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Review article

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Exploring beneficial effects of phytobiotics in marine shrimp farming: A review

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ABSTRACT

Marine shrimp farming, mainly *Penaeus monodon* and *Litopenaeus vannamei*, is an important component of the aquaculture industry. Marine shrimp farming helps produce a protein source for humans, provides job opportunities, and generates lucrative profits for investors. Intensification farming practices can lead to poor water quality, stress, and malnutrition among the farmed marine shrimp, resulting in disease outbreaks and poor production, impeding the development of marine shrimp farming. Antibiotics are the common short-term solution to treat diseases in marine shrimp farming. Moreover, the negative impacts of using antibiotics on public health and the environment erode consumer confidence in aquaculture products. Recently, research on using phytobiotics as a prophylactic agent in aquaculture has become a hot topic. Various phytobiotics have been explored to reveal their beneficial effects on aquaculture species. In this review paper, the sources and modes of action of phytobiotics are presented. The roles of phytobiotics in improving growth performance, increasing antioxidant capacity, enhancing the immune system, stimulating disease resistance, and mitigating stress due to abiotic factors in marine shrimp culture are recapitulated and discussed.

1. Introduction

Aquaculture is the most rapidly-growing industry in food production and plays a crucial role in contributing to nearly half of total world fish production [1]. Crustaceans, such as whiteleg shrimp (*Litopenaeus vannamei*), black tiger shrimp (*Penaeus monodon*), mud crab (*Scylla* sp.), and mitten crab are popular seafood all around the world [2]. High growth rate, high nutritional profile, and high return on investment attract many investors to crustacean farming [3,4]. Shrimp farming is a major industry mainly carried out in tropical countries and generates hundreds of millions of USD per annum for most countries in Latin America and Asia [5,6]. Black tiger

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Table 1

The beneficial effects of phytobiotics in marine shrimp.

Phytobiotics	Crustacean (life stage/weight)	Doses – Duration	Impacts	References
Garlic, Allium sativum, powder	Litopenaeus vannamei, (2.29 g)	2-6% of diet - 60 days	Enhance shrimp production	[65]
Garlic, A. sativum, extract	L. vannamei, (0.5 g)	0.5–1.5 % of diet – 56 davs	Improve growth performance; Enhance shrimp production	[66]
Polygain™, polyphenol-rich sugarcane extract (PRSE)	Penaeus monodon (post-larval stage day 15)	2–6 g/kg of diet – 70 days	Improve growth performance; Stimulate disease resistance to HPV, GAV, IHHNV, YHV7, YHV1, WSSV. <i>Vibrio parahaemolyticus</i>	[9]
Boesenbergia paniculata and Solanum ferox extracts	P. monodon (2.26 g)	20 mL/kg of feed – 40 days	Improve growth performance; Enhance flesh quality	[67]
Mangrove leaf litter solution (Avecennia officinalis, Heritiera fomes, Sonneratia apetala, S. caseolaris)	P. monodon (post- larval stage 1)	1 g/L – 28 days	Enhance color; Improve growth performance	[68]
Microalgae, Tetraselmis chuii bead	<i>P. monodon</i> (post- larval stage 1)	2 beads/mL (10 ³ cells/ mL in a bead) – 14 days	Maintain water quality; Improve growth performance; Enhance nutrition profile of flesh quality	[69]
Microalgae, Chaetoceros muelleri, Thalassiosira weissflogii and Spirulina	P. monodon (larval stage)	Live Chaetoceros muelleri -1×10^5 cells/ml Thalassiosira weissflogii -1×10^4 cells/ml Powdered Spirulina -0.2 mg/L	Maintain water quality; Promote larval metamorphosis; Enhance survival rate; Increase larval digestive system	[70]
Microalga, <i>Aurantiochytrium</i> sp. Supplemented with Artemia	P. monodon (post- larval stage)	10–20 g/kg of feed – 28 days	Improve growth performance; Enhance the nutrition profile of shrimp flesh; Supplemented with artemia can enhance growth performance	[2]
Silver nanoparticle (AgNPs) seagrass (Cymodocea serrulata) extract	P. monodon (post- larval stage, day 20)	1g/100 g of feed – 14 days	Stimulate disease resistance against V. parahaemolyticus	[71]
Wakame (Undaria pinnatifida)	P. monodon (Juvenile)	2.17–2.87 % of feed – 56 days	Improve growth performance; Increase feed utilization; Enhance immune system	[72]
AquaImmu – Polyherbal Emblica officinalis, Tinospora cordifolia, Withania sominifera, Ocimum sanctum	<i>P. monodon</i> (post- larval stage, day 15)	300 mg/kg of feed – 90 days	Improve growth performance; Enhance immune system	[73]
Forsythia suspensa extract	P. monodon (3.02 g)	0.01–0.06 % of diet – 60 days	Improve growth performance; Stimulate disease resistance to V. parahaemolyticus; Modulate transcription level of immune-related genes	[74]
Fermented cottonseed meal	L. vannamei (0.16 g)	10.5-42 % - 56 days	Enhance the nutrition profile of flesh quality; Promote the gut microbiota's growth	[75]
β-glucan	L. vannamei (0.26 g)	0.05–0.4 % of diet – 35 days	Enhance immune system; Increase antioxidant capacity; Mitigate stress due to low salinity	[76]
Ethanol extract of Salvinia cucullata	L. vannamei (4.89 g)	10 g/kg of feed – 56 days	Improve growth performance; Enhance immune system; Stimulate disease resistance to V. parahaemolyticus	[77]
Andrographis paniculata extract	L. vannamei (2.311 g)	0.25–0.5 % of diet – 28 days	Elevate growth performance; Stimulate disease resistance to <i>V. alginolyticus</i> ; Enhance immune system	[78]
Poultry by-product meal Antarctic krill meal	L. vannamei (2.55 g)	50 % of fish meal replacement – 56 days	Enhance the quality and flavor of the flesh	[79]
Tannic acid	L. vannamei (0.3 g)	400–800 mg/kg of diet – 56 days	Improve growth performance; Enhance immune system; Increase antioxidant capacity; Mitigate stress due to ammonia	[12]
Sea grape, Caulerpa lentillifera	L. vannamei (0.46 g)	1kg/m ³ - 56 days	Improve growth performance; Maintain water quality in the polyculture system	[80]
Fermented Siwu decoction	L. vannamei (1.62 g)	0.2–0.8 % - 42 days	Enhance immune system; Modulate gut microbiota; Stimulate disease resistance to V. harveyi	[81]
Sarcodia suae	L. vannamei (0.6 g)	2.5–7.5 % of diet – 20 days	Enhance immune system; Stimulate disease resistance to <i>V. alginolyticus</i>	[82]
Moringa oleifera leaves extract	L. vannamei (15 g)	2.5 g/kg of diet – 60 days	Elevate growth performance; Improve immune system; Stimulate disease resistance to V. alginolyticus	[<mark>83</mark>]
Polysaccharide derived from Amphiroa fragilissima	L. vannamei (1.62 g)	Bioencapsulation in Artemia at 0.1–0.2 g/L Given the Artemia to shrimp for 45 days	Increase growth performance; Elevate antioxidant activity	[53]

(continued on next page)

Table 1 (continued)

Phytobiotics	Crustacean (life stage/weight)	Doses – Duration	Impacts	References
Jania adharens extract	L. vannamei (1.24 g)	0.5–1.5 g/kg of feed – 56 days	Elevate growth performance; Increase antioxidant activity; Enhance immune system; Stimulate disease resistance to <i>Photobacterium damselae</i>	[54]
Powdered Syzygium cumini leaves	L. vannamei (5–6 g)	1 % of feed – 28 days	Increase antioxidant capacity; Enhance immune system; Stimulate disease resistance to V. parahaemolyticus	[84]

HPV – hepatopancreas parvovirus; GAV – gill-associated virus; IHHNV – infectious hypodermal and hematopoietic necrosis virus; YHV7 - yellow head virus genotype 7, YHV1 – yellow head virus genotype 1, WSSV – white spot syndrome virus.

shrimp is the second-most commercially available crustacean farmed worldwide, with production recorded at 4200 MT in 2019 and a market value of USD 4.8 billion [7]. It has been estimated that about 1.2 million people are involved in black tiger shrimp farming [8]. Furthermore, in 2016, the total world production of *P. monodon* and *L. vannamei* was recorded at nearly 5 million tons [9]. *L. vannamei* has become an important marine shrimp after the downfall of *P. monodon* and is farmed intensively worldwide due to the steadily increasing demand [10,11]. In 2020, *L. vannamei* accounted for more than half of the total world marine shrimp production (51.7 %), with a volume recorded at 5.81 million tons [12]. *L. vannamei* is a preferred choice for aquaculture due to its favorable attributes, such as high growth rate, low feed conversion rate, ability to survive at low salinity, and high market value [13]. Overall, marine shrimp farming is a promising investment opportunity, providing job opportunities and producing high-nutrition aquaculture products [14].

High density in crustacean farming leads to stress among aquaculture species and water quality deterioration. This results in mortality, disease outbreaks, and economic loss [15]. As crustacean farming is gearing toward intensification, disease outbreaks are identified as the main problem hindering the industry's expansion [16]. Various common diseases have been reported to infect farmed crustaceans, and some of them can devastate the whole farm operation [17]. These diseases include vibriosis, white spot syndrome virus (WSSV) disease, early mortality syndrome (EMS) or acute hepatopancreatic necrosis disease (AHPND), yellow head virus (YHV) disease, gill-associated virus (GAV) disease, infectious hypodermal and hematopoietic necrosis virus (IHHNV) disease, and microsporidiosis caused by *Enterocytozoon hepatopenaei* [18–23]. WSSV disease can infect any stage of life of crustaceans, especially *Penaeus* spp., whereas AHPND is reported to infect and cause high mortality in crustaceans at the growing stage [24]. Vibriosis due to *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* has been found to cause high mortality at an early stage of shrimp [25], leading to huge economic loss [26].

Traditionally, antibiotics and chemicals were used as prophylactic agents in marine shrimp farming to control disease problems. Intensified marine shrimp farming often uses antibiotics to boost production and manage the health of marine shrimp [27]. However, overuse of these traditional prophylactic agents has adverse effects on public health and the environment [28]. As a result, probiotics, prebiotics, symbiotics, vaccines, and phytobiotics have been explored as alternatives to antibiotics and chemicals in crustacean farming [29–32]. Phytobiotics offer several advantages: they are abundant, inexpensive, and easy to apply in large-scale marine shrimp farming. Moreover, some phytobiotics are commercially available, making them readily accessible to marine shrimp farmers. Many studies have revealed the potential of phytobiotics in marine shrimp farming. For example, chamomile oil, used as a feed additive in *P. indicus* farming, can elevate growth performance, increase antioxidant capacity, and stimulate disease resistance to *V. parahaemolyticus* [33]. In this review, the current trend of phytobiotic application in marine shrimp farming for immune system enhancement, growth performance improvement, antioxidant capacity increment, disease resistance stimulation, and stress mitigation are discussed and summarized.

2. Sources and modes of action of phytobiotics

Phytobiotics is a broad term encompassing plant materials, including vegetables, fruits, herbs, seaweeds, mushrooms, and even agricultural wastes like fruit wastes, rice bran, and palm kernel cake. This also includes plant bioactive compounds such as tannin, alkaloids, saponins, essential oil, phenolic acid, flavonoids, and polysaccharides [34–38]. The bioactive compounds are responsible for the medicinal values of phytobiotics and offer a range of benefits, including antimicrobial, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, antidiabetic, immunostimulant, etc. [39]. Phytobiotics have been widely explored for their beneficial effects on various organisms, including humans, animals, and aquatic animals. Studies have shown that phytobiotics can elevate growth performance, improve the immune system, increase antioxidant capacity, modulate gut microbiota, stimulate disease resistance, and mitigate stress [39,40]. Notably, phytobiotics can enhance the growth of beneficial gut bacteria like *Lactobacilli* and *Bifidobacteria*, which play a crucial role in maintaining a balanced gut microbiome [41]. A balanced gut microbiome is essential for the immune system and increases the antioxidant capacity, ultimately protecting the host against harmful microorganisms [42].

3. The roles of phytobiotics in improving growth performance in marine shrimp farming

Microalgae are a vital component of live feeds in aquaculture, providing essential nutrients to aquaculture species [43,44]. The nutritional profile of microalgae has been well documented, with reports indicating a high content of protein, polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFAs), vitamins, pigments, and sterols [45]. Their roles have been extensively explored in improving growth performance, relieving stress, stimulating disease resistance, and enhancing the flesh quality of aquaculture species [46,47] (Table 1). Macroalgae have been used as functional ingredients in animal feed, and their benefits have been widely recorded in the literature. Many species of

seaweeds, such as *Carpoblepharis flaccida*, *Ecklonia maxima*, *Gracilaria gracilis*, *Laminaria japonica*, *Ulva rigida*, and *U. lactuca*, were explored as feed additives in aquafeed, revealing positive effects on various aquatic species [48–52]. Previous studies have also shown the potential of seaweeds as feed additives in crustacean farming (*P. monodon* and *L. vannamei*), with examples including *G. tenuitipitata*, *G. fisheri*, *Gelidium anansii*, *Jania adherens* and polysaccharide derived from *Amphiroa fragilissima* [53–57]. Seaweeds possess all the essential nutrients that aquatic animals need, such as fatty acids, essential amino acids, various minerals, vitamins, and bioactive compounds [58–60]. These compounds are believed to be responsible for positive impacts observed on growth performance, feed utilization, flesh quality, and immune system of aquatic animals [61–63]. Moreover, seaweeds are inexpensive and abundant, making them an attractive ingredient for fish farmers to utilize in aquafeed [64].

In addition, the polyculture of macroalgae and shrimp has been found to benefit both aquaculture species. For example, the polyculture of sea grapes (*Caulerpa lentillifera*) and *L. vannamei* can improve the growth of both organisms [80]. Sea grape can be found wild in the open seas of tropical countries [85]. This green seaweed, also known as green caviar due to its nutritional profile that can promote human health [86–89], is mainly farmed in China, Vietnam, Philippines, Taiwan, and Japan [89,90]. Sea grape has the ability to consume huge quantities of nutrients, making it favorable for use in wastewater treatment to enhance water quality. For instance, sea grape has been used to reduce nutrients from aquaculture wastewater, industrial wastewater containing toxic dyes and heavy metal-contaminated wastewater [89,91–93].

4. The roles of phytobiotics in modulating the immune system, enhancing antioxidant capacity, and stimulating disease resistance in marine shrimp farming

The potential of medicinal plants as immunostimulants in aquatic animals has been extensively studied, as shown in Table 1. These immunostimulants are used as feed additives to improve growth performance, strengthen the immune system, mitigate stress, and stimulate disease resistance in aquatic animal farming [84,74]. For example, *Andrographis paniculate*, a herb found wild in Southern Asia with reported medicinal properties like antimicrobial, antioxidant, and anti-inflammatory effects that can be utilized as a feed additive in Nile tilapia and *P. monodon* against pathogens *Streptococcus agalactiae* and *V. harveyi*, respectively [94,95]. Herbs have been widely studied and documented as feed additives in crustacean farming. Examples include *Allium sativum* and *Petalonia binghamiae* in *L. vannamei*, and *Eclipta erecta*, *Agati grandiflora*, *Justicia tranquebariensis*, *Cardiospermum halicacubum*, *Eclipta alba*, *Picrorhiza kurroa*, *Tinospora cordifolia*, *Aegle marmelos*, and *Cynodon dactylon* in *P. monodon* [65,66,96–99]. Furthermore, polyphenols, abundant compounds in a plant, typically have two hydroxyl groups attached to aromatic rings [100]. Polyphenols possess strong antimicrobial, antioxidant, and anti-inflammatory properties, which can improve the gut microbiota growth and enhance metabolism in the host body [101,102]. Studies have shown that these herbs can be utilized as immunostimulants and improve growth performance in crustacean farming, with minimal to no side effects on organisms [103,104].

Besides herbs, medicinal plants have also been reported to modulate the immune system of marine shrimp. For example, *Forsythia suspensa*, a plant commonly found in Korea, China, Japan, and some European countries, can be used as a feed additive in *P. monodon*, enhancing its immune system against disease. It has been used as traditional Chinese medicine for treating various ailments, such as pyrexia, ulcers, tonsillitis, pharyngitis, erysipelas, and nephritis [105]. The bioactive compounds in the plant, such as glycoside, lignin, triterpenoids, and essential oil, are responsible for its medicinal activities [106]. Another species of *Forsythia, F. fructus* has been reported to possess antioxidant activity, antimicrobial properties, and anti-inflammatory effects [106–108]. This plant, when used as a feed additive, has been found to have positive impacts on animals like rats and weaned pigs [106,109].

Syzygium cumini is a medicinal plant widely distributed in Southeast Asian countries, including Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. The leaves of this plant contain bioactive compounds like tannins, kaempferol, alkaloids, quercetin, triterpenoids, ellagic acid, gallic acid, etc. [110–112]. They are responsible for the medicinal activities of the plant leaf, such as antibacterial, anti-inflammatory, and antioxidant activities. *S. cumini* leaf has been used as an immunostimulant in marine shrimp farming (*P. monodon* and *L. vannamei*) against bacterial diseases, as summarized in Table 1. Moreover, the essential oil present in the plant leaf, namely sesquiterpenes, can act as a feed attractant, increasing the palatability for use in marine shrimp farming [113].

Moringa (*Moringa oleifera*) has been reported to contain high levels of nutrients and bioactive compounds, such as flavonoids and phenolic acid, which are responsible for its medicinal properties like anticancer, antimicrobial, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and antidiabetic [114–117]. The benefits of this plant on aquatic animals have been widely explored. Moringa has been utilized as a feed additive in various aquaculture species, including whiteleg shrimp (*L. vannamei*), giant freshwater prawn (*Macrobrachium rosenbergii*), Nile tilapia (*Oreochromis niloticus*), rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*), common carp (*Cyprinus carpio*), and grass carp (*Ctenopharyngodon idella*), to enhance growth performance, strengthen the immune system, increase antioxidant capacity, mitigate stress due to abiotic factors, and stimulate disease resistance [118–121]. *Salvinia cucullata*, a freshwater aquatic plant with a rapid growth rate on the water surface [122], possesses various bioactive compounds like tannins, phenols, quercetin, saponins, flavonoids, and alkaloids. These compounds are responsible for the plant's antimicrobial and antioxidant properties [123]. The ethanolic extract of this aquatic plant can improve the immune system of *L. vannamei* and stimulate disease resistance against *V. parahaemolyticus*.

Red seaweeds have been found to stimulate disease resistance in crustacean farming. For example, *Sarcodia suae* and *Jania adhaerens* can stimulate disease resistance to *V. alginolyticus* and *Photobacterium damselae* infections in *L. vannamei*, respectively [53, 54]. Additionally, *S. suae* has also been shown to stimulate disease resistance in Nile tilapia (*O. niloticus*) against *S. agalactiae* [124]. Furthermore, *S. suae* possesses a bioactive compound called acetyl-xylogalactan, which can play a role in inducing macrophage activity in fish organs like the kidney and liver [125]. The benefits of this red seaweed have also been extensively studied in medicine, especially for its ability to bioaccumulate heavy metals [126–128]. *J. adhaerens* has been reported to contain bioactive compounds such as tannin, ketosteroids, and flavonoids, which are responsible for its antimicrobial properties [54,129]. Moreover, the ethanolic

extract of J. adhaerens can suppress the growth of microorganisms like Micrococcus spp., Klebsiella spp., and Pseudomonas spp. [54].

The use of Chinese herbal medicine in aquaculture practice is a current trend gaining significant attention [81]. However, Chinese herbal medicines can have side effects due to the presence of toxic compounds [130]. Therefore, fermentation is applied as a method to reduce and minimize the toxic compounds in the herbs [131]. Fermentation has been shown to not only reduce antinutritional factors but also produce new bioactive compounds that may enhance the immune system in aquatic animals [132]. An example of such an herbal combination is Siwu decoction, which comprises a group of herbs, including *Paeonia lactiflora, Rehmannia glutinosa, Ligusticum chuanxiong,* and *Angelica sinensis* [81]. This herb combination possesses antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties, offering potential benefits like promoting blood circulation, relieving pain, and improving anemia [133–135].

β-Glucan, a plant-derived polysaccharide, is widely reported to play a crucial role as an immunostimulant in aquatic animals. β-Glucan is commercially available in the market, making it easily accessible for fish farmers to incorporate into their aquaculture practices. Previous studies have shown that β-Glucan can improve growth performance by modulating the growth of gut microbiota in aquaculture species [136,137]. Additionally, it can enhance the immune system and stimulate disease resistance in crustacean farming, as reported in banana shrimp (*P. merguiensis*) and black tiger shrimp (*P. monodon*) [138,139]. Furthermore, β-Glucan derived from *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* has been found to stimulate disease resistance of black tiger shrimp (*P. monodon*) against WSSV [140].

5. The roles of phytobiotics in mitigating stress caused by abiotic factors in marine shrimp farming

Tannin acid, a plant-derived compound, offers several beneficial influences on numerous aquatic animals. For instance, tannic acid can help *L. vannamei* relieve stress caused by the presence of ammonia in an aquaculture system [12]. The mode of action of tannic acid is to enhance the immune system and increase the antioxidant capacity of the shrimp [12]. Tannin acid can also be used as a feed additive in mussels (*Unio tumidus*), grass carp (*C. idella*), zebrafish (*Lateolabrax japonicus*), and Nile tilapia (*O. niloticus*), exhibiting beneficial effects, such as improved growth performance, stimulated disease resistance, and enhanced the immune systems [141–145]. Tannin acid has also been reported to improve the health and growth performance of livestock, including chickens and weaned piglets [146,147]. Similarly, β -Glucan has been shown to improve the immune system and antioxidant capacity of whiteleg shrimp (*L. vannamei*), allowing the shrimp to relieve stress caused by a low salinity environment [76]. Commercial β -Glucan has been found to mitigate stress in Golden pompano (*Trachinotus ovatus*) exposed to low salinity [148]. Due to its affordability and abundance, β -Glucan is a practical choice for use in marine shrimp farming.

6. Conclusion

Marine shrimp farming represents a significant economic driver in numerous countries, particularly those located in tropical and subtropical countries. However, disease outbreaks pose a substantial impediment to the continued advancements of this industry. While antibiotics have demonstrably controlled these diseases, their use has become a contentious issue due to public health and environmental ramifications. Phytobiotics, with lower environmental impact, have emerged as a promising alternative for prophylactic measures in aquaculture practices. Their affordability and abundance make them readily accessible to marine shrimp farmers. Additionally, several commercially available phytobiotics exist, including tannic acid, PolygainTM (polyphenol-rich sugarcane extract, PRSE), Wakame (*Undaria pinnatifida*), AquaImmu – Polyherbal, β -Glucan, and Sea grape (*C. lentillifera*). These can readily incorporated into large-scale marine shrimp operations. Phytobiotic feed additives present the most practical approach due to their cost-effectiveness and scalability. However, improper dosing, whether excessive or insufficient, can have detrimental effects on the performance of marine shrimp. A thorough understanding of the molecular and cellular pathways involved in immune response regulation within marine shrimp farming, particularly in response to diverse pathogens and abiotic stressors, is crucial for fully elucidating the beneficial effects of phytobiotics in this context.

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Data availability statement

The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors without undue reservation.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Lee Seong Wei: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Visualization, Validation, Supervision, Software, Resources, Project administration, Methodology, Investigation, Funding acquisition, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization. Suniza Anis Mohamad Sukri: Writing – review & editing. Albaris B. Tahiluddin: Writing – review & editing. Zulhisyam Abdul Kari: Writing – review & editing. Wee: Writing – review & editing. Muhammad Anamul Kabir: Writing – review & editing.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare the following financial interests/personal relationships which may be considered as potential competing interests:Lee Seong Wei, Associate Editor, Heliyon If there are other authors, they declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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