

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# HALAL RETAIL GOVERNANCE THROUGH MS2400-3:2019: STRUCTURE, IMPLEMENTATION, AND GLOBAL BENCHMARKS

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**ABSTRACT** - This paper explores the implementation and strategic potential of MS2400-3:2019, Malaysia's halal retail supply chain standard, in response to growing demands for transparent and integrated halal governance. It aims to critically assess the standard's structural composition, practical applicability, and global relevance in the context of modern halal retailing. Employing a qualitative methodology, the study applies thematic content analysis to academic literature, regulatory frameworks, and international benchmarks. The findings suggest that, although MS2400-3:2019 offers a comprehensive model aligned with Shariah principles and quality management systems, its adoption remains constrained by operational hurdles, a shortage of skilled personnel, and ambiguity surrounding return on investment. Benchmarking against halal governance systems in Indonesia, Brunei, the UAE, and Japan highlights Malaysia's role as an innovator in halal supply chains, while also revealing notable deficiencies in implementation support and incentive mechanisms. The study puts forward practical recommendations to overcome these challenges, emphasizing the need for stronger policy coherence, stakeholder involvement, and technological integration. By pinpointing strategic shortcomings and proposing focused improvements, the paper contributes to advancing halal retail governance and reinforces Malaysia's aspirations to lead in global halal certification and compliance.

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## INTRODUCTION

The global halal market has been expanding rapidly, with projections suggesting it will surpass USD 2 trillion by the end of the 2020s. This growth underscores a rising global demand for halal-certified products and services, extending well beyond Muslim-majority nations (Masood, 2022). As a result, the definition of halal has broadened. No longer limited to dietary laws, it now includes every stage of the product lifecycle—from production and processing to distribution and retail. Within this evolving landscape, maintaining halal integrity across the supply chain has become increasingly vital, especially at the retail level where consumer trust is ultimately affirmed (Atieqoh et al., 2023). Malaysia has been a trailblazer in shaping the global halal ecosystem. Among its contributions is the MS2400 series, the world's first set of halal supply chain standards that addressed transportation (MS2400-1), warehousing (MS2400-2), and retailing (MS2400-3) (Shariff & Ahmad, 2019). Of particular interest is MS2400-3:2019, which governs the retail interface where halal-certified products meet consumers, marking the final checkpoint in the assurance process.

The main objective of this paper is to assess the MS2400-3:2019 standard in supporting halal governance at the retail level in Malaysia. The study specifically investigates the standard's structural framework, theoretical basis, implementation challenges, and global benchmarking with international halal practices. It further explores the practical difficulties encountered by retailers, including compliance obstacles, limited resources, and issues of operational viability. This research is significant in advancing the discourse on halal supply chain governance, particularly by promoting greater transparency, reinforcing consumer confidence, and supporting Malaysia's ambition to lead in global halal certification and retail compliance.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Over the past two decades, the halal concept has undergone significant transformation. Initially centered on dietary compliance—such as permissible slaughter and the exclusion of alcohol or pork—it has evolved into a comprehensive system encompassing ethics, safety, and quality (Febriati et al., 2024). This shift has been driven by the complexities of global supply chains and the mobility of Muslim consumers, prompting the need for holistic assurance systems that preserve halal integrity at every juncture. Malaysia's Halalan-Toyyiban Assurance Pipeline (HTAP), introduced in 2010, laid the foundation for the MS2400 series. Combining the Islamic principles of halal (permissibility) and toyyiban (wholesomeness), HTAP emphasized purity and safety (Apandi et al., 2018). By 2019, this evolved into a more

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operationally focused framework, now referred to as the "halal supply chain," which stresses traceability, risk management, and shared accountability (MS2400-3:2019, 2019). The MS2400-3:2019 standard outlines general requirements for halal retail operations, ensuring product compliance up to the point of sale. Yet, despite its strategic importance, adoption across the industry remains limited, raising questions about its practical scalability, enforceability, and fit with commercial realities.

Prior research on halal retailing and the MS2400-3:2019 standard shows that, although Malaysia has taken a pioneering role in formalizing halal retail governance (Shariff & Ahmad, 2019; Tieman et al., 2012), actual uptake has remained limited. Zainuddin and Shariff (2016) observed that major retail chains often lack readiness for implementation, citing challenges such as operational complexity, constrained resources, and the absence of clear technical guidance. Similarly, Giyanti et al. (2020) reported that small and medium-sized enterprises face barriers related to infrastructure, certification costs, and insufficient expertise. According to Tieman and Ruiz-Bejarano (2020), the retail point is a decisive stage in the halal supply chain, where consumer trust is most directly reinforced. Yet, as Rahim et al. (2016) point out, the standard's non-prescriptive design has left many stakeholders unsure of how to effectively translate its requirements into practice. Comparative literature reveals that countries like Indonesia and the UAE tend to embed retail oversight within broader halal food frameworks (Rahma & Phahlevy, 2024; Othman & Ibrahim, 2025). In contrast, Malaysia's approach seeks to define retail-specific halal practices through a dedicated standard, which remains underutilized. This disconnect between conceptual robustness and limited implementation reinforces the relevance of the present study. By critically examining MS2400-3:2019 and situating it within an international benchmarking context, this research seeks to identify key strategic gaps and outline actionable pathways for more effective adoption.

## METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research design to have a critical look at the design, execution, and international positioning of MS2400-3:2019 within Malaysia's evolving halal retail landscape. Given the nature of the governance models, institutional behaviors, and obstacles, qualitative research proves especially effective in capturing insights. To gather relevant data, the research uses multiple secondary sources. These include peer-reviewed journal articles, government-issued documents, official materials from Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (JAKIM), and reports by global halal certification bodies and medias. Together, these resources laid the groundwork for understanding the conceptual, operational dynamics, and strategic ambitions embedded in the MS2400-3:2019 framework.

To situate Malaysia's approach within the global halal arena, the study carried out a benchmarking comparison. This involved evaluating MS2400-3:2019 against retail-focused halal standards and recognized best practices from countries including Indonesia, Brunei, the UAE, Australia, Japan, and several European nations. Particular attention was given to areas like regulatory governance, enforcement protocols, integration of digital technologies, public engagement, and certification adoption rates. The research applied thematic content analysis to distill prevailing themes and recurring ideas from the reviewed literature and policy documents. This method helped surface key implementation issues, spotlight avenues for innovation, and shape a set of actionable recommendations. By triangulating data from diverse sources governmental, industrial, academic, and medias, the study strengthens the depth, reliability, and breadth of its conclusions.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Theoretical Framework: Halal Supply Chain Governance

A halal supply chain is an interconnected system designed to maintain halal integrity from origin to consumer. As outlined by (Muhammed et al., 2022), preserving the halal status of goods across supply chain stages—supplier, manufacturer, logistics, and retailer—is essential. Three core pillars support this framework: consumer expectations, product sensitivity, and contamination risk (Tieman et al., 2012). MS2400-3:2019 brings these principles into practice, embedding them within retail operations through risk assessments, internal audits, staff training, and policy protocols. It aligns with broader systems such as ISO 9001, HACCP, and MS1900, offering a multi-faceted compliance model. Central to the standard is a zone-based risk classification—green (low), yellow (moderate), and red (high). High-risk zones in retail settings typically include areas near non-halal items like alcohol or pork. To address these, MS2400-3:2019 recommends physical separation, dedicated utensils, and preventive controls, ensuring that halal status is preserved even in complex retail environments. This risk-driven approach aids in systematically identifying and mitigating contamination threats. However, effective implementation calls for organizational will and infrastructure—resources not always readily available, especially in diverse retail contexts.

### MS2400-3:2019 – Structure and Key Requirements

MS2400-3:2019, part of Malaysia's Halal Supply Chain Management System, is a landmark standard crafted to bring clarity and structure to halal retail compliance. Designed with flexibility, it applies across a range of retail formats—from large supermarkets to digital platforms, each with distinct operational needs and halal-related challenges. A standout feature of the standard is its adaptability. It accommodates businesses of all sizes, including hypermarkets and superstores that offer a mix of halal and non-halal items. In such settings, segregation practices and risk controls are encouraged to safeguard halal products amid complex inventories. For smaller retailers like convenience stores, compliance can be achieved through streamlined processes such as product labeling and basic staff education. This tailored approach enables

retailers with limited space and rapid turnover to maintain halal standards without overextending their resources. The standard also anticipates the growth of e-commerce. Online retailers are advised to focus on secure packaging, verified halal sourcing, and compliance in logistics. These measures are particularly critical in regions where halal consumers depend heavily on digital access to certified products. To support implementation, MS2400-3:2019 outlines essential retail components and processes, as detailed in Table 1.

Table 1. Core Components of MS2400-3:2019

No.	Component	Explanation	Strategic Importance
1	Halal Policy Framework	A documented and institutionally endorsed policy that reflects the organization's commitment to halal integrity, aligned with Shariah law and applicable regulatory requirements. It sets the tone for halal governance and guides all related activities across the organization.	Establishes a formal commitment to halal values and ensures top-down implementation. Acts as a foundation for audits and stakeholder communication.
2	Supplier Evaluation and Monitoring	A structured process for assessing and monitoring suppliers to ensure that raw materials, products, and services comply with halal principles throughout the upstream supply chain. This includes supplier audits, certification verification, and contract clauses.	Ensures upstream integrity of halal products. Builds a traceable and transparent supply chain which is critical for audit readiness.
3	Risk Control Measures	Systems and protocols to identify, assess, mitigate, and monitor risks that could compromise halal integrity, particularly cross-contamination risks from haram or najis materials. Often includes zone classification and preventive controls.	Prevents contamination and builds consumer trust by maintaining product purity. Integral for compliance with JAKIM audits and international halal expectations.
4	Personnel Competency	Ensures all staff, particularly those involved in handling, storage, and retail of halal products, are adequately trained on halal principles, SOPs, and regulatory requirements. Often includes onboarding modules and refresher programs.	Key to operationalizing halal policies. Competent staff can proactively prevent violations and enhance customer interactions on halal queries.
5	Documentation and Traceability	Maintaining comprehensive records of halal compliance activities such as product movement logs, cleaning schedules, supplier documents, and internal audit findings. Traceability ensures each product's halal status can be verified at any point.	Facilitates internal and external audits, provides transparency, and protects against reputational risks in the event of a compliance issue.

Despite this comprehensive blueprint, the absence of detailed implementation guidelines has created challenges, particularly for small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) seeking cost-effective compliance models.

## Implementation Challenges

### *Operational constraints*

Retailers operating in mixed-product environments often face substantial logistical hurdles in enforcing halal segregation. Maintaining dedicated zones, utensils, and equipment demands considerable investment, particularly challenging for smaller businesses. These operators must allocate funds for separate shelving, carts, storage units, and distribution channels, all while ensuring traceability mechanisms are in place. For many, these technical and financial requirements prove overwhelming (Kadir et al., 2016). One example from Malaysia's cosmetic sector illustrates this issue well. To comply with MS2400-3:2019 and other halal-related standards, manufacturers must separate halal from non-halal items throughout the supply chain. Yet, many small and medium enterprises (SMEs) lack the necessary infrastructure and expertise (Giyanti et al., 2020). The KK Mart controversy in 2023–2024 further highlights the risks. The prominent convenience chain came under fire after halal-labeled items were displayed near non-halal products, raising concerns about contamination. The public backlash damaged consumer trust and spotlighted the difficulties of maintaining segregation protocols in real-world settings (The Star Online, 2024). The incident emphasized the need for clearer operational guidance and infrastructural support.

### *Human capital and resource gaps*

Effective halal compliance hinges on staff equipped with knowledge of both Islamic principles and quality assurance. However, Malaysia's retail sector suffers from a lack of personnel with this dual expertise. Retailers consistently report challenges in finding or training staff capable of managing halal compliance effectively (Voak & Fairman, 2020). The Halal Development Corporation (HDC) has called for specialized roles such as "halal compliance managers" to help shape internal frameworks. Yet, despite over 200,000 local companies involved in halal-related trade, only 9,162 have

obtained certification (Malaysia Continues to Lead Global Islamic Economy, 2021). This shortfall is largely due to a lack of qualified personnel and a limited understanding of the certification process. Bridging this gap will require targeted vocational programs and standardized training.

### Certification uptake and ROI ambiguity

Since its release, uptake of the MS2400-3:2019 standard has been minimal. To date, according to Halal Malaysia Portal, no retailer has officially obtained certification under the framework in Selangor (Halal Status Verification, 2025). The main deterrent can be attributed to uncertainty over return on investment (Han et al., 2022). Retailers are unsure whether the cost of compliance translates into tangible benefits like stronger consumer loyalty or increased revenue. Consumer awareness of halal certification also varies across market segments, weakening the incentive for businesses to invest in certification. Moreover, in the absence of compelling advantages or government support, many hesitate to commit. A case from Malaysia's food supply sector illustrates this: while global interest in halal products is growing, scepticism persists among some consumers due to perceived inconsistencies in enforcement and transparency (Damat et al., 2017). This uncertainty makes the business case for certification harder to justify.

### Comparative Perspectives and Global Benchmarks

The international halal industry is shaped by a range of cultural, regulatory, and operational contexts. While Malaysia has led efforts to formalize halal standards, other nations—both Muslim and non-Muslim—have also adapted certification systems to suit local dynamics. A comparative analysis of MS2400-3:2019 against global benchmarks, as summarized in Table 2, reveals valuable lessons for enhancing the standard, improving compatibility, and encouraging global harmonization. In contrast, Indonesia's centralized body, BPJPH, employs GRA to support more systematic risk assessment. While enforcement is stronger, the system still suffers from infrastructure constraints and limited international recognition.

Table 2. Global comparative analysis of halal standards and practices

Country/Region	Key Regulatory Body / Framework	Unique Features	Strengths	Challenges / Gaps Compared to Malaysia
Malaysia	JAKIM + MS2400 series	Hybrid system balancing Shariah with operational flexibility; voluntary adoption; segmented by supply chain (transport, warehouse, retail)	Comprehensive framework; integration with MS1900; supply chain-wide focus	Limited uptake; lacks prescriptive implementation; not fully quantified (no GRA); low ROI clarity (Azmi, 2024)
Indonesia	BPJPH (under Ministry of Religious Affairs)	Centralized halal authority; adoption of Grey Relational Analysis (GRA) for risk quantification	Objective, data-driven assessment; integrated legal backing	Still developing capacity for complex logistics; limited global acceptance outside ASEAN (Rahma & Phahlevy, 2024)
Brunei	Halal Food Control Division	Centralized Shariah board governance; highly rigid certification process (Ibrahim, 2022)	High theological credibility; strong traceability	Limited adaptability for modern retail formats; less scalable
UAE / Saudi Arabia	ESMA (UAE), SFDA (Saudi)	Cross-border accreditation models; part of GCC and OIC harmonization efforts	Strong international recognition; support for exports	Complexity in bilateral acceptance; highly bureaucratic approval processes (Othman & Ibrahim, 2025)
Australia	Independent certifiers (e.g., AFIC)	Emphasis on staff training and physical segregation in halal logistics	High export credibility; clear operational SOPs	Fragmented certifier landscape; lacks centralized Shariah oversight (Persyarikatan Muhammadiyah, 2025)
Japan / South Korea	Local initiatives + international certifiers	Consumer-focused halalization (multilingual signage, tech use, app integration) (Abdur Rakib et al., 2020)	Strong retail UX; excellent tourist adaptation	Limited theological depth; dependence on foreign certification
UK / Europe	Multiple certifying bodies (HMC, Halal Trust, etc.)	Community-driven standards; flexible and adaptive to local Muslim needs	Responsive to local consumer values; pluralistic	Inconsistent standardization; lacks national regulatory alignment (Tajuddin et al., 2022)

Brunei, known for strict religious oversight, enforces a highly regulated model that enhances credibility but offers little flexibility for diverse retail formats. These examples suggest that while strict control can enhance religious legitimacy, it may hinder broader usability.

The UAE and Saudi Arabia benefit from global recognition through efforts to harmonize halal standards, yet they often struggle with bureaucratic delays and regulatory complexity. Australia's approach emphasizes operational clarity and export facilitation, though it lacks centralized religious oversight, a gap that Malaysia fills through JAKIM's dual role in religious authority and national coordination. Japan and South Korea illustrate how technology, mobile applications, and customer-centric design can enhance halal systems, despite relying on external certification. Their emphasis on tourism and user experience presents useful lessons for making MS2400-3 more appealing to the public. In contrast, the UK and parts of Europe, while attuned to local preferences, often lack consistent national standards, which can create confusion, something Malaysia avoids through its unified regulatory structure. In summary, while MS2400-3:2019 provides a solid starting point, it requires clearer guidance, stronger institutional backing, and deeper integration of digital tools. Drawing from global best practices can help Malaysia improve adoption and reinforce its leadership in halal retail governance.

### Business Implications and Strategic Integration

MS2400-3:2019 offers more than just religious compliance—it brings substantial opportunities for businesses to boost competitiveness, streamline operations, and build stronger consumer connections. Strategically adopted, the standard can open doors to emerging halal markets, reinforce brand reputation, and underpin long-term sustainable growth. For many businesses, halal compliance has become a key market differentiator. Effective implementation of MS2400-3:2019 enables retailers to tap into high-demand regions like Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Europe—where certification often serves as both a market access requirement and a signal of trust. It also demonstrates a company's commitment to religious integrity, ethical practices, and transparent supply chain management—all values prized by the halal consumer base (Othman & Ibrahim, 2025). Additionally, the standard enhances brand identity, fostering loyalty, especially in multicultural environments where halal aligns with values such as hygiene, safety, and ethical sourcing (Othman & Ibrahim, 2025).

A notable advantage of MS2400-3:2019 lies in its compatibility with existing quality and safety standards, including ISO 9001 and ISO 22000. This interoperability allows halal protocols to be embedded into existing operational systems, avoiding redundancy while ensuring comprehensive compliance. As a result, businesses can optimize their infrastructure—from documentation to audits—and better prepare for both local and international inspections. As transparency becomes a key consumer demand, digital tools are playing a growing role in safeguarding halal integrity. Technologies such as blockchain, RFID, and IoT are being adopted to ensure real-time traceability and verification. Blockchain offers tamper-proof records of product handling, improving audit efficiency and consumer trust (Nik et al., 2020). RFID allows dynamic tracking of items, especially critical in mixed-product environments. Meanwhile, IoT sensors help monitor environmental conditions vital to halal-sensitive goods like meat and dairy. These innovations also extend to end-user engagement. Mobile halal verification apps, QR-coded packaging, and real-time traceability dashboards empower consumers to verify a product's halal status from source to shelf, strengthening trust and transparency throughout the retail journey.

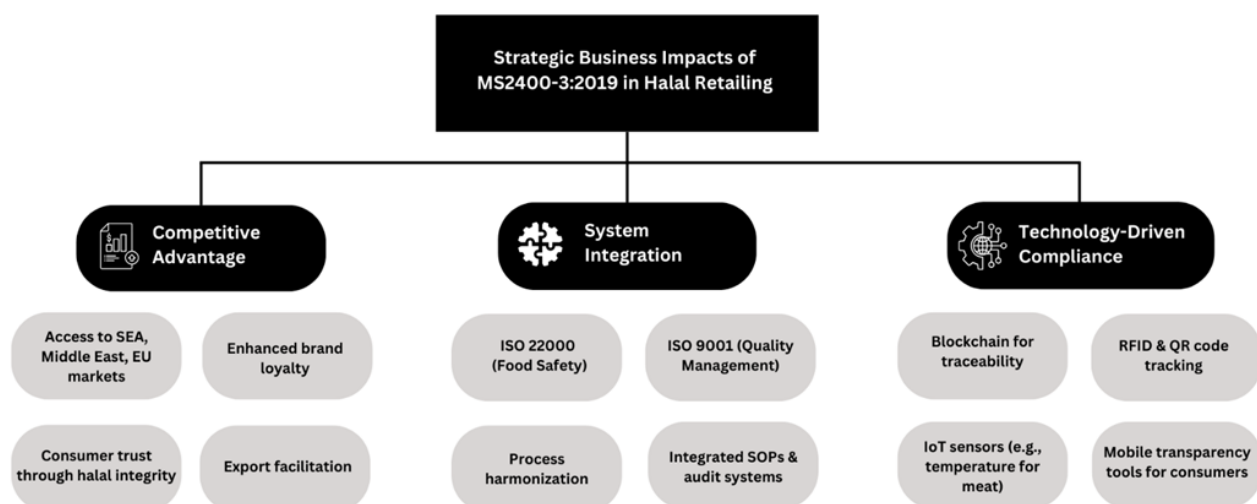


Figure 1. Strategic business impacts of MS2400-3:2019 in halal retailing

To illustrate these interconnected dimensions of business strategy, the diagram provides a visual summary of how MS2400-3:2019 supports three core strategic pillars: competitive advantage, system integration, and technology-driven compliance. These components collectively reinforce the standard's capacity to enhance both internal operations and market-facing performance.

## CONCLUSION

The MS2400-3:2019 Halal Supply Chain Management System – Part 3: Retailing – General Requirements represents a pivotal advancement in Malaysia's journey to institutionalize comprehensive halal governance. By focusing on the retail segment—the final interaction between certified products and consumers—it bridges a critical gap in the halal assurance framework. Its design integrates Shariah principles with modern management system concepts, offering a flexible yet robust foundation for both religious compliance and business functionality. Yet, despite its forward-thinking architecture, adoption has been slow. Practical challenges—ranging from financial constraints and infrastructure gaps to skill shortages and uncertain ROI—have hindered widespread implementation. Furthermore, the standard's non-prescriptive nature, although intended to foster flexibility, has often led to confusion, especially among SMEs seeking actionable guidance. Nevertheless, the long-term potential of MS2400-3:2019 remains significant. As global demand for halal products continues to rise—driven by demographic shifts, heightened religiosity, and consumer expectations—the standard offers a timely framework for reinforcing halal authenticity at the critical retail level. With coordinated policy, stakeholder support, and operational clarity, it could evolve into a global benchmark for halal retail practices, reaffirming Malaysia's leadership in halal supply chain innovation.

## Suggestions for Stakeholders

To realize the full promise of MS2400-3:2019, targeted action is needed at both systemic and operational levels. One key step is developing detailed implementation guides tailored to various retail settings. These should include visual aids, procedural checklists, and case-based examples to simplify application and interpretation in daily operations. Complementing this, government incentives could catalyze adoption—particularly for SMEs. Financial support in the form of certification subsidies, tax breaks, or onboarding assistance could lower entry barriers and offset initial costs tied to infrastructure upgrades and workforce training. Policy-level alignment is equally crucial. Embedding MS2400-3 compliance into procurement standards—especially in halal-certified tenders—would signal national commitment and motivate voluntary certification. This alignment would also link compliance to tangible commercial advantages, boosting private sector participation. On the capacity-building front, modular training programs must be established in partnership with JAKIM, academic institutions, and halal advocacy organizations. These programs should equip retail personnel with practical skills in halal risk control, consumer interaction, and procedural documentation. Public engagement also plays a vital role. Awareness campaigns that explain the value and mechanics of MS2400-3 can drive consumer demand for certified retail environments. Informed consumers, in turn, create grassroots pressure for adoption, accelerating market uptake from the bottom up.

## Future Research Directions

Continued academic and industry inquiry is essential to refine and expand the relevance of MS2400-3:2019. A top priority is conducting economic evaluations, particularly cost-benefit analyses across retail formats. Comparative data between certified and non-certified outlets would offer critical insights into ROI, informing more strategic business decisions. Technology offers another rich avenue for exploration. Research into blockchain, AI, and IoT applications can uncover scalable tools for real-time monitoring, risk prediction, and digital certification. These innovations could revolutionize halal retailing by creating transparent, verifiable systems. As halal standards extend into non-Muslim markets, contextual adaptability becomes vital. Cross-cultural studies examining how MS2400-3 can be localized for Western or East Asian settings—considering regulatory, consumer, and theological differences—will be instrumental in shaping region-specific adoption strategies.

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## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

## AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION

Nik Mohamad Ridhwan (Writing - original draft; Formal analysis; Illustration)

Abdul Hadi Samsi (Methodology; Data curation; Proofreading; Supervision)

## AVAILABILITY OF DATA AND MATERIALS

The data supporting this study's findings are available on request from the corresponding author.

## ETHICS STATEMENT

Not applicable.

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