

DESTINATION MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC-PRIVATE NETWORKS: THE CASE OF LAMBAYEQUE

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Citation: Serruto-Perea, Y.A., & Zapata-Mendoza, M.E. (2026). Destination management and public-private networks: The case of Lambayeque. *Geojournal of Tourism and Geosites*, 66(2spl), 1442-1449. <https://doi.org/10.30892/gtg.662spl16-1777>

Abstract: Lambayeque is a region located on the northern coast of Peru, renowned for its cultural and natural wealth, where tourism has developed steadily. The purpose of this study is to establish the type of relationship that exists between destination management (GD) performance and its public-private networks (PPNs). The methodology used was a nonexperimental cross-sectional design with relational scope. Data were collected from January 2023 to January 2024, with a response rate of 93% among public and private organisations related to tourism. Two questionnaires were used to collect the data: one to analyse destination management (GD) performance, consisting of 51 questions with a Likert scale, and one questionnaire on relational networks, consisting of nine questions. The instruments were validated and reliability testing was carried out for their application. Google Forms and personal interviews were used to collect data. No sampling was used as the entire population was considered according to the exclusion criteria. The results obtained in the research indicate that there is a moderate positive relationship between the two variables, with the dimensions of product innovation, marketing, sustainable development, training in tourism and hospitality, risk management, and climate change having a moderate significant correlation with the dimension of systemic awareness of the variable Public-Private Networks. These are the areas that should be worked on with greater emphasis to achieve the good performance of the destination.

Keywords: tourism, relations, management, public-private partnership, sustainable development

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INTRODUCTION

Each tourist destination develops strategies to improve its competitiveness, perfecting its supply and demand. However, this depends largely on destination management (GD) and how networks are established between public and private institutions (Serruto-Perea & Córdova-Buiza, 2024). This competitiveness of the destination must be worked on jointly, as different actors from the public and private sectors are involved in the management of the destination, with each institution playing an important role in its competitiveness. Some destinations are clear about the importance of coordinated work through business networks; however, in other destinations, institutions work in isolation, hindering the ability to innovate, sustain, and differentiate destinations. In this regard, studies have been conducted on these topics in relation to destination management and association coordination. Serruto-Perea (2024) states that there is theoretical support for this link between these two variables. although it is true that there are few quantitative articles demonstrating this relationship, the author presents a model linking these two variables based on the factor theories of Dwyer et al., 2014, and public-private networks (PPNs) based on the dimensions of Chiappa & Presenza, 2013.

On the other hand, Pulido-Fernández & Merinero-Rodríguez (2018) affirm that there is a direct and growing relationship between the attributes of actors in the networks of a tourist destination and its tourism development.

Cudai et al., 2024; Cehan et al. (2020) mention that collaboration between actors in a tourist destination is difficult and changeable and requires involvement and willingness to do so. Czernek-Marszałek (2020) states that the higher the level of business cooperation, communication, knowledge between members, trust, understanding, and dialogue, the higher the level of collaboration assessment will be. However, Tang et al. (2019) assert that local public sector officials and managers of tourism service companies have links that impact institutional innovation and management and product processes, while intersectoral links foster innovations in processes and products.

In the case of Lambayeque, despite its cultural, natural, and gastronomic wealth, there are no quantitative studies that demonstrate the articulation of destination management and public-private networks (PPNs), raising the question: What is the relationship between destination management and public-private networks? Therefore, this study aims to contribute to the theory and methodology of the relationship between these two variables. In this regard, based on the above and given the theoretical support for the articulation of these two variables, destination management and public-

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private networks, this study will contribute to filling an empirical gap, as studies on these two variables have been qualitative in nature, while this research proposes a quantitative correlational analysis using validated and reliable instruments. Thus, the study hypothesises that if there is a positive and significant relationship between destination management and public-private networks (PPNs) in the tourism sector, the study offers recommendations for governance that are valuable for public policy makers and private actors.

The literature review, methodology, results, discussion, and conclusions are presented below.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1. Management of tourism destinations.

In relation to tourism destination management, Ritchie & Crouch (2003) mention that: "It is a micro-level activity in which all actors in the sector and the community perform individual and organisational responsibilities to realise the vision, policy, planning and development of the destination" (p. 166). Consequently, Dwyer & Kim (2003) in their competitiveness model propose that destination management is comprised of the public and private sectors through joint initiatives consisting of five types of activities, namely marketing; planning and development; organisation; human resource development; and environmental management. The World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO, 2019), citing UNWTO 2007, indicates that destination management is the "coordinated management of all the elements that make up a tourist destination (attractions, services, access, marketing, and prices)" (p. 12). In destination competitiveness, also referred to by Michael Porter as the competitiveness of nations, he indicates that the management of these elements is essential for their development. Ritchie & Crouch (2003) stated that this management must be constituted by institutions responsible for coordinating and directing the actions of the tourism system and that all institutions in the sector must be committed to supporting tourism services. On the other hand, Dwyer et al. (2014) proposed six factors for analysing destination management, namely: product development and innovation, marketing, sustainable development, training in tourism and hospitality, risk management, and climate change. They indicate that if tourism agents do not apply strategies that can improve their competitiveness and at the same time make it sustainable, the destination will not reach its potential.

Similarly, Armenski et al. (2017) classified factors related to destination competitiveness into five categories: risk management and environmental adaptation strategies, product development, innovation, networking, sustainable development planning, and community concern and sustainability education. Therefore, it can be observed that the conducted studies and the proposed models consider similar dimensions for the competitiveness of the destination.

1.2. Associativity and public-private networks

It should be noted that there is no single definition of public-private partnerships, as these depend on the culture, economy, and politics of each nation. The Inter-American Development Bank (2015) states that public-private partnerships are established through long-term contracts between institutions for the purpose of providing a public good or service, in which the private company assumes greater risk and, similarly, is responsible for management, with remuneration based on performance. On this subject, Sanz (2003) indicated that the network is a relational construct consisting of two concepts: the first is the link that connects the participants and the second is made up of the actors, which can be organisations, institutions, associations, groups, and individuals. Stocker et al. (2019) mention that despite the various types of organisational network, a common denominator among all of them is that they are constituted through complex and dynamic relational processes, governed by strategic factors of competition and cooperation, which characterise relational interdependence.

1.3. Studies on destination management and public-private networks

Studies focussing on destination management and public-private networks (PPNs) have been conducted in different countries in Europe, Asia, and Africa. However, these studies have not yet been explored to the same extent in Latin America. The following authors have researched these two variables: Cobán & Sevket (2019) indicate that well-defined destination management could help make it more competitive and that having resources is not enough if there is no good management of them; They indicate that as the complexity of the destination increases, it requires more efficient management. This is in line with one of the consensuses on destination management reached in Sweden, where Reinhold et al. (2023) discuss the most important areas of future research on destination management and marketing, with the most important topics being training and empowering local actors to promote their destination, highlighting that if this is possible, it would have significant implications for the destination in terms of financing, supervision, policies, etc.

From this perspective, it was indicated that a destination is attractive for private investment at the national and international level when it has distinctive value. In this context, Sampieri & Mazzetto (2025) argue that governance orientated towards clear objectives and plans is important for maintaining the confidence of investors in the destination, especially if they are aligned with the 2023 agenda, which is particularly focused on safeguarding cultural and natural heritage. Similarly, Sarhan et al. (2025) propose a relationship between local actors of collaboration through local leadership with co-participation of actors for population-orientated destination management.

Along the same lines, Haid et al. (2021) state that destination tourism managers are called upon to negotiate and propose tourism development in the area through sustainable projects and measures, and that understanding between stakeholders is essential for the planning and implementation of policies and measures aimed at improving sustainability without losing the competitiveness of the destination.

In this respect, Basyar et al. (2025) explain that public-private networks depend on local leadership, and constant communication between the different levels of organisation, focused on community development.

Similarly, Wirman et al. (2025) emphasise that communication is key to building trust between community stakeholders and encouraging the participation of local actors, as well as generating communication policies to achieve efficient destination management. However, Reta & Beldados (2025) state in their study the importance of generating standards in the destination and having resources to strengthen collaboration between public-private networks, thereby promoting the sustainable development of the locality. Similarly, Pulido-Fernández & Merinero-Rodríguez (2018) assert that there is a direct and growing relationship between the attributes of the stakeholders in the network and the tourism development of a tourist destination. For this reason, it can be deduced that when network stakeholders behave in a coordinated manner, destination management performs better. On the other hand, Ledesma (2025) mentions that the participation of destination stakeholders is very important for destination planning and management, as decisions and actions can help increase competitiveness in a shorter period of time.

Along the same lines, Monticelli (2024) and Cehan et al. (2020) mention that collaboration between actors in a tourist destination is difficult and changeable due to the diversity of actors and their respective objectives, where involvement is essential and implies a willingness to do so. Similarly, Cortés-Leal & Aranda-Camacho (2017) state that innovation in a destination occurs through the formation of strategic networks with a collective vision, recognising that collective action helps the destination perform better and be more competitive. However, Lequeux & Teodorescu (2024) and Weaver (2006) states that the sustainability of a destination has to do with the conservation of resources to maintain its long-term viability, considering tourism as a form of sustainable development for a community. Furthermore, Deladem et al. (2020) state that in strategic plans for the tourism sector, sustainability must be included in promotion aimed at eradicating scarcity or poverty. On the other hand, Czernek-Marszałek (2020) states that social integration between networks depends on the sociocultural and institutional context, and hence this context must be taken into account to raise awareness among entrepreneurs about the relevance of social relations, which facilitates the opening of the market (pp. 1, 14).). To this end, Toma & Mihai (2023) state that effective leadership and coordination in destination management can achieve greater performance, competitiveness, and sustainability, ensuring coordinated work between stakeholders. Another aspect is that expressed by Díaz et al. (2023) reviewed different case studies on the management of destinations in different cities around the world during the COVID-19 pandemic, recognising relevant ideas on how destinations should deal with these situations, namely that resilience and government support, communication and collaboration are essential aspects for moving

Finally, Lisovska et al. (2025) emphasise that public-private partnerships optimise performance in destination management by creating a network that minimises financial risks, increases investment in infrastructure, and encourages innovation, marketing, and digitalisation in order to attract visitors.

METHODOLOGY

For the study, 90% of the information used came from scientific articles in indexed journals such as Scopus and Science Direct, and 10% from books and tourism organisation websites. The information gathered from these materials was used to develop the theoretical framework, conceptual framework and background, which allowed for a global understanding of the study of the variables of destination management and public-private networks.

In terms of methodology, a synthetic analytical method was used. In this context, an analysis of the variables was carried out at the theoretical level, breaking them down into dimensions and indicators to understand the behaviour of the constructs. After data collection, the data was synthesised to understand the reality and explain it by variables and their relationship with each other. In this regard, this research used a nonexperimental cross-sectional design. Data collection for this research began in January 2023 and continued until December 2024. Similarly, the study has a correlational scope, with the study variables being destination management and public-private networks.

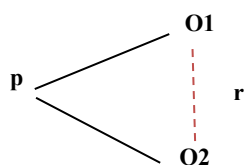


Figure 1. Diagram of the object of study

P is the unit of research, O1 is destination management, O2 is public-private networks, and r is the possible relationship between the two variables. The purpose of the study was the public and private institutions involved in the management of the tourist destination of Lambayeque, represented by the representatives of these institutions, which until 2022 consisted of 237 institutions, according to the National Institute of Statistics and Informatics (INEI, 2020) and Regional Foreign Trade and Tourism Management (GERCETUR, 2021).).

The total population was filtered using the following exclusion criteria: provincial and district municipalities that do not have a tourism office within their organisational structure, institutions with legal or other problems that prevent them from having legitimacy, accommodation establishments, food and beverage establishments, informal travel agencies and similar businesses, uncategoryed accommodation and food and beverage establishments, accommodation establishments with a 2-star or 1-star rating, and food and beverage establishments with a 2-fork or 1-fork rating.

Therefore, according to the exclusion criteria for data collection, a total of 140 public and private institutions were identified. They were contacted by email, sending them the link to the questionnaire created in Google Forms,

explaining the purpose of the research, and asking them to fill it out. Companies and institutions that did not respond to emails were contacted by telephone and in person and asked to respond impartially. In some cases, it was difficult to communicate with all public and private institutions, despite constant insistence, obtaining a response from 93% of the total sample, of which 15 were public institutions/associations and 115 were private institutions.

Instrumentation

Two questionnaires were used as instruments in the research. The first questionnaire on destination management was proposed by Dwyer & Kim (2014) and consisted of 51 questions with a Likert scale from 1 to 5, an ordinal scale ranging from 1 (poor performance) to 5 (high performance) that measures managers' performance. A reliability test was conducted to verify the internal consistency of the instrument, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.917, confirming the authors' findings and indicating that this score is very acceptable for the application of the questionnaire.

The second instrument used for the relational networks variable was that of Chiappa & Presenza (2013), consisting of nine questions with a Likert scale from 1 (totally absent) to 7 (very present). Regarding the reliability of the instrument, a pilot test was conducted with 26 tourism specialists. According to the results obtained, Cronbach's alpha was 0.755, which is a very good reliability, which means that the questionnaire is applicable.

Table 1. Normality tests (Source: Own research)

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	gl.	Sig.	Statistic	gl.	Next
Destination management - Performance	.101	130	.002	.936	130	.000
Public-private enterprise networks	.177	130	.000	.925	130	.000

According to the normality test, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk normality tests were applied to the main variables of the study (Table 1). The results show that both the variable Destination Management – Performance (Kolmogorov-Smirnov: $D = 0.101$, $p = 0.002$; Shapiro-Wilk: $W = 0.936$, $p < 0.001$) and the variable Public-Private Business Networks (Kolmogorov-Smirnov: $D = 0.177$, $p < 0.001$; Shapiro-Wilk: $W = 0.925$, $p < 0.001$) do not follow a normal distribution. Consequently, nonparametric statistical tests were used, specifically Spearman's correlation coefficient, to analyse the relationship between the two variables. The SPSS vs24 programme was used to organise and analyse the data. The data were organised into tables to identify the correlation between variables and dimensions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 02 shows the correlation between destination management performance variables and public-private networks, with the following results. The results of the calculation indicate the existence of a significant positive relationship between destination management in terms of stakeholder performance and public-private networks ($\rho = 0.341$; $p < 0.01$; $N = 130$). This result shows that when there is greater support between public and private actors, performance could improve at the destination. Although the relationship is considered moderate, the statistical significance provides relevance for the link between the two variables in the tourism context.

Consequently, the result obtained in this research is in line with what the authors mentioned, agreeing that the articulation of networks has a positive relationship with the development of competitiveness and differentiation of tourist destinations. It is important to mention that although the correlation is not high, it is significant, suggesting that there should be other factors that explain this relationship more significantly.

Table 2. Relationship by performance of the Destination Management and Public-Private Networks variable

		Destination Management - Performance	
Spearman's Rho	Public-private business networks	Correlation coefficient	.341**
		Sig. (bilateral)	.000
		N	130
		N	130

According to the reviewed literature, these factors could be related to infrastructure, public policies, or land management, which opens the door to further research to integrate other study variables to clarify the relationship between these variables more precisely. From a theoretical point of view, the results reinforce the arguments of authors who state that collaborative governance and alliances between actors are decisive in achieving the sustainability of destinations and that inter-organisational cooperation facilitates the use of resources and encourages innovation in the destination, as well as the ability to reinvent itself in the face of changes in demand or other contingencies in the macro environment (Beritelli et al., 2020; Baggio, 2019; Dredge & Jamal, 2015). It is important to emphasise that destinations must design strategic plans with the global market in mind to increase visitor numbers.

As such, the role of key players in the competitiveness of the destination is crucial. Similarly, destination authorities must work to improve their cities, provide basic health services, and establish pricing policies, which would have a positive impact on the quality of life of residents and on the natural and cultural heritage.

For this reason, sustainability must be considered in management, with public policies that help regulate environmental protection processes, as well as a network of collaboration between public and private institutions,

focused on trust and collaboration, where inclusive governance is promoted for destination management (Rodríguez-Herrera et al., 2025; Haid et al., 2021; Albayrak et al., 2018; Boley et al., 2017).

In this regard, the report issued by Consensus 2022 on research for destination marketing and management concluded that for sustainable destination management, key areas related to generating tourism policies must be taken into account. Governance must consider the resilience and sustainability of destinations and, from the same perspective, take into account visitor flows and the development of emerging destinations (Reinhold et al., 2023).

These are aligned with the relationship between destination management variables and public-private networks. It is also important to note that destinations must currently focus their efforts not only on sustainability, but also on developing smart destinations through innovation, technology, communication, connectivity, information platforms and smart solutions for the benefit of the entire community. However, a major limitation is the strategic plans and innovative capacity of destination managers. It is also important to note that a successful destination has the particularity that the market is similar, where public-private networks are strengthened and improve the competitiveness of the destination (Chim-Miki et al., 2025; Reinhold et al., 2023; Sigalat-Signes et al., 2020).

In summary, the empirical results support the hypothesis that the articulation of public-private networks has a significant positive relationship with moderate magnitude in the management of tourist destinations, underlining what was explained above about the importance of designing collaborative management strategies that enhance local development. This is in line with the current trend towards tourism management models based on social innovation and shared governance, which are considered key to achieving a balance between competitiveness and sustainability.

The results of the relationship between the dimensions of destination management and public-private networks are shown below. The table below shows the results of the relationship between destination management and networks.

Table 3. Relationship by performance of the dimensions of the Destination Management and Public-Private Networks variable (Source: Own research)

			DM: dimension Product development and innovation	DM: dimension Marketing	DM dimension: Sustainable development	DM - dimension: Training in tourism and hospitality	DM - dimension: Risk management	DM - dimension: Climate change
Spearman's Rho	PPNs dimension: Systemic awareness	Correlation coefficient	.441**	.407**	.462**	.435**	.407**	.424**
		Next (bilateral)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
		N	130	130	130	130	130	130
	PPNs dimension: Trust	Correlation coefficient	.297**	.083	.223*	.196*	.118	.119
		Sig. (bilateral)	.001	.351	.011	.025	.181	.178
		N	130	130	130	130	130	130
	PPNs dimension: Collaboration	Correlation coefficient	.318**	.182*	.268**	.267**	.330**	.327**
		Signature (bilateral)	.000	.038	.002	.002	.000	.000
		N	130	130	130	130	130	130
	PPNs dimension: Reciprocity	Correlation coefficient	.059	.006	.063	.190*	.124	.052
		Cont. (bilateral)	.508	.946	.474	.031	.161	.560
		N	130	130	130	130	130	130
	PPNs dimension: participation	Correlation coefficient	.327**	.202*	.248**	.219*	.104	.175*
		Sig. (bilateral)	.000	.021	.004	.012	.237	.046
		N	130	130	130	130	130	130

Spearman's correlation analysis shows a positive and significant association between the dimensions of public-private enterprise networks and the dimensions of destination management. The most notable correlations, of moderate magnitude, are between the systemic consistency dimension of Public and Private Networks and the dimensions of product development and innovation ($\rho = 0.447$; $p < 0.01$), marketing ($\rho = 0.407$; $p < 0.01$), sustainable development ($\rho = 0.482$; $p < 0.01$), tourism and hospitality ($\rho = 0.415$; $p < 0.01$), risk ($\rho = 0.407$; $p < 0.01$) and climate change ($\rho = 0.424$; $p < 0.01$). These findings suggest that strengthening collaborative networks between public and private actors has a positive effect on most of the components that make up the comprehensive management of a tourist destination.

The network has a positive relationship with the dimensions of the product innovation destination management performance of product innovation ($\rho = 0.318$; $p < 0.01$), Risk Management ($\rho = 0.330$; $p < 0.01$), climate change ($\rho = 0.327$; $p < 0.01$) and the dimension of participation of public-private networks with the Dimension of Product Innovation ($\rho = 0.327$; $p < 0.01$) of the destination management performance.

In this regard, the dimensions of product innovation, marketing, sustainable development, tourism and hospitality, risk and climate change with the dimension of systemic awareness and of public-private networks clearly show that the

coordination and participation of stakeholders improve destination management. It is also important to have leadership that guides competitiveness strategies, where the role of governance is very important for the development of a destination. For this reason, management must be sustained and based on policies implemented in order to develop long-term tourism. Therefore, destination management and leadership must be part of this management in order for it to be sustainable (Basyar et al., 2025; Toma & Mihai, 2023; Marketa & Drew, 2020; Goffi, 2013). This suggests that when stakeholders recognise their role within a collective effort, destination management focuses on stronger performance. In this way, shared awareness acts as a decisive element in increasing competitiveness.

In contrast, the dimensions of trust and reciprocity show weaker correlations. One clear explanation could be the persistence of divided institutional designs, where actors, while recognising the importance of participation, do not actively engage in formal decision-making spaces or effective coordination mechanisms, which limits the generation of trust and reciprocity in benefits. Similarly, the low participation of certain private sectors in planning instances explains why these dimensions do not achieve significance similar to systemic awareness or collaboration.

The benefit is explained in empirical research conducted in European destinations, where cooperation among stakeholders benefits local development; as decisions and actions help to improve the competitiveness of the destination (Ledesma, 2025; Elvekrok et al., 2022) and the fact that institutions work in a planned manner perceive the benefit as the possibility of obtaining higher sales due to the influx of visitors and greater resistance to changes that may exist in the markets, demonstrating the vital importance of stakeholders in destination management, provided that they are aware of their participation in generating value for their organisations and the destination in its different

However, tourism development must go hand in hand with care and conservation of the environment, have a positive impact on the economy and society, and preserve culture to achieve destination sustainability. Therefore, stakeholders must include these factors and impact monitoring indicators in their development plans, which should be flexible to changes and trends in tourism, with a focus on resilience to tourism sustainability (Fitri et al., 2024; Zubiaga et al., 2024). Another aspect to consider is that indicated by Tang et al. (2019), who explain that links between tourism companies help to generate greater institutional innovation, management innovation and product innovation through links between companies, making it clear that networking is relevant to destination management. Similarly, Lisovska et al. (2025) emphasise that public-private partnerships minimise the financial risks for additional investments in infrastructure, marketing and digitalisation, thereby improving tourist numbers.

Based on the above, it is clear that strengthening marketing and improving the presence of the destination's resources and/or attractions is an important factor in product innovation and thus in meeting market needs. Smart destinations are part of product innovation and to this end tourism stakeholders must work together to form networks for the development, promotion, and sustainability of the destination, with marketing playing an important role through sustainability marketing (Cerdá-Mansilla et al., 2024; Månsson & Eksell, 2024; Gato et al., 2022).

Along the same lines, to emphasise this relationship, Elvekrok et al (2022) highlight that relationships between destination stakeholders are beneficial for increasing sales and market growth, having a significant impact on marketing effects and thus achieving visitor satisfaction; Similarly, Cehan et al. (2020) state that there is a relationship between the level of development of a destination and the willingness of stakeholders to work and collaborate with it.

CONCLUSIONS

The study revealed a positive and significant, albeit moderate, relationship between destination management and public-private networks in Lambayeque, Peru, confirming the hypothesis and fulfilling the objective of demonstrating the articulation of interinstitutional coordination in tourism competitiveness. The dimensions of innovation, marketing, sustainability, tourism training, risk management, and climate change showed consistent correlations with systemic awareness and stakeholder collaboration, underscoring the relevance of collaborative governance in strengthening destination competitiveness.

At the academic level, the work provides a novel quantitative approach in a field dominated by qualitative studies, while in practice it offers guidance for designing public policies and cooperation strategies that promote sustainability and innovation. However, the cross-sectional nature of the study limits the dynamic analysis of the results, which opens the need for future longitudinal comparative research that integrates multivariate models that consider additional variables such as infrastructure and public policies. In general, the research reinforces the importance of public-private coordination as a strategic axis for the competitive and sustainable management of emerging tourist destinations.

Author contributions: Conceptualisation, Y.A.S.P. and M.E.Z.M.; methodology, Y.A.S.P. and M.E.Z.M.; software, Y.A.S.P.; validation, Y.A.S.P.; formal analysis, Y.A.S.P. and M.E.Z.M.; investigation, Y.A.S.P.; data curation, Y.A.S.P.; writing: preparation of the original draft, Y.A.S.P.; writing: review and editing, Y.A.S.P. and M.E.Z.M.; visualisation, Y.A.S.P.; supervision, Y.A.S.P. and M.E.Z.M.; project management, Y.A.S.P. All authors have read and accepted the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: Not applicable.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: The data presented in this study may be obtained on request from the corresponding author.

Acknowledgements: The research undertaken was made possible by the equal scientific involvement of all the authors concerned.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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