary shared commonality is facilitating self-recognition or *ma'rifat an-nafs*. Both institutions successfully use the fingerprint test as a powerful catalyst for self-awareness. By providing an external, "scientific" mirror, they help students overcome subjective biases and see inherent tendencies they may not have articulated. This directly serves the primary Islamic counseling function of *ma'rifat an-nafs*, the essential first step in any spiritual or personal development journey (Misbach, 2010). Furthermore, both provide value-based career guidance by translating psychological insights into practical educational and career recommendations. For instance, a student showing strong interpersonal and emotional intelligence might be guided toward counseling, teaching, or social work professions framed not just as jobs, but as forms of social service (*khidmah*) and worship through benefiting others. This aligns career planning with the Islamic principle of pursuing a *halal* and beneficial livelihood.

Another significant commonality is the utilization of interactive, reflective counseling sessions. Merely handing over a report is insufficient. Both emphasize mandatory follow-up sessions where counselors employ *mau'izhah hasanah*, beautiful, wise persuasion (Awawina et al., 2020). These dialogues help internalize the results, address anxieties, and connect the findings to Islamic values, family expectations, and real-world decisions. Finally, both models serve preventive and developmental functions. The process is used not to treat a pathology but to prevent future misalignment and stress. By guiding students before critical decision points, both models fulfill the preventive (*preventif*) and developmental (*pengembangan*) roles central to modern guidance counseling (Ulfiah & Jamaluddin, 2022). Participants reported increased self-confidence and reduced anxiety about the future, while parents gained a framework for understanding their child, improving family communication (*tafahum*) and support (Siswa, n.d.).

However, critical differentiators emerge in the nature of the results. The most profound difference lies in the construct of intelligence. STIFIn advocates for a single, dominant intelligence model. Its results categorize an individual into one primary type (e.g., “Feeling” type), from which learning style, communication preferences, and suitable career clusters are derived. This offers clarity, simplicity, and a strong sense of identity. In contrast, EduTalent presents a profile of multiple, coexisting intelligences (e.g., linguistic, logical-mathematical, interpersonal, intrapersonal) with varying strengths. This reflects a pluralistic view of the mind, suggesting that an individual possesses a unique blend of capabilities rather than one overriding “machine.” This difference extends to the interpretive foundation. STIFIn’s interpretation is anchored in a specific neurolinguistic and temperament framework designed to explain the dominance of one brain system. EduTalent’s interpretation is more eclectic, weaving together Gardner’s theory, Jungian typology (MBTI), and learning style models, resulting in a more composite but potentially less theoretically unified profile.

Discussion

The findings illuminate the complex interplay between a modern biometric tool and the ethical-spiritual framework of Islamic counseling. Both institutions justify the use of fingerprint tests by referencing the Quranic affirmation of human uniqueness (QS. Al-Qiyamah: 3-4), effectively using it as a bridge to engage students in self-reflection. However, the discussion must reconcile this with two major tensions: scientific substantiation and philosophical congruence. Scientifically, the dermatoglyphic basis for predicting specific cognitive or vocational profiles remains contentious within mainstream psychology, relying primarily on correlation rather than proven causation. This presents a challenge for both models. STIFIn’s streamlined, single-dominant-output approach, while efficient, carries a higher risk of being interpreted in a deterministic manner that could oversimplify human complexity. EduTalent’s integrative model, though more holistic, must navigate the potential lack of theoretical coherence when merging distinct psychological frameworks.

From an Islamic counseling perspective, which emphasizes human agency (*ikhtiar*), dynamic growth, and the holistic human being (*insan kamil*), the critical factor is not the test's scientific pedigree alone, but its contextualization within the counseling process. EduTalent's methodology with its inherent focus on potential-as-trust (*amanah*), its longer reflective process, and its multidimensional results appears more structurally aligned with countering fatalism and promoting a growth mindset. It naturally lends itself to a narrative of exploration and responsible development. STIFIn's model, while powerful for rapid engagement, requires exceptionally skillful counseling to frame its results as a starting point for effort, not a final label.

The comparative analysis underscores a fundamental trade-off. STIFIn offers efficiency, standardization, and motivational clarity, which can be highly effective for initial self-awareness and decision-making impetus. EduTalent offers depth, comprehensiveness, and a built-in reflective space, which aligns closely with the developmental and spiritual goals of holistic Islamic counseling. The choice between them is not about superiority but about suitability to context and counseling objectives. Ultimately, this study posits that the value of fingerprint testing in Islamic counseling is predominantly derived from its use as a catalytic tool for value-based dialogue. When counselors, regardless of the model used, expertly guide students to view their results through the lenses of *amanah* (trust), *ikhtiar* (effort), and beneficial purpose (*khayr*), the tool transcends its scientific controversies. It becomes an instrument for preventive guidance, curative self-understanding, and developmental planning, thereby fulfilling the multifaceted functions of Islamic counseling as described by scholars like Aunur Faqih (Anwar, 2019).

Research Implications

Theoretically, this study contributes to the field of Islamic Guidance and Counseling by providing a structured framework for critically evaluating and integrating modern assessment technologies. It moves the discourse beyond technical adoption to a focus on philosophical and ethical integration. Practically, it offers clear guidance for practitioners. Counselors are urged to be critical interpreters, using test results to facilitate conversations about faith, responsibility, and growth rather than as definitive answers. The study suggests a potential complementary use: STIFIn's model for accessible, initial engagement and motivation, and EduTalent's approach for in-depth, long-term developmental and spiritual planning. For educational institutions and parents, it highlights the tool's benefits for fostering self-awareness and family communication while cautioning against an over-reliance that might stifle a child's sense of agency and open future.

Research Limitations

This study acknowledges certain limitations. As a qualitative, comparative case study, its findings, while rich in depth, are not statistically generalizable. The research focused on participant perceptions and process analysis rather than

longitudinal tracking of the long-term accuracy of recommendations or life outcomes. Furthermore, while it engages with the scientific debate surrounding dermatoglyphics, it does not conduct an independent empirical validation of the biological claims underpinning the tests. The focus remained on the application and perception of these tools within a counseling framework. Future research would benefit from longitudinal designs, larger-scale mixed-methods approaches, and interdisciplinary collaboration with neuroscientists to further explore the empirical foundations and long-term efficacy of such tools within ethically-grounded counseling practices.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that fingerprint-based talent identification, as practiced by both STIFIn and EduTalent, can serve as a viable complementary tool within Islamic Guidance and Counseling when critically and ethically integrated. While STIFIn's model emphasizes efficiency and a singular dominant intelligence for rapid self-awareness, EduTalent's approach prioritizes a comprehensive, multi-dimensional analysis that naturally fosters deeper reflective dialogue. Despite their methodological differences, both systems align with core Islamic counseling objectives, preventing misguided career choices, facilitating self-knowledge (*ma'rifat an-nafs*), and promoting holistic development (*tawazun*), by framing innate potential as a divine trust (*amanah*) to be actualized through conscious effort (*ikhtiar*). The research affirms that the primary value of these tools lies not in their contested scientific certainty, but in their capacity to catalyze value-based counseling conversations that guide students toward purposeful, faith-aligned life decisions.

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Declaration of AI-Assisted Writing

During the preparation of this work, the authors used DeepSeek AI and Dimension AI for assistance in specific, limited aspects of the writing process. These tools were used solely for the purposes of initial language polishing, grammar checking, and refining sentence structure to improve the clarity and academic tone of the manuscript. The core research ideas, theoretical framework, data collection, analysis, interpretation, conclusions, and scholarly argumentation

remain the original and sole intellectual contribution of the human authors. The authors take full responsibility for the content of this published work.

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