

Research Article

Institutional Support on Green Entrepreneurial Intention of University Students in Kenya

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Abstract

The intensifying environmental crisis has amplified the urgency for green entrepreneurship as a pathway toward sustainable economic development. Although numerous studies have examined students' intentions to pursue entrepreneurship, most have concentrated on traditional entrepreneurial pathways rather than environmentally oriented ventures. Additionally, of the studies in green entrepreneurship conducted, very few focus on Sub-Sahara Africa. This study investigates institutional support as a moderator of key determinants (environmental values, social norms, perceived behavioral control and entrepreneurial self efficacy) of green entrepreneurial intentions among undergraduate students in Kenya. Grounded in the Theory of Planned Behavior and cultural values theory, it investigates how students' perception on institutional support influences their intention to engage in green entrepreneurship. A mixed-methods design was employed, comprising a survey of 392 students and 12 focus group discussions and 10 key informant interviews. Quantitative analysis involved both simple and multiple regression techniques. The findings indicate that policy support acted as a strong direct predictor of green entrepreneurial intention but did not significantly moderate most relationships, except for a significant negative moderation on subjective norms ($\beta = -1.368$, $p = .039$). The integrated model explained 79.0% of the variance in GEI. The study concludes that Green entrepreneurial intentions amongst university students in Kenya are manifold, driven by an interconnected web of personal values, self-perceptions, social influences, and contextual enablers. Policy support functions primarily as a direct enabler rather than a uniform amplifier of individual factors.

Keywords

Green Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurial Education, Entrepreneurial Intentions, Undergraduate Students, Green Entrepreneurial Intentions

1. Introduction

The world today is facing a host of challenges ranging from climate change and resource depletion to environmental challenges such as pollution and deforestation, thus pushing countries around the world to call for, and pursue innovative and

sustainable solutions. The pressure to embrace sustainability-conscious practices, especially in business, continues to increase as the world grapples with these challenges related to

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climate change [1]. Green entrepreneurship is one of the pathways to sustainability that is steadily gaining traction [2]. This type of entrepreneurship involves innovative business ventures that prioritize environmental stewardship while at the same time realizing economic sustainability [1]. Further, green entrepreneurship, which stands at the juncture of ecological accountability and economic innovation, holds particular significance especially for developing countries where environmental degradation coexists with high rates of unemployment [3]. Additionally, SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth) and SDG 13 (climate action) of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals emphasize the role of inclusive and sustainable economic growth in environmental conservation.

The green economy and sustainable development are entangled [4]. The two must be carefully implemented and realized through fostering a natural shift in society's outlook and attitude, particularly in organizations and especially among the younger generation [4]. The framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) offers a platform to examine the competences required for tomorrow's entrepreneurs. The 17 goals and 169 targets highlight a series of issues within the community that behavior change towards sustainability can solve [5]. Despite its critical role, matters concerning green entrepreneurship intention among university students are largely unexplored [6]. The United Nations Decade for Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) (2005 -2014) dynamically promoted sustainability as a fundamental part of both personal and professional choices. Its objective No.2 was to *foster an increased quality of teaching and learning in education for sustainable development*, a testament to recognition that Education serves as a powerful instrument for instigating generational changes and leaving lasting impacts. Research [7, 8] consistently alludes to the fact that entrepreneurial education is a crucial antecedent of intentions toward green entrepreneurship. Structured educational programs in this area have been proven to enhance environmental awareness and equip students with essential skills for launching green businesses [9]. For example, studies conducted in Indonesia reveal that entrepreneurial education plays a significant role in influencing Green Entrepreneurial Intent (GEI), typically through enhanced environmental awareness [9]. Likewise, in China, university students who have received green entrepreneurship education have demonstrated increased desire to pursue green entrepreneurial ventures [10]. An entrepreneurial mindset is essential; Instead of relying solely on opportunities in their field of study, graduates can leverage entrepreneurial opportunities to mitigate unemployment.

The Climate Change Act of 2016, in conjunction with the country's broad Vision 2030 strategy, highlights Kenya's intent to embed sustainability at the very Centre of its development strategy. These policy tools are not simply indicators of Kenya's disposition to collaborate with international climate agendas but are calculatingly fashioned to create a strong in-

stitutional environment that facilitates the rise and development of green entrepreneurship. Recent publications released by the Kenya Climate Innovation Centre (2023) and the Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs (ANDE) (2023) demonstrate a strong and growing level of interest among Kenyan entrepreneurs to pursue environmentally conscious business practices, a notable trend spurred by a rising consciousness of environmental concerns and an expanding range of opportunities in the green sector of the economy.

In the quest for sustainability, the role of universities extends beyond an educational one. Despite the formation of the Kenya Green University Network (KGUN) in 2014, which aimed at incorporating environment, low carbon - climate resilience development strategies and sustainability aspects in the education, training, campus operations and enhanced student engagement there is still a scarcity of information on students from Kenyan universities participation or intent to participate in green entrepreneurship. Consequently, this study seeks to understand how policy support, especially in a university context, contributes the intention of students to engage in green entrepreneurship.

According to the theory of planned behavior [11], factors in an individuals environment may indirectly influence their intentions based on how they perceive feasibility and desirability of the intended behavior [12]. Ajzen, [11] denotes the three pillars of intention to be attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control. These pillars may positively or negatively influence intention and behavior depending on the perceived desirability and feasibility. Additionally, uncertainty avoidance and long-term vs short term orientation of cultural values theory [13] were used. The cultural values theory [13] is commonly used for cross-cultural research. However, scholars such as Prabowo [14] have used the theory to do a similar study in Jakarta yielding positive results.

Franco et al., as cited in [14] entrepreneurial intentions may be categorized into three: non-founders as students who do not want to be self-employed, potential founders who do not exclude the possibility, and founders who intend to be self-employed, are actively setting up an enterprise, or already self-employed. This study excluded the non-founders and focused on the respondents who desired entrepreneurship. This paper is part of a broader study titled Personal and Institutional Determinant Of Green Entrepreneurial Intentions Among University Students In Kenya.

2. Methods

2.1. Research Design

The study adopted a pragmatic mixed-methods orientation, combining quantitative survey data with qualitative focus group discussions and key informant interviews. Pragmatism is compatible with mixed-methods inquiry because it allows methods to be selected in relation to the research problem ra-

ther than requiring exclusive commitment to a single methodological tradition [15, 16]. In the present study, the quantitative strand assessed patterns among the principal constructs, while the qualitative strand provided contextual interpretation of students' and faculty members' experiences of institutional support for entrepreneurship.

2.2. Participants and Sampling

The quantitative sample consisted of 392 fourth-year undergraduate business students drawn from six selected universities in Kenya. Fourth-year students were targeted because they had completed most of their business and entrepreneurship coursework and were positioned to reflect on post-university career intentions. The study focused on respondents who expressed openness to entrepreneurship and did not include students categorized as non-founders. This sampling decision narrows the population to entrepreneurship-inclined students and should therefore be considered when generalizing the findings to all university students.

For the qualitative component, students were drawn from the same broader participant pool and 12 focus group discussions were conducted. Ten key informant interviews were also conducted with faculty members. This design permitted the survey findings to be considered alongside student experiences and faculty perspectives on entrepreneurship education and institutional support.

2.3. Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics summarized demographic characteristics. Simple linear regression examined relationships between independent and dependent variables. The analysis assessed predictive power of environmental values, self-efficacy, norms, control, and policy support while controlling for demographics. Diagnostic tests established model assumptions were met before interpreting coefficients. This approach allowed the thorough systematic evaluation of incremental contributions from theoretical blocks. Furthermore, it establishes the baseline variance explained prior to introducing the main study predictors.

The qualitative data generated through the focus group discussions were examined using thematic analysis guided by predetermined themes. These themes were drawn from the study objectives and the structured FGD guide to maintain alignment with the theoretical framework. All audio recordings were transcribed verbatim, after which the transcripts were carefully reviewed to identify and classify participants' responses within the predefined thematic categories. Manual coding was employed, enabling a systematic yet adaptable interpretation of participants' views. Although the analysis followed a largely deductive structure, additional sub-themes that emerged within the preset categories were documented to capture subtle and context-specific insights. This analytic process ensured coherence across data sources while allowing for

depth, richness, and nuanced interpretation. The paper forms part of a broader study titled Individual and Institutional Determinants of Green Entrepreneurial Intentions Among Undergraduate Students in Select Universities.

3. Results and Discussions

Table 1. Response Rate Across Demographic Characteristics.

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	234	59.7
	Female	158	40.3
	Total	392	100
	Mean	21.58	
	Std. Deviation	1.242	

The sample comprised 392 fourth-year business students from six selected universities in Kenya, with a gender distribution of 234 males (59.7%) and 158 females (40.3%). This proportion aligns with national enrolment patterns in business-related programs within Kenyan public and private universities, where male participation often exceeds female participation due to socio-cultural factors influencing educational and career choices [17].

Table 2 below presents the descriptive statistics for respondents' perceptions of university support and the broader entrepreneurial environment for green entrepreneurship. Overall, the findings indicate that students perceive their universities and local systems provide moderate to high support for entrepreneurial activities, even though contextual challenges in the wider economy remain. Respondents strongly agreed that their universities offer courses related to green entrepreneurship ($M = 4.18$, $Mdn = 4$), with 47.7% strongly agreeing and 31.4% somewhat agreeing. Additionally, universities were perceived to motivate students to start green businesses ($M = 4.11$, $Mdn = 4$) and provide project work focused on green entrepreneurship ($M = 4.07$, $Mdn = 4$), reflecting a robust institutional emphasis on cultivating green entrepreneurial skills. In summary, these findings emphasize that universities play a crucial role in promoting green entrepreneurial skills through courses, project work, mentorship, and motivational programs. However, challenges remain in the broader entrepreneurial ecosystem, particularly regarding financial accessibility and economic support. This sentiment is echoed by respondent 7 of FGD 5 *I can manage a business, especially. The biggest challenge is perhaps a lack of capital and proper mentorship*. These insights underscore the need for integrated strategies combining institutional, local, and national-level interventions to strengthen green entrepreneurship, particularly in contexts like Kenya where systemic barriers may impede

entrepreneurial engagement.

Table 2. Likert Scale-Level Descriptives for Policy Support.

Measures	Strongly Disagree n (%)	Disagree n (%)	Agree n (%)	Somehow Agree n (%)	Strongly Agree n (%)	N	Mean	Median
My university offers courses on green entrepreneurship	7 (1.8%)	22 (5.6%)	53 (13.5%)	123 (31.4%)	187 (47.7%)	392	4.18	4
My university motivates students to start a green business	6 (1.5%)	22 (5.6%)	52 (13.3%)	152 (38.8%)	156 (39.8%)	388	4.11	4
My university offers project work focused on green entrepreneurship	10 (2.6%)	22 (5.6%)	54 (13.8%)	149 (38.0%)	157 (40.1%)	392	4.07	4
My university provides students with the financial and policies means to start a new business	13 (3.3%)	27 (6.9%)	70 (17.9%)	145 (37.0%)	137 (34.9%)	392	3.93	4
My university has shown strong commitment to support green entrepreneurship	9 (2.3%)	18 (4.6%)	58 (14.8%)	137 (34.9%)	170 (43.4%)	392	4.13	4
My university offers mentorship for student entrepreneurs	8 (2.0%)	17 (4.3%)	54 (13.8%)	152 (38.8%)	161 (41.1%)	392	4.13	4
The Kenyan economy offers a conducive environment for entrepreneurs	84 (21.4%)	50 (12.8%)	60 (15.3%)	99 (25.3%)	99 (25.3%)	392	3.20	4
In Kenya, entrepreneurs are empowered by an underlying private system, public and non-governmental institutions	14 (3.6%)	25 (6.4%)	55 (14.0%)	108 (27.6%)	190 (48.5%)	392	4.11	4
Taking bank loans is difficult for entrepreneurs in Kenya	11 (2.8%)	21 (5.4%)	51 (13.0%)	142 (36.2%)	167 (42.6%)	392	4.10	4
The hustler fund is a viable source of funding for aspiring entrepreneurs	28 (7.1%)	70 (17.9%)	65 (16.6%)	117 (29.8%)	112 (28.6%)	392	3.55	4
My home county supports budding entrepreneurs	4 (1.0%)	32 (8.2%)	54 (13.8%)	127 (32.4%)	175 (44.6%)	392	4.11	4

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics and Factor Loadings for Policy Support (PS).

Item	M	SD	Communality (h ²)	Component Loading
My university offers courses on green entrepreneurship	4.17	.988	.824	.882
My university motivates students to start a green business	4.11	.945	.794	.871
My university offers project work focused on green entrepreneurship	4.07	.998	.791	.868
My university provides students with the financial and policy means to start a new business	3.93	1.049	.723	.836
My university has shown strong commitment to support green entrepreneurship	4.12	.982	.779	.864
My university offers mentorship for student entrepreneurs	4.12	.947	.723	.819
The Kenyan economy offers a conducive environment for entrepreneurs	3.20	1.492	.549	.732
In Kenya, entrepreneurs are empowered by public, private, and NGO institutions	4.11	1.093	.711	.817
Taking bank loans is difficult for entrepreneurs in Kenya	4.10	1.008	.537	.719
The hustler fund is a viable source of funding for aspiring entrepreneurs	3.55	1.272	.494	.500

Item	M	SD	Communality (h ²)	Component Loading
My home county supports budding entrepreneurs	4.11	.997	.524	.713

The descriptive results for the Policy Support (PS) construct show high mean scores across most university-related items, indicating strong student agreement that their institutions provide substantial support for green entrepreneurship. Factor loadings for these items are robust, ranging from .819 to .882, with high communalities, demonstrating that they strongly represent the underlying policy support factor. Items related to the broader Kenyan entrepreneurial environment show comparatively lower means and weaker loadings, suggesting that while universities are perceived as supportive, national-level financial and policy structures remain less reliable. Overall, the factor structure confirms that institutional support through courses, motivation, project work, mentorship, and fi-

nancial or policy facilitation is a central component of perceived policy support for green entrepreneurship among students. The sentiment of getting support from university is echoed by respondent 3 FGD 1 saying that *The things I have been learning here (at the university) have properly equipped me with skills I require to run a successful green venture. I have learnt how to make a business plan, and we also did some entrepreneurship courses.*

4. Linear Regression Analysis

Policy Support Moderating the Relationship Between Determinants of Green Entrepreneurial Intention.

Table 4. Model VI Summary.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.891 ^a	.793	.789	.41150	1.671

The results in the model show that the inclusion of Policy Support (PS) as a moderating variable substantially strengthens the relationship between the determinants of green entrepreneurial intention and the overall model performance. The model reports a very high $R = .891$, indicating a strong combined relationship between the predictors and green entrepreneurial intention. The R^2 value of .793 shows that approximately 79.3% of the variance in green entrepreneurial intention is explained by the determinants together with policy support. The adjusted R^2 (.789) confirms that the model remains stable and reliable even after adjusting for the number of predictors. As KII 10 connotes: *If we instill green values in them and help them see the importance of taking care of the environment, then we will increase the number of budding entrepreneurs who lean towards green entrepreneurship.* The ANOVA results further demonstrate that the model is statistically significant ($F = 168.051$, $p < .001$), meaning that the predictors collectively have a meaningful impact on green entrepreneurial intention. The relatively low standard error (.41150) indicates good model precision, while the Durbin-Watson statistic (1.671) suggests no serious autocorrelation issues in the residuals.

Overall, these findings confirm that policy support plays a crucial moderating role, strengthening the influence of individual determinants such as environmental values, subjective

norms, and perceived behavioral control on students' intentions to engage in green entrepreneurship. When supportive policies, institutional structures, and enabling environments are present, students' motivation and confidence to pursue green ventures significantly increase.

Additionally, a multiple linear regression analysis with interaction terms was conducted to examine how Policy Support (PS) interacts with Environmental Values (EV), Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (ESE), Subjective Norms (SN), Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC), and Green Entrepreneurial Intention (GEI) among fourth-year business students in selected Kenyan universities. Prior to analysis, assumptions of linearity, independence of errors, homoscedasticity, and normality of residuals were evaluated. The Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.671 indicated acceptable independence of residuals, suggesting no significant first-order autocorrelation among errors [18].

The overall regression model, including four main predictors and four interaction terms ($EV \times PS$, $ESE \times PS$, $PBC \times PS$, $SN \times PS$), was statistically significant, $F(8, 350) = 168.05$, $p < .001$, explaining 79.3% of the variance in Green Entrepreneurial Intention ($R = .891$, $R^2 = .793$, Adjusted $R^2 = .789$, $SE = .412$). This substantial effect size indicates that the combined influence of individual-level determinants and their interactions with policy support constitutes a robust predictor framework for sustainability-oriented entrepreneurial motivation

within the Kenyan higher education context. The high variance explained reinforces the integrative power of examining how institutional enablers may condition the influence of personal values, self-perceptions, and normative pressures on green entrepreneurial intention formation.

In addition, the findings are compatible with the Value-Belief-Norm theory, according to which the environmental behavior of individuals are shaped by deep-rooted values, environmental risk perception, and individual moral obligations. The strong and statistically robust effect of Environmental Values ($B = 0.338$, $p < .001$) supports the cardinal function of values in shaping intentions for green entrepreneurship. Students with a high appreciation for environmental friendliness would feel an ethical obligation to participate in actions for protecting the environment, as evidenced by their search for green business opportunities. This demonstrates how pro-environmental values internalized guide entrepreneurial choices, substantiating VBN theory's argument that values are the foundation of change.

Faculty members echoed this sentiment, stating that while the policy framework was “well-structured on paper,” the translation into actionable, student-accessible opportunities

was inconsistent. Integrating the quantitative and qualitative strands suggests that policy support currently operates more as a contextual enabler than as an active moderator of the relationship between individual-level determinants and entrepreneurial intentions. While the presence of supportive policies enhances the general environment for green entrepreneurship, the lack of effective dissemination, streamlined access, and student-specific provisions limits their capacity to significantly amplify the effects of environmental values, self-efficacy, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control.

Practically, therefore, those findings imply that whereas policy environments continue to be so ostensibly central to building an enabling environment for green entrepreneurship, efforts at catalyzing GEI among Kenyan university students would ostensibly reach even significant impact if channeled at personal belief systems, peer norms, and entrepreneurial competency building as much as at information campaigns regarding policy. What this does is further reinforce argumentative focus outlined by [19] that institutional effects have tended to have an indirect effect through cognitive and normative channels but not direct impact effects upon intentions.

4.1. Model VI Regression Coefficients

Table 5. Model VI Regression Coefficients.

e	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T Test	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
	Coefficient	Std. Error	Coefficient			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	.064	.171		.371	.711	-.274	.401		
Environmental Value	-.273	.222	-.251	-1.229	.220	-.711	.164	.014	70.715
Entrepreneurial Self Efficacy	.204	.296	.192	.690	.491	-.377	.786	.008	130.793
Subjective Norms	1.233	.411	1.150	3.003	.003	.426	2.041	.004	248.376
1 Perceived Behavioural Control	-.077	.274	-.074	-.281	.779	-.615	.461	.008	117.849
EVxPS	.106	.060	.630	1.766	.078	-.012	.224	.005	215.455
ESExPS	.020	.082	.121	.244	.808	-.140	.180	.002	421.021
PBCxPS	.081	.075	.505	1.079	.281	-.066	.227	.003	371.206
SNxPS	-.227	.110	-1.368	-2.069	.039	-.443	-.011	.001	740.971

4.2. Moderation Effects: Interaction Terms

Subjective Norms $\times$ Policy Support (SN $\times$ PS) emerged as a statistically significant negative moderator ($B = -0.227$, $SE =$

0.110 , $\beta = -1.368$, $t = -2.07$, $p = .039$, 95% CI $[-0.443, -0.011]$). These findings indicate that the positive relationship between subjective norms and green entrepreneurial intention is diminished at higher levels of perceived policy support. In practical

terms, when students perceive strong institutional and governmental support for green entrepreneurship, the effect of social pressure from family, peers, and religious communities on their entrepreneurial intentions manifests less. This pattern may reflect a substitution effect: when structural enablers are perceived as adequate, individuals may rely less on normative validation to form entrepreneurial intentions. This interpretation aligns with research by (Yi, 2021) who observed that institutional support can moderate the translation of social norms into entrepreneurial action among Chinese university students.

Environmental Values $\times$ Policy Support (EV $\times$ PS) approached statistical significance ($B = 0.106$, $SE = 0.060$, $\beta = 0.630$, $t = 1.77$, $p = .078$, 95% CI [-0.012, 0.224]), suggesting a potential positive moderating trend. Although not conventionally significant at $p < .05$, this marginal effect warrants cautious interpretation: it may indicate that policy support slightly amplifies the influence of environmental values on green entrepreneurial intention. This pattern would be consistent with Value-Belief-Norm Theory (Stern, 2000), wherein external enablers may strengthen the activation of personal norms derived from biospheric values. However, given the borderline significance level, this finding should be interpreted as preliminary and replicated in future research with larger samples or alternative analytical approaches.

The interaction terms for Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy $\times$ Policy Support (ESE $\times$ PS) ($B = 0.020$, $p = .808$) and Perceived Behavioral Control $\times$ Policy Support (PBC $\times$ PS) ($B = 0.081$, $p = .281$) were not statistically significant. These null findings suggest that, within this sample, policy support does not significantly condition the relationships between self-efficacy beliefs or perceived controllability and green entrepreneurial intention. This pattern may reflect the relative autonomy of cognitive constructs: students' confidence in their entrepreneurial capabilities and their perceptions of venture feasibility may operate independently of institutional support perceptions, at least within the cross-sectional timeframe of this study.

5. Conclusions

This study shows that fourth-year business students in selected Kenyan universities generally perceive substantial university-level support for entrepreneurship through courses, project work, mentorship, motivation, and institutional commitment, while access to capital and the practical accessibility of support remain important concerns. These findings are consistent with a wider literature in which university and institutional support are relevant to green entrepreneurial intention and behavior. They support continued investment in sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship education, mentorship, experiential learning, incubation, and clear information about financing and support pathways. Additionally, the findings cement the importance of implementing sustainability-oriented

curriculum not just having it on paper. Universities should integrate environmental literacy and sustainability-focused entrepreneurship education into curricula across all disciplines. By embedding these principles within teaching and learning, students will acquire both the cognitive understanding and affective commitment necessary to recognize, evaluate, and pursue environmentally sustainable business opportunities.

In addition to curriculum reform, there is a need to strengthen environmental values and entrepreneurial self-efficacy through experiential learning approaches. This may be achieved by encouraging students to participate in practical business simulations, green business competitions, and mentorship arrangements with experienced entrepreneurs. Access to incubators, prototyping facilities, and field-based sustainability projects would further enable students to convert environmental awareness into viable entrepreneurial ventures. Universities should make concerted efforts to sensitize students about the availability of these facilities and provide adequate information on how to access them.

While the presence of supportive policies enhances the general environment for green entrepreneurship, the lack of effective dissemination, streamlined access, and student-specific provisions limit their capacity to significantly amplify the effects of environmental values, self-efficacy, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. The results indicate that policies within the university as well as stakeholders within the higher education context should work together to come up with a model that builds on values, perceptions and competencies of students. If this is done in a competent and well-coordinated manner, these actions can make significant contributions to sustainable development and inclusive economic growth. Future research should consider conducting a longitudinal study to establish how students' perception of institutional support changes as they transition through university from first year to fourth year. Research exploring the category of entrepreneur who is already self-employed and their motivation to run a green business is also a rich area that would add to the body of knowledge.

Abbreviations

EV	Environmental Values
ESE	Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy
SN	Subjective Norms
PBC	Perceived Behavioral Control
PS	Perceived Policy/Institutional Support

Author Contributions

Catherine Thiong'o: Conceptualization, Resources, Writing – original draft

Daniel Muasya: Supervision

Ezekiel Ndunda: Supervision

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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