

Comparison of Attachment Styles and Object Relationships Among Women Engaged in Romantic Relationships with an Age Difference of 10 Years or Less and an Age Difference of 15 Years or More (with the Man Being Older)

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Objective: The present study aimed to compare the attachment styles and object relationships among women engaged in romantic relationships with an age difference of 10 years or less and an age difference of 15 years or more (with the man being older).

Methods and Materials: This was a causal-comparative study; the population consisted of 91 individuals, with 50 participants in the first group (women involved in romantic relationships with an age difference of 10 years or less) and 41 participants in the second group (women involved in romantic relationships with an age difference of 15 years or more), selected via convenience and snowball sampling methods. Participants responded to the Hazan and Shaver (1987) Attachment Style Questionnaire and the Bell (1995) Object Relationships Questionnaire. Data were analyzed using multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) with SPSS software.

Findings: The results showed a significant difference between the two groups in the anxious/ambivalent attachment style and the avoidant attachment style ($P < 0.01$). There was a significant difference between the two groups in the insecure attachment, alienation, and incompetence components from the object relationships variable ($P < 0.05$). Also, there was no significant difference between the two groups in the secure attachment style and the self-centeredness component (object relationships) ($P > 0.05$).

Conclusion: It is recommended that decision-makers and practitioners in the fields of education, training, and culture pay attention to educating parents on correcting child-rearing styles to amend educational patterns, emphasizing the significant role of fathers in the psychological well-being of children, especially daughters.

Keywords: Attachment styles, Object relationships, Romantic relationship, Age superiority

1. Introduction

Marriage is the most widespread institution in human society, having been the foundation of human civilization's stability from early civilizations to the present, playing a very important role in human society (Parsakia & Darbani, 2022). The institution of marriage has undergone significant changes due to structural and cultural shifts and, overall, due to societies' transition from traditional to modern orders (Azadian & Fathi, 2017). Research indicates that marriage has a beneficial impact on physical and mental health, largely depending on the quality of marital life (Goldman & Hatch, 2000).

Undoubtedly, one of the critical determinants of marital life quality is the age of marriage (Allendorf & Ghimire, 2013). In more than 85% of marriages, husbands are older than their wives; however, the age difference between couples varies across societies and even within a society over time, and it cannot be predicted without considering cultural, social, economic, and geographical differences. For example, this age difference (with a preference for the man being older) ranges from about 2 years in Australia to about 10 years in Gambia or even more in patriarchal societies governed by paternal relatives (Mohamadi et al., 2023).

Another significant aspect, which has received less attention in Iran, is the impact of the age difference between spouses on the quality of marital life (Valadkhani et al., 2017). A large age difference, due to creating different physical, emotional, and social spaces for each of the spouses, limits the possibility of participation and emotional closeness between individuals, reducing satisfaction with marriage (Sayadpour 2005); to the extent that it is directly associated with the risk of separation and family dissolution (Mahmoudian & Rahro-Zargar, 2011). Marriage has a positive function for the entire social system when it occurs at the right time and with the right person (Ahmady, 2021). The World Bank's declaration considers the age difference between spouses a common aspect of child marriage cases. On the other hand, the United Nations considers any marriage under 18 years as child marriage before the individual is physically and mentally ready to take on marital and parenting responsibilities (Ahmady, 2021). Therefore, in this study, women from the age group above 18 years are selected to exclude legal, social, and research backgrounds of child marriage from this study, although this selection omits the statistical benefit of finding more samples.

Based on Lee's theory (1973), love is a learned behavior that determines individuals' ways of loving and is influenced

by culture and social context. According to Lee, there are different styles of love that may change over time (Neto, 2023). One of the factors affecting love styles is individuals' attachment styles. Early attachment experiences provide information about oneself and primary caregivers, which the child organizes as mental representations or internal working models (Razeghi et al., 2015). Attachment, stemming from Bowlby's research, is one of the most extensive theories in the field of social development, describing the pattern of intimate interactions (Farias et al., 2020). According to Bowlby's attachment theory (1980), these attachment patterns guide intimate relationships throughout an individual's life. Hazan and Shaver (1987) extended Bowlby's concept of attachment and linked Ainsworth's tripartite classification of attachment patterns to romantic relationships in adulthood. They introduced romantic relationships as a continuation of the attachment process, in which an individual forms an emotional relationship with another adult, much like the emotional relationship of an infant with its primary caregiver (Folwarczny & Otterbring, 2021). The choice of a spouse and the quality of the relationship between husband and wife are also influenced by their first memories of the parent-child relationship. According to Hazan and Shaver, three attachment styles—secure, avoidant, and anxious/ambivalent—exist in adulthood, and individuals with these attachment styles experience intimate and romantic relationships in completely different ways (Santona et al., 2019). Similarly, attachment style can significantly affect the spouse selection process (Feeney, 2005); sometimes, individuals repeat their childhood scenarios based on their psychological conflicts (Razeghi et al., 2015).

Secure adults can more easily become intimate with others and feel comfortable being dependent on them or having others depend on them (Momenzadeh et al., 2006). Avoidant insecure adults are not comfortable becoming intimate with others, find it difficult to trust others, or allow themselves to depend on others (Momenzadeh et al., 2006); they experience intense emotional ups and downs in romantic relationships and often experience emotional jealousy (Pourmohseni-Koluri, 2016). Anxious/ambivalent insecure adults find that others are not as willing to become intimate as they would like and are often worried that their partner does not truly love them or want to continue living with them. These individuals want to fully merge emotionally with others, which sometimes causes people to distance themselves from them (Momenzadeh et al., 2006). For anxious/ambivalent individuals, love is a form of

engagement and mental preoccupation associated with sexual attractiveness and jealous behavior, and although they have strong and reasonable relationships with their partners, they seek attention and support, leading to relationships full of tension and conflict. Research indicates that insecure individuals (avoidant and anxious) attribute the opposite sex's behavior to negative traits and the lack of love and see their emotional turmoil as a consequence of the opposite sex's behavior (Carnelley & Boag, 2019).

Object relationships also represent interpersonal relationships. Internalized representations create a set of predetermined expectations about feedback and behaviors of others. Representations that reflect satisfying and stable subjects in the past are effective in forming a sense of security and protection against threats, while disturbances in object relationships will destabilize personal security. Object relations examine early development and differences in psychological structures (internal images of self and others) and how these structures manifest in interpersonal situations. The focus of these theories is on early life relationships and their lasting effects; i.e., the contents settled in an individual's psyche. These remaining sediments from past relationships and these internalized object relations shape an individual's perceptions and relationships (Mesgarian et al., 2017).

The current study, focusing on the high age difference between emotional partners with an age difference of 15 years or more in favor of the man, aims to answer whether the formation of an emotional bond between men and women with an age difference of more than 15 years in favor of the man can be affected by fundamental psychological factors such as attachment styles or individuals' object relationships? And essentially, is there a difference between the attachment styles and object relationships of women engaged in romantic relationships with an age difference of 10 years or less and an age difference of 15 years or more (with the man being older)?

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study Design and Participants

This research was a causal-comparative (post-event) study comparing two groups of women involved in romantic relationships with an age difference of 10 years or less (with the man being older) and women involved in romantic relationships with an age difference of 15 years or more (with the man being older) on the main variables of attachment styles and object (object) relationships.

In this study, two groups of the statistical population of women involved in romantic relationships who had visited clinical and psychological centers in Tonkabon city from May 2021 to September 2022 participated; one group consisted of women whose spouse or romantic partner was older by 10 years or less, and the other group consisted of women whose spouse or romantic partner was older by 15 years or more. From the first group, i.e., women involved in romantic relationships with an age difference of 10 years or less, 50 individuals were selected, and from the second group, i.e., women involved in romantic relationships with an age difference of 15 years or more, 41 individuals were selected, making a total of 91 women.

To collect research samples, convenience sampling and snowball sampling methods were used to select women involved in romantic relationships, whether in the form of permanent/temporary marriage or extramarital relationships. Criteria such as a minimum age of 18 years, at least six months since the beginning of the romantic relationship, and a minimum education of junior high school were considered in the selection of samples.

Given the research process coincided with the COVID-19 epidemic outbreak, to adhere to health standards, reduce unnecessary visits, and break the chain of virus transmission, the paper questionnaire was designed online and sent to the selected samples. Since the questionnaire link was mainly sent through social media messengers like Telegram or WhatsApp, and since it was not always possible to access the participants' phone numbers, a QR code for scanning and direct access to the questionnaire link without needing to provide phone numbers was designed and made available to the sample individuals to maintain privacy and reduce filtering issues of messengers.

During interviews with the sample individuals, they were fully informed about the research specifics, and their consent was obtained for filling out the study questionnaires; they were assured that their identity would remain confidential, and they could terminate their participation at any time during the response process.

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. Object Relationships

Created by Bell (1995), it consists of 45 true/false questions measuring object relationships in four subscales: social incompetence, self-centeredness, insecure attachment, and alienation. Nine questions of this questionnaire (1, 7, 8, 15, 21, 30, 37, 42, 45) are scored inversely. Bell (1995)

reported the retest reliability coefficients of its subscales from 0.58 to 0.90 and their internal consistency from 0.78 to 0.90. The validity of this scale was also confirmed through correlation with various scales such as the Brief Psychiatric Rating Scale, Positive and Negative Syndrome Scale, Millon Clinical Multiaxial Inventory-III, Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-2, and the Revised 90-item Symptom Checklist (Holaday & Glidewell, 2000). For example, significant correlations of Bell's Object Relationships Scale with the Brief Psychiatric Rating Scale were reported as follows: alienation with conceptual disorganization and excitement (0.30 and 0.26), insecure attachment with guilt feelings (0.28), social incompetence with somatic concern, hostility, paranoia, excitement, and blunted affect (0.46, 0.43, 0.31, 0.30, and 0.31); all four subscales of Bell's Object Relationships Scale had significant correlations with depressed mood (0.27-0.37). The correlations between its subscales and most subscales of the Revised 90-item Symptom Checklist were significant (0.26-0.58). In the study by Mesgarian and colleagues (2017), the reliability of this questionnaire using Cronbach's alpha was 0.66 to 0.77, the split-half reliability coefficient was 0.60 to 0.70, and the total scale ordinal theta was 0.86. Significant correlations between dimensions of object relationships and levels of defense mechanisms also confirmed the convergent and divergent validity of this questionnaire (Mesgarian et al., 2017).

2.2.2. Adult Attachment Styles

This questionnaire was created by Hazan and Shaver (1987) based on the assumption that similarities from child-caregiver attachment styles can be found in adulthood. It consists of 15 statements measuring three types of attachment styles: avoidant, anxious/ambivalent, and secure. Scoring is on a five-point Likert scale, from very low=1 to very high=5. This questionnaire does not have a total score, and the minimum and maximum scores for all subscales are 5 and 25, respectively. Its reliability was obtained through test-retest with a Pearson's r equal to 0.4 (Parsakia et al., 2023). In a study conducted by Pakdaman (2004), its validity was confirmed through test-retest for anxious, avoidant, and

secure attachment styles, respectively, at 0.72, 0.56, and 0.37, and Cronbach's alpha was reported at 0.79. The correlation coefficient between two tests in retesting was 0.92. Cronbach's alpha in the study by Taj and colleagues (2013) was reported at 0.68 (Taj et al., 2014).

2.3. Data analysis

Data analysis was performed using multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) with SPSS software.

3. Findings and Results

A total of 91 women participated in this study; the first group consisted of 50 individuals (women involved in romantic relationships with an age difference of 10 years or less) and the second group of 41 individuals (women involved in romantic relationships with an age difference of 15 years or more). In both groups, the most common birth order was middle children. In the first group, the highest frequency related to educational level was associate degree and bachelor's degree at 42%, and in the second group, the highest frequency in the educational group was associate degree and bachelor's degree at 44%. In the first group, the medium income level at 64% and in the second group, the good income level at 51% had the highest frequency. In the first group, the highest job frequency at 50% was related to employed women, and in the second group, the highest frequency was related to housewives at 56%. In the first group, the highest frequency of the type of romantic relationship at 78% was related to temporary marriage, and in the second group, the frequency of the permanent marriage group was 49%. In the first group, the highest frequency of the age at the beginning of the romantic relationship in the 18 to 30 years group was 54%, and in the second group, over 30 years had the highest frequency at 58%. In the first group, the highest frequency of the duration of the romantic relationship at 68% was related to more than three years, and in the second group, the highest frequency in the group of six months to three years was 61%. Also, only 12% of individuals in the first group had a history of previous marriage, while in the second group, 43% of individuals had a history of previous marriage.

Table 1

Descriptive Characteristics of Attachment Styles and Object Relationship Variables in Two Groups

Groups	Variables and Components	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Group 1	Attachment Styles					
	Avoidant	50	1.28	45.228	2.52	0.60
	Anxious/Ambivalent	50	1.00	4.57	2.47	0.79
	Secure	50	1.14	4.85	3.02	0.62
Group 2	Attachment Styles					
	Avoidant	41	1.85	4.42	3.23	0.65
	Anxious/Ambivalent	41	1.42	5.28	3.23	0.91
	Secure	41	2.14	4.84	3.14	0.59
Group 1	Object Relationships					
	Insecure Attachment	50	1	12	5.26	3.36
	Alienation	50	0	6	2.02	1.51
	Social Incompetence	50	1	17	7.68	3.27
	Narcissism	50	2	18	8.74	3.85
Group 2	Object Relationships					
	Insecure Attachment	41	2	13	6.75	2.69
	Alienation	41	0	6	2.78	1.68
	Social Incompetence	41	4	19	9.51	3.32
	Narcissism	41	4	16	9.02	3.52

The descriptive characteristics of the components related to the variables of attachment styles and object relationships in both groups were compared and shown in Table 1.

Prior to conducting the main analysis, tests for normality, homogeneity of variances, and multivariate outliers were performed to ensure that the assumptions of multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) were met. The normality of the data was confirmed through the Shapiro-Wilk test, with results showing that all variables were normally distributed ($p > .05$ for all variables). Box's M test was conducted to assess the equality of covariance matrices

across groups, yielding a Box's M value of 8.234, which was not statistically significant ($p = .074$), indicating that the assumption of homogeneity of covariance matrices was satisfied. Levene's test was utilized to verify the homogeneity of variances for each dependent variable across groups. The results of Levene's test were not significant for any of the dependent variables ($p > .05$), suggesting that the variances were equal across groups. These preliminary tests provided the necessary validation for proceeding with the MANOVA to investigate the differences between groups on the dependent variables.

Table 2

Results of the Analysis of Variance for Attachment Styles and Object Relationships

Variable	Test	Value	F	df	df Error	Effect Size	Eta
Attachment Styles	Pillai's Trace	0.394	18.818	3.000	87.000	0.000	0.394
	Wilks' Lambda	0.606	18.818	3.000	87.000	0.000	0.394
	Hotelling's Trace	0.649	18.818	3.000	87.000	0.000	0.394
	Largest Root	0.649	18.818	3.000	87.000	0.000	0.394
Object Relationships	Pillai's Trace	0.137	3.402	4.000	86.000	0.012	0.137
	Wilks' Lambda	0.863	3.402	4.000	86.000	0.012	0.137
	Hotelling's Trace	0.158	3.402	4.000	86.000	0.012	0.137
	Largest Root	0.158	3.402	4.000	86.000	0.012	0.137

According to the results in Table 2, the calculated f-value for Wilks' lambda was significant at the 0.05 level, indicating that there is a significant difference between the means of the study groups in at least one of the variables. Therefore, in response to the research question, it is confirmed that there is a difference between the attachment

styles and object relationships of women involved in romantic relationships with an age difference of 10 years or less and those with an age difference of 15 years or more (with the man being older). Subsequently, in Table 3, the results of the analysis of variance related to the variables of attachment styles and object relationships are presented.

Table 3

Analysis of Variance Test Between Components of Research Variables

Dependent Variable	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Squares	F Ratio	Sig	Eta Squared
Group	Attachment Styles					
	Avoidant	11.377	1	11.377	28.803	0.000
	Anxious/Ambivalent	16.289	1	16.289	22.628	0.000
	Secure	0.345	1	0.345	0.924	0.339
Group	Object Relationships					
	Insecure Attachment	50.423	1	50.423	7.968	0.006
	Alienation	13.029	1	13.029	5.131	0.026
	Social Incompetence	75.623	1	75.623	6.945	0.010
	Narcissism	1.822	1	1.822	0.132	0.717

Based on the data in Table 3, the results of the analysis of variance for the secure attachment style component show that the difference between the two groups in this component is not significant at the 0.05 level. For the anxious/ambivalent attachment style component, it indicates that the mean of this variable is higher in the group of women involved in romantic relationships with an age difference of 15 years or more (in favor of the man) compared to the other group. For the avoidant attachment style component, it shows that the mean of avoidant attachment style is higher in the group of women involved in romantic relationships with an age difference of 15 years or more (in favor of the man) compared to the other group.

According to the data in Table 3, the results of the analysis of variance in the insecure attachment (object relationships) component indicate that the mean of insecure attachment (object relationships) is higher in the group of women involved in romantic relationships with an age difference of 15 years or more (in favor of the man) compared to the other group. For the alienation component, it indicates that the mean of alienation is higher in the group of women involved in romantic relationships with an age difference of 15 years or more (in favor of the man) compared to the other group. For the social incompetence component, it shows that the mean of social incompetence is higher in the group of women involved in romantic relationships with an age difference of 15 years or more (in favor of the man) compared to the other group. For the self-centeredness component, it indicates that the difference between the two groups in this component is not significant at the 0.05 level.

Therefore, with 95% confidence, it is confirmed that there is a difference between the attachment styles and object relationships of women involved in romantic relationships with an age difference of 10 years or less and those with an

age difference of 15 years or more (with the man being older).

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The current study aimed to compare the attachment styles and object relationships of women involved in romantic relationships with an age difference of 10 years or less and an age difference of 15 years or more (with the man being older). The findings of this study demonstrated that there are differences in the attachment styles of women in these two groups. As indicated by statistical tests, insecure attachment styles (anxious/ambivalent and avoidant) in the group of women involved in romantic relationships with an age difference of 15 years or more (in favor of the man) have a higher mean compared to women involved in romantic relationships with an age difference of 10 years or less (in favor of the man). The findings are supported by existing literature (Ahmady, 2021; Azadian & Fathi, 2017; Carnelley & Boag, 2019; Farias et al., 2020; Folwarczny & Otterbring, 2021; Ketnr et al., 2019; Mesgarian et al., 2017; Mirsadeghi et al., 2018; Neto, 2023; Pourmohseni-Koluri, 2016; Razeghi et al., 2015; Santona et al., 2019; Valadkhani et al., 2017).

In explaining the results of this question, we first refer to theoretical foundations regarding attachment styles. Bowlby believed that everyone needs an emotional relationship for healthy development. According to Bowlby, an insecure relationship leads to distrust, difficulty in coordination, sensitivity, and emotional dissatisfaction in romantic relationships. Attachment relationships play a significant role in an individual's sense of security (Farias et al., 2020; Santona et al., 2019). For children, the relationship accompanied by attachment initially occurs with parents, and in adults, with a partner. Bowlby believed that the nature of the mother-infant intimate relationship determines the

nature of an individual's intimate relationships throughout life. It seems that in the women of the present study, the initial environment for optimal emotional development and gaining psychological security in childhood was unsuitable, and they learned through helplessness and failure to meet their needs to find other ways to gain security and emotional support. Apart from the unsuitable conditions of the initial environment for child development, it must be noted that attachment styles formed during childhood are not necessarily identical to what is shown in emotional attachments in adulthood. A long time has passed between childhood and adulthood, and the experiences gained during this interval also play a major role in adult attachment styles. Bitter experiences of individual life from childhood to adulthood can affect the emergence of insecure attachment styles. The experience of failure and frustration in past emotional relationships, an insecure environment, failure to satisfy fundamental psychological needs, incorrect or delayed response or neglect from primary attachment sources causes women of this group to enter relationships where the partner as an alternative source of attachment compensates for past emotional deficiencies (Folwarczyn & Otterbring, 2021). They consider an older partner as a replacement for the parent who provides them with attention, support, care, and security. It seems that women in this group, by sharing their youth capital and beauty or even fertility, receive what they have lacked in emotional and psychological support from their older spouse or romantic partner. On the other hand, younger women, by entering into emotional relationships with a significant age difference, reduce the likelihood of failure and rejection in their view and, by gaining material resources from the older spouse, try to provide a safe environment for themselves.

The findings of this study also showed significant differences between the mean object relationships of women in the two groups in the components of insecure attachment, alienation, and social incompetence. Additional tests support the finding that women in the second group (involved in romantic relationships with an age difference of 15 years or more in favor of the man) have higher means under these components; meaning that, according to the average, women of the second group have more insecure attachment, alienation, and social incompetence in their object relationships compared to the first group. There was no significant difference between the two groups in the self-centeredness (narcissism) subscale.

Considering the dimensions that Bell and colleagues (1986) considered for object relationships, a high score of

individuals in alienation indicates a lack of trust feeling in their relationships. These individuals are unstable and superficial in their communications and show serious problems in establishing intimacy. Such individuals retreat into solitude to protect themselves against the anger and hostility they project onto others. A high score in insecure attachment is a sign of individual sensitivity to rejection and harm by others. Absence, separation, and abandonment, whether imaginary or real, appear difficult and unbearable for these individuals. Their relationships are usually accompanied by guilt, jealousy, and anxiety, often leading to maladaptive patterns and self-destructive and other-destructive tendencies. A high score in social incompetence reflects being shy, nervous, and doubtful about others, especially the opposite sex. For these individuals, communications seem extremely difficult and unpredictable, and they often avoid any relationships (Ketmr et al., 2019).

The first object satisfying the instinct in a child's life is the mother's breast. Later, the mother becomes a complete person and turns into an object. As the child grows, this psychic investment moves from the mother to other persons. If the mother is not sufficiently available, is ill, incapable, or neglectful, the child seeks to satisfy their needs from other sources. The first available psychological source for the child is the father. The nature and quality of the daughter's emotional relationship with her father lead to a specific mental representation of the father in the daughter's mind. This mental representation can be damaging or satisfying. If the father is aware of his role as a parent properly, he can replace the mother's object and be a source of satisfying the child's psychological needs. However, the lack of awareness of this position by the father starts insecure object relationships and insecure attachments for the child. On the other hand, the child's temperament determines what image of the primary object is represented in their mind. Whatever the child's mental representation of the primary object is, it is projected in later relationships. Individuals form their internal working models based on their experiences with primary caregivers, and these models influence the nature of feelings, thoughts, behaviors, and changes in behaviors and attitudes in marriage and subsequent significant relationships. According to Feeney (2005), the quality of this relationship can even predict the type of person chosen as a spouse (Feeney, 2005).

With what has been discussed, deficiencies in object relationships and specific consequences that follow can lead women to engage in romantic relationships with a significant age difference. Insecure attachment arising from flawed

emotional relationships with the primary object, which can be the mother or specifically the father, causes women in adulthood and in their emotional relationships to seek an attachment source in a substitute individual as an object for satisfying their psychological needs. Alienation and social incompetence lead to isolation and avoidance of entering desirable emotional relationships. There is a possibility that the sense of deficiency, incompetence, and social isolation of these individuals limits the range of similar age emotional partners for these women, leaving them no choice but to engage in relationships where the older spouse or romantic partner (who is the mental representation of the father) follows. The report of disturbed object relationships in this study aligns with insecure attachment styles and confirms the explanation that psychological reasons such as object relationships can pave the way and drive women's inclination to enter into emotional relationships with much older men.

In a general summary, the result of this study showed that there are differences between the attachment styles and object relationships of women involved in romantic relationships with an age difference of 10 years or less and those with an age difference of 15 years or more (with the man being older).

5. Limitations & Suggestions

This research did not investigate the moderating role of variables such as the history of previous marriage, which could have influenced the accuracy of the results and therefore should be considered in generalizing the findings. Further research on relationships with reverse age differences, i.e., relationships where women are older than men and have significant age differences, is recommended. It is also suggested that decision-makers and practitioners in the fields of education, training, and culture pay attention to educating parents on correcting child-rearing styles to amend educational patterns, emphasizing the significant role of fathers in the psychological well-being of children, especially daughters.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethics Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants. "This article is derived from the first author's Master's thesis at the Tonkabon Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tonkabon, Iran." and has the ethics code IR.IAU.TON.REC.1401.072 from the Ethics Committee of the Islamic Azad University, Tonkabon Branch.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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Authors' Contributions

All authors contributed equally.

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