



Striving for musical excellence: a study on the development of music players' skills for church worship accompaniment through ensemble training



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ABSTRACT

The connection between music and the church is integral, especially during worship, where hymns require musical accompaniment. The musical experience influences congregational engagement and emotions. Given the significance of musical accompaniment, diversity is essential. Coaching can enhance musicians' skills and contribute to varied worship experiences. This action research aims to guide music players at GKE Palangka I Palangka Raya to improve their music-playing skills, which are carried out in two cycles. Each cycle consists of four stages: planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. The subjects of this study were ten teenage music players. Data were collected through observation, documentation, and skill tests. The data were analyzed by processing scores of assessment aspects, including the ability to imitate sounds, read notation, tempo suitability, intonation accuracy, and fingering techniques. The results increase musicians' skills in playing music through ensemble music, with an increase in the average score of each participant from pre-cycle 52 to the first cycle 62 by 19% and from the first cycle 62 to the second cycle 77 by 24%. This research contributes to the significance of musical diversity in worship, the impact of musical instruments on congregational engagement, and the potential benefits of coaching in enhancing musicians' skills for diverse music presentations, particularly within small musical ensembles. Additionally, this research highlights the significance of a theological-oriented approach to training in music ministry and practice and the potential for collaborative music training to improve musical proficiency in the context of worship.

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1. Introduction

Music and the church share a close relationship, particularly in the context of worship implementation, where hymns sung during services require musical accompaniment. This symbiotic connection arises from the inherent integration of hymns, an inseparable component that holds significance in the lives of Christians [1]. It makes music a form of service to God. Based on research done previously by Sulistyowati [2]. Accompaniment music affects the congregation's interest to worship at GKE Palangka I Palangka Raya. In more detail, it was explained that 36.25% of the congregation said they strongly agreed, and 56.25% said they agreed that accompaniment music influenced the interest of the congregation to worship in the church. Thus, varied accompaniment music is also needed to create a different atmosphere when worshipping. The variety of musical accompaniment during Worship gives the congregation a variety of musical experiences and affects the congregation's emotions so that the phenomenon of musical taste appears, namely the sensitivity of the human subconscious to something related to music [3]. Church music developed in Indonesia not only in musical form but also in terms of function in Worship.

The utilization of musical forms and practices, including hymns, psalms, local chants, and spiritual songs, has found extensive application within the context of worship in churches. Each denomination offers a distinct musical style during worship services. Moreover, the choice of musical instruments significantly influences the accompanying music, thereby yielding diverse musical nuances. As a result, incorporating a range of musical instruments for accompaniment becomes imperative, enriching the congregational musical experience and thereby impacting their emotional engagement during worship. This endeavor necessitates proficient musical skills from church musicians. The emotions articulated, awakened, and molded through worship hold the potential to stimulate post-worship congregation behavior [4].

This shows the importance of preparing a worship service well in order to build the emotions of the congregation. One part of worship that is very important is music, so it requires musicians who are truly capable of preparing musical accompaniment in worship. But what kind of preparation should church musicians do? As Schroder asserts, there exists a requirement for a theological-oriented approach to training in music ministry and practice [5]. On the flip side, there is an equally pressing need to improve musical skills to enhance proficiency in performance. One effective approach is through collaborative music training [6]. Some of the studies above have shown the relationship between liturgical music, musical skills, and also coaching from a theological perspective. Therefore, this research tries to focus on the development of liturgical music by conducting coaching in an effort to improve musical skills.

The musical instruments used as worship accompaniment at GKE Palangka I Palangka Raya are piano and band. Every Sunday, Worship is held one to three times. Using the same musical instrument will make the musical accompaniment in Worship less varied or monotonous. Helena proposes employing a diverse array of musical instruments with complete dynamics to effectively convey the divine message [7]. Alongside the significance of the musical element in congregational worship, the musical experience of the musicians serves as a valuable exemplar of the impact of illocutionary power within worship [8]. Incorporating new and user-friendly musical instruments can enhance musical dynamics significantly. One form of musical presentation that makes use of a variety of musical instruments is a musical ensemble, which involves social interaction [9]. A musical ensemble is a form of musical presentation wherein performers collaborate either in unison or in groups, utilizing one or multiple types of musical instruments [10]. The music ensemble presentation involves delivering uncomplicated music, with the role of presenting functions that are distinct as carriers of the main melody and accompaniments [11]. Small musical ensembles represent a distinct form of human social activity, entailing a profoundly intricate array of interpersonal communicative skills [12].

Based on the results of the initial interview with the Chairperson of the GKE Palangka I Congregational Council, it was found that there was less variety of musical accompaniment in the church because music development was not optimal. The absence of optimal guidance for musicians also impacts their musical skills. Coaching should strive to enhance or refine musical abilities within small musical units, utilizing uncomplicated musical instruments [13]. The purpose of coaching implementation is to enhance musical abilities for the creation of diverse music [14]. Musical skills encompass an individual's capacity to blend and arrange sounds and silences acquired through the learning process, enabling the creation of expressions or responses that convey meaning to the listener. These skills find their foundation in the acuity towards the auditory aspects of music, encompassing high and low notes, rhythms, and melodies [15].

The indicators of music skills used in this study are the results of a literature review by researchers who then rearrange the indicators of music skills as follows, namely: (1) the ability to imitate sounds; (2) the ability to read notation; (3) tempo suitability; (4) sound accuracy; and (5) fingering technique. To present good music requires good musical skills. Thus, it is necessary to improve musical skills at GKE Palangka I Palangka Raya through ensemble music development so that the music accompaniment in the church is more varied. Coaching involves endeavors to establish, sustain, or enhance a desirable state, both in the present and the future, with the aim of enhancing one's knowledge, attitudes, and skills. Early initiation of coaching is advisable, particularly in connection to skill development during adulthood [16].

The main thing to note is that musical activities involve the auditory (auditive) aspect. Moreno *et. al.*, contends that all forms of musical activities necessitate auditory acumen. Consequently, coaching activities involving musical ensembles hinge on two pivotal proficiencies: mastery of musical elements and factors associated with auditory perception [17]. For the development of musical ensembles, it is necessary to formulate strategies that will be used in the development of musical ensembles, plan activities for fostering musical ensembles, organize and carry out the development of musical ensembles, as well as evaluate the results and implementation of musical ensemble development activities.

The trainer must possess the ability to coordinate musicians playing diverse instruments [18]. The learning process aims to establish an activity system for musical education within an ensemble. Subsequently, this activity system is employed to examine the motivational factors intrinsic to group learning and the role of identity in motivating participation [19]. The results of research conducted by Frankenberg *et al.* showed that music program participants who had performed in music ensembles showed greater improvement in terms of orientation towards mainstream culture over 1.5 years compared to control students who did not receive additional music lessons [20]. Through the development of musical ensembles, it is hoped that the skills of playing musical instruments can increase. Based on the description above, music ensemble coaching is one of the efforts made to improve the skills of the musicians in the church. In worship, when the music ensemble is used as accompaniment music, it will provide a different atmosphere compared to conventional worship. Thus, this research contributes to the development of musical accompaniment in church worship.

2. Method

This research is action research using a qualitative approach conducted at the GKE Palangka I Church, Palangka Raya. The data sources in this study were all musicians or music players in GKE Palangka I Palangka Raya. In designing actions, there are four stages of implementing the actions taken, namely: (1) planning; (2) implementation of actions; (3) observation; and (4) reflection. Data was collected during the auction process, observation, documentation, and skill tests. Observations were made during the coaching process to see how musicians' behavior and skill developed. Documentation is used to collect information or materials in a systematic and actual manner, then analyzed to clarify further the data collected. In this study, documentation is used to document the process of activities and the results of the development that will be carried out. At the same time, the skill test is used to measure the improvement of musical skills.

The test is in the form of practice playing a musical instrument. The test is carried out before and after giving the action at the end of each cycle. The assessment is carried out by researchers using an assessment guide that contains the aspects to be measured. The results of the skill test, then the results were analyzed and compared the results before being given coaching and after being given coaching to be able to see the improvement in their musical skills. The range of values for determining ratings can be seen in Table 1 [21].

Table 1. Scoring Determination Value Range

Score	Description
80-90	Very Excellent
60-79	Excellent
40-59	Sufficient
0-39	Deficient

The success indicator of this research is the increase in musical skills of musicians at GKE Palangka I Palangka Raya through the development of musical ensembles where all music players get a minimum score in the excellent category with a score range of 60-79. Thus, the success indicators have been met; the cycle will be declared complete.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Pre Cycle

Pre-cycle is a learning stage to determine the initial skills coaching participants possess, which in this case are music players at GKE Palangka I Palangka Raya. In the pre-cycle stage, an initial assessment is carried out before the implementation of the research action. Musical skills assessed in the pre-cycle are the ability to imitate sounds, the ability to read notation, tempo suitability, intonation accuracy, and fingering techniques by playing songs Pelengkap Kidung Jemaat 183 "Mari Sebarkan Injil." Fig 1.

Pkj 183
MARI SEBARKAN INJIL
Cipt. Arnoldus Isaak Apituley
Arr. Jose Ernest

The musical score is arranged in a grand staff format with eight staves. The Recorder staff has a treble clef and a tempo marking of quarter note = 88. The Pianika staff has a treble clef. The Glockenspiel staff has a treble clef. The Vocal staff has a treble clef. The Guitar staff has a treble clef and includes chord diagrams for F, F/G, Em, Am, Dm, and G. The Piano staff has a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The Electric Bass staff has a bass clef and a tempo marking of quarter note = 88. The Cajon staff has a percussion clef and a tempo marking of quarter note = 88. The score begins with a double bar line and repeat sign, followed by four measures of music.

Fig. 1. Music Score PKJ 183 "Mari Sebarkan Injil"

Based on Table 2, it can be seen that the average total score of the participants is 52, with a sufficient category. Two out of ten participants have musical skills in the excellent category, while the other eight are in the suitable category. The average on all aspects of the assessment shows that the musical skills of the participants are included in the excellent category. The participants' musical skills will be explained in more detail in each aspect. In the aspect of the ability to imitate sounds, one participant had an inferior ability, eight participants had a poor ability, and one had an exemplary ability. In the aspect of notation reading skills, as many as two participants had abilities that were in the excellent category, which means they could read notation correctly but not fluently, and six participants were in the poor category, while two participants were still very poor in reading notation.

Table 2. Pre-cycle assessment results by raters I, II, and III

Name	Assessment Aspect					Score	Dec.
	Sound Imitation Ability	Ability to Read Notation	Tempo Match	Intonation Accuracy	Fingering Technique		
Respondent 1	2,7	2,0	2,0	2,0	2,0	53	Sufficient
Respondent 2	2,0	1,7	2,0	1,7	1,3	43	Sufficient
Respondent 3	2,3	2,0	2,3	1,3	1,3	47	Sufficient
Respondent 4	2,7	1,7	2,3	2,3	2,0	55	Sufficient
Respondent 5	3,7	3,0	2,3	2,3	2,7	70	Excellent
Respondent 6	2,7	3,0	2,3	2,0	2,0	60	Excellent
Respondent 7	2,0	2,0	1,7	2,0	1,7	47	Sufficient
Respondent 8	1,7	2,0	2,0	2,3	2,0	50	Sufficient
Respondent 9	2,0	2,0	1,7	2,0	2,3	50	Sufficient
Respondent 10	2,0	2,0	1,3	1,7	1,7	43	Sufficient
Score	59	53	50	49	48	52	Sufficient
Description	Sufficient	Sufficient	Sufficient	Sufficient	Sufficient		

On the aspect of tempo suitability, it was found that seven participants had poor ability to adjust the tempo of the song, while three participants were less able to adjust the tempo of a given song. Then from the aspect of intonation accuracy, it was also found that as many as seven participants were classified as lacking, and three participants were classified as very poor in terms of intonation accuracy when playing music. Six participants were lacking in the aspect of fingering techniques, and four were lacking in mastering fingering techniques. Based on the results of the pre-cycle assessment above, it is continued to take action. The action given is in the form of coaching ensemble music for participants.

3.2. Cycle I

The implementation of the first cycle is the initial research action on developing musical ensembles at GKE Palangka I. In this cycle, the researcher tries to improve the participants' skills based on the pre-cycle assessment. The following are the results obtained after the first cycle is completed, Table 3. Based on Table 3, it can be seen that the average score of all participants is 62, where there is an increase in music skills when compared to the pre-cycle results. From the table above, it can also be seen that 5 participants still need to be given special attention in order to improve their musical skills, while 4 participants are in a suitable category, where there is an increase from the results of the pre-cycle assessment. Then, there was 1 participant whose skills improved to be very good. In this cycle, the indicators of success have been achieved from the average score obtained, but if viewed individually, it is still necessary to implement actions to improve their musical skills because 50% of the total participants' scores are still in the excellent category.

Table 3. Results of Cycle I Post-test Assessment by Raters I, II, III

Name	Assessment Aspect					Score	Dec.
	Sound Imitation Ability	Ability to Read Notation	Tempo Match	Intonation Accuracy	Fingering Technique		
Respondent 1	3,0	2,3	2,0	2,0	3,0	62	Excellent
Respondent 2	2,0	2,3	2,3	1,7	2,0	52	Sufficient
Respondent 3	2,7	2,3	2,3	2,3	2,0	58	Sufficient
Respondent 4	2,7	2,7	2,3	2,7	2,3	63	Excellent
Respondent 5	4,0	3,7	2,7	3,0	2,7	80	Very Excellent
Respondent 6	3,3	3,3	2,7	3,0	3,3	78	Excellent
Respondent 7	2,7	2,3	2,3	2,7	2,0	60	Excellent
Respondent 8	2,3	2,0	2,0	2,7	2,3	57	Sufficient
Respondent 9	2,3	2,0	2,0	2,3	3,0	58	Sufficient
Respondent 10	2,0	2,0	1,7	1,7	2,3	48	Sufficient
Score	68	63	56	60	63	62	Good
Description	Good	Good	Good	Sufficient	Good		

Fig. 2 is Music Ensemble in Cycle 1. If we look at the assessment aspect, it is found that the average for each aspect of the assessment is in a suitable category. However, the aspect of tempo suitability needs special attention because it has not met the standard of success. This aspect will then be used as evaluation material to improve the implementation of cycle II.



Fig. 2. Music Ensemble in Cycle 1

3.3. Cycle II

The implementation of the second cycle is a follow-up action to the research on developing musical ensembles at GKE Palangka I. In this cycle, the researchers continue their efforts to improve the participants' skills based on the results of reflections from the actions of the first cycle, Fig 3 is the music ensemble in cycle II. From the implementation of the second cycle, the following results were obtained in Table 4.



Fig. 3. Music Ensemble in Cycle II

Table 4 shows that all participants have met the standard of coaching success, all of which are in the excellent category with an average score of 77. Likewise, if we look at the assessment aspect, all participants have achieved the standard of success for each aspect.

Table 4. Results of Cycle II Post-test Assessment by Raters I, II, III

Name	Assessment Aspect					Score	Dec.
	Sound Imitation Ability	Ability to Read Notation	Tempo Match	Intonati on Accuracy	Fingering Technique		
Respondent 1	3,0	2,7	3,0	2,7	3,0	71,7	Excellent
Respondent 2	2,7	2,3	2,7	2,7	2,7	65,0	Excellent
Respondent 3	3,3	3,3	2,7	3,7	2,7	78,3	Excellent
Respondent 4	3,7	3,3	3,0	3,3	3,0	81,7	Very Excellent
Respondent 5	4,0	4,0	3,3	3,3	3,7	91,7	Very Excellent
Respondent 6	3,7	3,7	3,0	3,3	3,3	85,0	Very Excellent
Respondent 7	3,0	3,0	3,3	3,0	3,0	76,7	Excellent
Respondent 8	3,0	2,7	2,0	3,3	3,0	70,0	Excellent
Respondent 9	3,0	2,3	2,7	2,7	3,0	68,3	Excellent
Respondent 10	2,7	2,3	3,3	2,3	3,0	68,3	Excellent
Score	80	74	73	76	76	77	Excellent
Description	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent		Excellent

3.4. Discussion

Church and music are inseparable parts, where the appreciation and improvement of spiritual aspects can occur more deeply through music. Therefore, music is an essential key in Worship. According to Siagian *et al.*, worship will be disrupted if the music is not running correctly [22]. Musical accompaniment in Worship is not only part of the liturgy but also serves as a service, where musical accompaniment is an intermediary that helps the congregation to be able to absorb and accommodate divine emotions. So, in this case, the music accompaniment plays an equally important role in Worship and must always be aware of its position. As a musical accompaniment, this position is directly related to his musical skills. Musicians must realize that their musical skills must constantly be developed to maintain and even improve the quality of services they provide during Worship.

One way that can be used to improve musical skills can be through coaching, where coaching is an effort to bring, maintain or maintain a situation as it should be, both now and in the future. Domitrovich posits that coaching encompasses all efforts aimed at enhancing the execution of present and future tasks through the provision of information and influencing attitudes [23]. The relevant attitude in question involves fostering a positive transformation akin to the augmentation of knowledge, insights, skills, and abilities. Research conducted by Zutell has also demonstrated that coaching can indeed enhance teachers' proficiency in nurturing their students' potential [24]. Corroborating the findings from research by Zutell, it is acknowledged that coaching can enhance teachers' abilities in facilitating learning processes. This outcome subsequently serves as the foundation for researchers to delineate the procedural steps of this action research in the form of coaching.

Utilizing a music ensemble is one approach that can be employed in coaching. According to the research findings by Guan, musical ensembles have been demonstrated to enhance interest in music [25]. Through ensemble music, students can feel and experience or practice directly. Furthermore, musical ensembles also affect several aspects, including intellectual, emotional, social, perceptual, physical, aesthetic, and creative aspects, and these aspects are included in the musical skills section. Based on the results of the research described in the previous section, it can be seen that coaching through musical ensembles can improve the musical skills of musicians at GKE Palangka I Palangka Raya. This result is illustrated by the improvement in the coaching process starting from the following pre-cycle activities, cycles I and II. In Fig 4, it can be seen that there is a change in the graph that continuously increases, indicating an increase in the average value obtained by each participant.

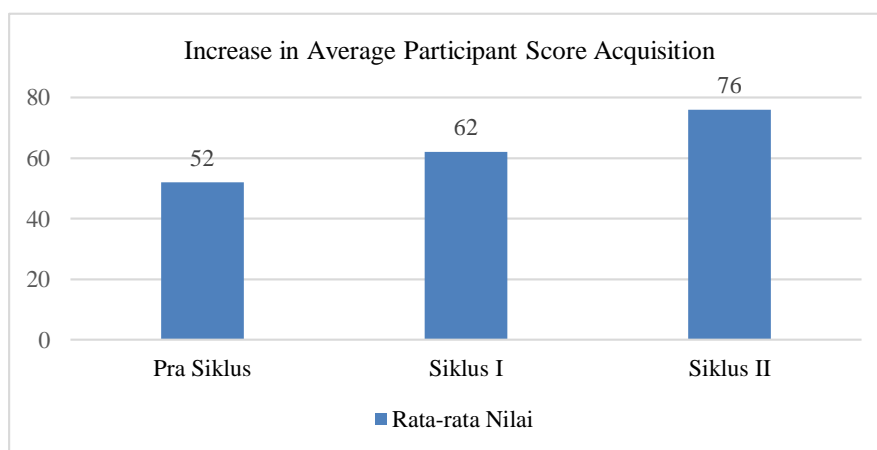


Fig. 4. Graph of Music Skills Assessment Test Results in Pre-cycle, Cycle I, and Cycle II

Table 5 shows an increase for each aspect of the assessment of music skills. Before the action is carried out in the initial stage, namely coaching through ensemble music, pre-cycle activities are carried out. The test results in this activity revealed that the initial skills of each coaching participant were still in the excellent category, whereas when referring to the success standard set by the researcher, the participants' musical skills were still below the standard. This result

then became the reason for the researcher to continue in the stage of giving the first cycle of action in the form of coaching through ensemble music. At the planning stage, the researcher prepares everything related to the needs needed to support the implementation of the coaching, as well as the time for the implementation of the coaching.

Table 5. Obtaining the Average Score of Each Aspect of Assessment

Assessment Aspect	Average Score		
	Precycle	Cycle I	Cycle II
Ability to imitate sounds	59	68	80
Ability to read notation	53	63	74
Tempo match	50	56	73
intonation accuracy	49	60	76
Fingering technique	48	63	76

In the first cycle, it was found that there was an increase in music skills in the participants by 19 %. However, if it is reviewed based on the observations of each participant, it is found that 5 participants, or 50 % of the total number of participants, still need special attention in order to improve their musical skills. Then if we look at various aspects of the assessment, the aspect of tempo suitability needs special attention because it has not met the standard of success. Therefore, the results of the first cycle become a reference for researchers to proceed to the following action, namely the second cycle, by paying attention to and focusing more on the participants and aspects of the assessment that have not yet reached the standard of success so that the implementation of the second cycle can be improved. Based on the observations made in cycle I, it was found that there were still many participants who had not been able to follow directions well.

In addition, most of the participants were holding musical instruments for the first time, so they still looked stiff in playing musical instruments; participants who played musical instruments and participants who held the piano were already able to play the piano well; it is just not by the score of the song. Then it was also found that some participants came late to the third and fourth meetings, so the practice time was not optimal, and some participants still could not interact with other participants. Based on the results of these observations, the researcher then tried to plan the implementation of the second cycle of actions to minimize the shortcomings in the first cycle by taking a more intensive approach to each participant by building communication with the participants in the Whatsapp group that had been formed. In the group, the researcher always asked how the progress of the participants in practicing independently and kept reminding the participants regarding the timing of the coaching implementation so that the next opportunity, the participants could continue to improve their time discipline and the participants could get used to interacting with one another. Furthermore, in the second cycle of coaching, after planning that was adjusted to the results of observations and reflections of the first cycle, it was found that there was an increase in musical skills. Therefore, all participants have met the standard of coaching success, where all are in the excellent category, with an average score of 75.8 or an increase of 24%. Likewise, if we look at the assessment aspect, all participants have reached the standard of success for each aspect.

The results of the observations obtained in cycle II were that the participants seemed to be more enthusiastic and able to adapt to their fellow participants, the participants seemed to be able to enjoy the songs being played, the participants had started to have high enough confidence in holding and playing their respective musical instruments. However, on the other hand, there are still weaknesses in the implementation of cycle II, where some participants often ask for permission to leave the room, thus affecting the coaching activities. Nevertheless, referring to the overall aspects of the assessment and increasing the average score obtained by the participants, implementing the coaching action through this ensemble music can improve the participants' musical skills.

Music is related to the sensitivity of feelings that humans have. In practice, music learning consists of several elements [26]; (1) experiencing, where the musical process must be experienced directly by students so that they can sense, recognize, feel, and respond to sounds from various sources types of music; (2) creating, where students can produce musical works

according to context, needs, and availability, in line with technological developments. Students are expected to be able to create simple musical works according to their creativity and musical experience; (3) reflect, where students can attach values to continuous music experience and learning; (4) think and work together artistically, where students, through the process of thinking and working, are expected to be able to design, organize, produce, develop, create, reproduce, and communicate musical ideas or ideas; and (5) have an impact on themselves and others, where students undergo creative habits/disciplines in various musical practices as a means of practicing personal and collective development, getting better over time, and step by step.

The five elements above are only possible if there is awareness in the participants to continue to develop themselves. In addition, external support is also needed through continuous learning, one of which is coaching. In implementing coaching, it is necessary to have close communication to create a harmonious relationship between the coach and the participants who are fostered and conduct an initial needs analysis as a first step in preparing future coaching plans. A harmonious relationship and the results of this needs analysis will help ensure clarity of information related to coaching; there are no confused participants who do not know what is expected by the coach. Furthermore, the needs analysis results become the basis for the coaches in planning their coaching so that the implementation of coaching can run effectively and efficiently.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of the analysis and discussion described in the previous section, it can be concluded that through the development of musical ensembles, the musical skills of the participants, in this case, the musicians at GKE Palangka I Palangka Raya, can be improved. This result is indicated by an increase in the average score of each participant from the pre-cycle to the first cycle by 19% and from the first cycle to the second cycle by 24%. Furthermore, this result is also in line with the significant improvement in each aspect of music skill assessment, including the ability to imitate sounds, the ability to read notation, tempo compatibility, intonation accuracy, and fingering techniques. Furthermore, in cycle II, all participants achieved the score of music-playing skills in the excellent category. Thus, the ensemble music development activities at GKE Palangka I Palangka Raya can be declared victorious.

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RS, NNAU, JE: analyzed the data and wrote the article.
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