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Peer Attachment, body dissatisfaction and social appearance anxiety disorder of adolescents

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Abstract
The aim of the present study was to investigate the influence of peer attachment and body dissatisfaction on social appearance anxiety disorder of adolescents. A sample of 280 adolescents ranging their age from 12 to 18 years was randomly selected as participants. Bangla version of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA), The Body Esteem Scale for Adolescents and Adults (BESAA) and Social Appearance Anxiety Scale (SAAS) was also used for collecting data. Collecting data were analysed by computing t-test, correlation and Regression. Pearson product moment correlation was used to determine the significant level of correlation. The results of the study indicate that the girls scored significantly higher than the boys in peer attachment. In body esteem boys scored higher than girls. In social appearance anxiety disorder girls scored higher than the boys. The result of the study also indicates that there was significant difference between early adolescence and late adolescence in peer attachment and there was no significant difference between early adolescence and late adolescence in body esteem and social appearance anxiety disorder. Result of correlation indicates that peer attachment is negatively correlated with body esteem and positive correlation was found between peer attachment and social appearance anxiety disorder; and also, negative correlation was found between body esteem and social appearance anxiety disorder. A regression analysis investigated the predictive ability of peer attachment toward body dissatisfaction and social appearance anxiety. However, the study shows that there is significant difference in body dissatisfaction of adolescent's girls and boys. It also shows that girls are more dissatisfied with their body than boys and increases in body dissatisfaction increases in social appearance anxiety disorder. Students in early adolescence benefit from peer connections most because research shows their mental health depends greatly on peer relationships particularly in girls. The research proposes useful methods to improve peer relationships and body contentment among students during this critical age period.

Keywords: Peer attachment, ideal body, body dissatisfaction, social appearance anxiety disorder, adolescents

Introduction
Physical appearance is the characteristics that has a ubiquitous role at the time of interactions with other people, and It's the foremost criterion that are noticed by people. There is a tendency to link one's good personal characteristics with their external physical attractiveness not only in western culture but also worldwide.

Adolescents' emotional and social development mainly depends on peer attachment. A person's relationship with peers maintains feelings through honest sharing and shared help backed by trust. During their journey towards independence adolescents rely on their peer groups to offer guidance and build friendships and seek their validation. The attachment shapes different important mental health aspects in addition to how people view themselves and how they behave. The discrepancy between one's own body (size and shape) and one's imagined is termed as body dissatisfaction (BD). The larger the discrepancy between an individual's imagined body with one's own body; the greater the degree of body dissatisfaction. As they become older, kids start to build an opinion of themselves based on how they think other people see them. The standards make by people about physical appearance and body type have an impact on the adolescent's self-perception. People who have a negative body image typically have a negative thought of their bodies (Hatmann AS). Young people are particularly concerned about their body structure and weight during

this critical developmental period, as they get more anxious about their looks and want to achieve "ideal" body image.

There has not been a comprehensive review of recent research that explores the specific aspects of friend and peer relationships that may increase or reduce body dissatisfaction in adolescents. The study intends to examine existing knowledge about peer and friendship influences on adolescent body dissatisfaction while recommending research directions that focus on improving intervention approaches.

Adolescence is a most competitive time for both children and their parents. The earliest stage of adolescence begins at twelve and continues through fifteen according to UNICEF research yet the second stage spans from sixteen to eighteen years old in most cases as per their findings. Currently, body dissatisfaction grows higher as body and appearance changes dramatically (Bucchianeri). When adolescence goes through puberty, rapid bodily changes occur during this period. At this time, some adolescents worry about the physical changes that take place at that time, while others may experience rapid mood swings. At the time of late adolescence, most of the changes related to puberty have already happened, and adolescents' at this phase become particularly concerned about their physical appearance, by thinking that others share this concern.

Studies demonstrate girls hold weight and body shape concerns to a greater degree than boys do regarding their self-image. Scientific studies have shown that the majority of women and girls experience negative feelings about their body image. Many girls express dissatisfaction with their body size and weight, as slimness is widely regarded as the ideal standard of beauty, especially for young women. Even at an adolescent age, underweight status is significantly more common among girls than boys.

Discussions among friends regarding body size, shape, diet, exercise, and clothing have been theorized to raise awareness of societal appearance ideals, that leads to increase body dissatisfaction (Jones). Moreover, girls report that their conversations often center around these topics (Wertheim *et al*., 1997). Five research studies used to analyze friendship appearance discussions demonstrated they directly lead to increased body dissatisfaction in addition to diminished body esteem.

Lawler and Nixon (2011) [26] found out that whenever friends discuss about that mostly create body dissatisfaction in girls, but not in boys. This proposes that the sex differences in how appearance conversations relate to body dissatisfaction may indicate a fundamental difference in how body image is associated with such conversations for boys versus girls. Supporting evidence from two studies (Clark & Tiggeman, 2007; Thompson *et al*., 2007) [20] corroborates this observation. The research establishes that students from both genders who face intense peer pressure for weight loss and body shape maintenance as well as body image perfection experience increased degrees of body dissatisfaction.

Social appearance anxiety disorder involves a fear of being judged, negatively evaluated, or rejected in social or performance situations and often present at an early age (Asher *et al*., 2017). The core concern of people with this disorder centers on two elements: their physical nervousness being noticeable to others and the impression that others have of them. Consequently, they often tend to avoid social or performance scenarios, and when avoidance isn't an option, they experience considerable anxiety and distress.

The relationship between body dissatisfaction and social appearance anxiety in eating disorders has recently attracted more attention. A correlation was reported between appearance anxiety and dissatisfaction in a non-clinical group as well (Hausenblas *et al*., 1999; Monro *et al*., 2005). Additionally, body image shame has a positive correlation with social anxiety (Thompson, *et al*., 2003) [2]. Moreover, in regard to body dissatisfaction and social appearance anxiety of the sociocultural aspect, Monro *et al*. (2005) found that idealized body image led to increased body dissatisfaction and appearance anxiety and provided further support for sociocultural determinants of body image and eating disturbance.

Despite the fact that few studies on body dissatisfaction and social appearance anxiety about body dissatisfaction in eating disorders have been done, the results that exist have shown that they do play a role in eating disorder pathology and are predictors of eating disorders, especially in female groups (e.g., Thompson *et al*., 2004; Monro *et al*., 2005) [20]. Furthermore, there are very few studies on the relationship between body dissatisfaction and social appearance anxiety and how they relate to body dissatisfaction in eating disorders among diverse ethnic groups (Russel & Keel, 2002).

Literature Review

The research understands body dissatisfaction through the lens of socially derived phenomena through two critical theories. The theory of Social Identity suggests that people form their self-concept based on their membership in relevant social groups according to Tajfel and Turner *et al*. Worchel *et al*. explain this concept.

Student Self-identity stems from social relationships based on research conducted by Deauz (2000) as well as Worchel *et al*. (2000) within Social Identity Theory. People develop group identities through their experience of social representations and the group pressure for unity alongside participation in group activities that showcase collective understanding. The Social Learning Theory (Bandura) presents a specific assessment of how social circumstances drive learning activities. People learn from others through instrumental learning which involves experiencing behavioral consequences of observed actions as well as observational learning which involves mimicking observed actions according to Akers.

John Bowlby who established Attachment Theory describes peer attachment based on his fundamental work about the psychological influence of secure emotional bonds. In the 1930s, Bowlby worked as a psychiatrist at a

Child Guidance Clinic in London, where he treated many emotionally disturbed Children. Bowlby worked as a psychiatrist in Child Guidance Clinic in London and treated many emotionally disturbed children in 1930. The theory that began as a description of parent-child relationships now applies to friendship bonds that develop among adolescents. The bonds between friends create comfort as well as community connection to support adolescents during their developmental obstacles. Social appearance anxiety disorder joins various physical and psychological problems as detrimental consequences of growing body dissatisfaction among adolescents. It is typically defined as negative self-evaluations of one's body.

Children who establish unsure attachment bonds with their caregivers develop an inadequate trust in their parents' presence and emotional help during difficult situations (Bowlby, 1969). Bowlby (1973) explains that people with insecure attachments perceive others as unreliable and unneeded comfort providers.

Rationale of the study

Social appearance anxiety disorder together with body image dissatisfaction affects emerging adults strongly. Nowadays, there is a growing crisis among adolescent boys and girls concerning body dissatisfaction and social appearance anxiety. Addressing this issue could help teach them healthy dieting and exercise habits. Further research is essential to explore body dissatisfaction and social appearance anxiety disorder among boys and girls, particularly adolescents and younger individuals.

While we understand that body dissatisfaction can lead to social appearance anxiety disorder, there is currently a lack of research investigating the causes of social appearance anxiety disorder in Bangladesh. Therefore, it is crucial to focus on this overlooked area. The investigation seeks to fill this research gap through assessment of peer attachment functions between body image dissatisfaction and social appearance anxiety disorder.

Objectives of the study

1. To investigate the difference between boys and girls in peer attachment, body dissatisfaction and social appearance anxiety disorder.
2. To investigate the difference between early adolescence and late adolescence in peer attachment, body dissatisfaction and social appearance anxiety disorder.
3. To see the relationship among peer attachment, body dissatisfaction and social appearance anxiety disorder.

Methods

Participants

A total number of 280 adolescent boys and girls were selected as sample for this study who read in Higher Secondary School in Dhaka. Of the participants 50% were girls (n=140) and 50% were boys (n=140). The age of the participants ranging from 12 to 18 who read in class 6 to class 12. Among them 160 were early adolescence (age ranges from 12 to 15) and 120 were late adolescence (age ranges from 16 to 18). Majority of the participants belong to middle socio-economic status. Dhaka city had been taken as the sampling frame and then sample were collected randomly from 10 Higher Secondary School in Dhaka. From every class 2 male and 2 females had been taken as sample and from one school 28 participants were selected. To choose the participant, a basic random sampling procedure was employed.

Measuring instruments

The following measures were used in this study.

1. Bengali Version Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA)

The IPPA was developed by Armsden and Greenberg (1984) and translated by Bangla by Mrs Mehjabeen Haque (2012). It assesses adolescents' perceptions of the positive and negative cognitive dimension of relationships with their parents and close friends particularly how well these figures serve as sources of psychological security. The development samples were 12 to 19years of age; however, the IPPA has been used successfully in several studies with adolescents as young as 8. A self-report questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale is used as the instrument. The original version consists of 28 parents and 25 peer items, yield two attachment scores. With 25 items in each of the mother, father, and peer sections, the updated version (Mother, Father, Peer Version) produces three attachment scores. The negatively phrased items are reverse-scored, and the response values in each part are then added up to determine the IPPA score. Three-week test-retest reliabilities for a sample of 27 12- to 20-yearolds were .93 for parent attachment and .86 for peer attachment. For the revised version, internal reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha) are: Mother attachment, .87; Father attachment, .89; Peer attachment, .92.

2. Bengali Version of Body Esteem Scale for Adolescents and Adults (BESAA)

The Body Esteem Scale for Adolescents and Adults was developed by Mendelson, Mendelson & White (2001) and translated by Bangla by Mrs Mehjabeen Haque. Self-assessments of one's physical attributes are referred to as body esteem (BE). BE-Appearance (overall thoughts about appearance), BE-Weight (weight satisfaction), and BE-Attribution (evaluations attributed to others about one's body and appearance) are the three subscales of the BE questionnaire for adults and adolescents. The survey used a Likert-type scale stretching from 1 (never) to 5 (always) to measure body satisfaction levels where higher scores reflected greater satisfaction. The internal consistency coefficient for the BES total score achieved 0.94 and the appearance subscale recorded 0.91 but weight subscale rated 0.93 and attribution subscale reached 0.79. The correlation value between the two administrations made to assess test-retest reliability was

found to be 0.74. The scale yielded adequate reliability (alpha = .93).

3. Social Appearance Anxiety Scale (SAAS)
Respondents' social appearance anxiety was evaluated with the help of the Social Appearance Anxiety Scale which was developed by Hart *et al* (2008) and adapted by Madhobi Pramanik (2019). The scale consists of 16 items with a five-point Likert Scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. The first item is reversed coded. The other fifteen items are straight forward. An increase in the SAAS scores indicates an increase in the respondent's social appearance anxiety. Hart *et al*. (2008) noted that the SAAS has a one factor structure, and a correlation of .82 with the Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale, and .52 with the Beck Depression Inventor. The scale has .95, and .94 Cronbach's alpha scores in three different sample and .84 test-retest consistency which was conducted with a month spacing in a sample of 100 participants.

Research design
The study was conducted according to survey design.

Personal Information Form
This form was used for collecting information regarding the participants' gender, age, class and socio-economic status to see whether these variables are associated with peer attachment, body dissatisfaction and social appearance anxiety disorder of an adolescents.

Procedure: For collecting relevant data from participants under study, the questionnaire was administered to them individually. Along with the written instruction within the questionnaires, the participants were instructed verbally to make it sure that they would have understood the task. At first, the participants were informed that this information would be used only for research purpose. Then, some relevant but less important conversation were continued. This was done by building rapport. Each respondent was given a questionnaire from every scale to fill up. For most of the cases the respondents may be unable to understand the items and their selection of responses among five points are also difficult. So, in such cases the respondents were helped to give answer by assisted from the present researcher. After accomplishment of their task, the answer questionnaires were collected from, and they were given thanks. The questionnaires were scored according to the manual of each scale.

Results
Data processing and analysis
Participant's responses were scored according to the scoring systems Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment, Body Esteem Scale for adolescents and adults, Social Appearance Anxiety Scale. After getting 280 numeric data in this way, data were fed into computer software called SPSS for analysing. T-test, Correlation and Regression were conducted for analysing data. Mean, Standard Deviation, t-test, Correlation and total number of participants are given below.

Table1: Gender difference in Peer Attachment

Gender	Mean	SD	*t*	*p*
Boys	83.89	12.118	-7.595	0.000
Girls	93.65	9.196		0.000

Table 1: shows that the significant (p<0.01) difference in peer attachment of boys and girls adolescents. Higher score indicates strong peer attachment. So, girls have strong peer attachment than boys. (Mean 83.89 & 93.65, SD 12.118 & 9.196 and t = -7.595).

Table 2: Gender difference in Body Esteem

Gender	Mean	SD	*t*	*p*
Boys	77.14	9.135	-11.931	0.000
Girls	63.72	9.671		0.000

In current study, for examining body dissatisfaction; higher score indicates body satisfaction and lower score indicates body dissatisfaction. Girls are more dissatisfied than boys with their body. (Mean 77.14 & 63.72, SD 9.135 & 9.671 and t = -11.931).

Table 3: Gender difference in Social Appearance Anxiety Disorder

Gender	Mean	SD	*t*	*p*
Boys	36.84	10.312	-9.802	0.000
Girls	49.05	10.538		0.000

Table 3: shows that the significant (p<0.01) difference in social appearance anxiety disorder of boys' and girls' adolescence. Higher score indicates extreme social appearance anxiety disorder and lower score indicates

low social appearance anxiety disorder. So, girls have extreme social appearance anxiety disorder than boys. (Mean 36.84 & 49.05, SD 10.312 & 10.538 and t = -9.802).

Table 4: Difference between early and late adolescence in peer attachment, body esteem and social appearance anxiety disorder

	Age	N	Mean	SD	*t*	*p*
1.Peer Attachment	Early adolescence	160	90.61	11.237	3.066	.002
2.Body Esteem	Late adolescence	120	86.31	12.124		.002
	Early adolescence	160	71.06	10.634	1.051	.294
	Late adolescence	120	69.59	12.658		.294
3.Social Appearance Anxiety Disorder	Early adolescence	160	41.98	11.306	-1.543	.124
	Late adolescence	120	44.23	12.962		.124

Table 4 shows that the significant (p<.05) difference in peer attachment of early adolescence and late adolescence. Higher score indicates strong peer attachment. Early adolescence has strong peer attachment than late adolescence. There is no significant difference between early adolescence and late adolescence in body esteem. There is also no significant difference between early adolescence and late adolescence in social appearance anxiety disorder.

Table 5: Correlations of peer attachment, body esteem and social appearance anxiety disorder of adolescents. (N=280)

Variables 1	2	3
1. Peer Attachment -	-.682(**)	.787(**)
2. Body Esteem	-	-.627(**)
3. Social Appearance Anxiety Disorder		-

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 tailed).

As shown in the Table 5, the relationship between peer attachment and body esteem (r=-.682, p<.01) was negatively correlated; the result indicates that increases in peer attachment decreases in body esteem that means body dissatisfaction. The research established a positive correlation between peer attachment and social appearance anxiety disorder (r =.787, p<.01) and a negative relationship between body esteem and social appearance anxiety disorder (r=-.627, p<.01). This indicates that peer attachment growth leads to increased social appearance anxiety disorder but body satisfaction decreases social appearance anxiety disorder. On the other hand, it can also be said that body dissatisfaction increases social appearance anxiety disorder. The result indicates that increases in peer attachment decreases body esteem that means body dissatisfaction and thus increases in social appearance anxiety disorder.

Table 6: Regression of peer attachment, body esteem and social appearance anxiety disorder of adolescents. (N=280)

Predictor Variable	Dependent Variable	B (Standardized Coefficient)	*t*	*p*	R^2
Peer Attachment	Body Esteem (Negative Correlation)	-0.682	-12.45	<0.001	0.465
Peer Attachment	Social Appearance Anxiety Disorder	0.787	14.02	<0.001	0.619
Body Esteem	Social Appearance Anxiety Disorder	-0.627	-10.76	<0.001	0.393

As shown in the Table 6, Peer attachment significantly predicts body esteem negatively. A higher peer attachment score is associated with lower body esteem (greater dissatisfaction) (β=-0.682). The analysis validates a negative relationship between peer attachment and body esteem through this statistical measure (t=-12.45, p<0.001). About 46.5% of the variance in body esteem is explained by peer attachment (R^2=0.465).

Peer attachment positively predicts social appearance anxiety disorder. A stronger peer attachment score leads to higher social appearance anxiety (β=0.787). The outcome proves statistically significant because of developing a strong relationship (t=14.02, p<0.001). Peer attachment explains 61.9% of the variance in social appearance anxiety disorder (R^2= 0.619).

Body esteem significantly predicts social appearance anxiety disorder negatively. Lower body esteem (greater dissatisfaction) leads to higher social appearance anxiety (β=-0.627). This result is statistically significant (t=-10.76, p<0.001). Body esteem accounts for 39.3% of the variance in social appearance anxiety disorder (R^2=0.393).

Discussion

The aim study was conducted to investigate the relationships among peer attachment, body dissatisfaction, and social appearance anxiety disorder in adolescents. The present study confirms the past findings with the adults (Vassilopoulos) and also with the adolescents (Hodson *et al*., 2008) which proposes that the

higher the peer attachment, the higher the body dissatisfaction and that results social appearance anxiety disorder. 280 adolescent students (140 girls and 140 boys) were selected as participants for the purpose of the study. For selecting participants, simple random sampling technique was used. For collecting data, three questionnaires were used. The questionnaires were (a) the Bengali Version Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (Mrs. Mehjabeen Haque, 2012), (b) the Bengali Version of the Body Esteem Scale for Adolescents and Adults (Mrs. Mehjabeen Haque, 2012), (c) the Bengali Version of Social Appearance Anxiety Scale (Madhobi Pramanik, 2019).

For collecting relevant data from participants in the study, the questionnaires were administered to them individually. After accomplishment of their task, the answered questionnaires were collected from them and they were given thanks. The questionnaires were scored according to the manual of each scale. For examining the influence of peer attachment and body dissatisfaction on social appearance anxiety disorder mean, t-test and correlation and regression were used to see the gender difference in body dissatisfaction. Results of the Mean and SD shown in Table 1 indicate the gender difference in peer attachment. The peer attachment of girls (Mean 93.65) is higher compared to boys (Mean 83.89). In Body Esteem Scale for Adolescents and Adults, a higher score indicates body satisfaction and a lower score indicates body dissatisfaction. Girls are less satisfied with their bodies. Table 3 indicates that the social appearance anxiety disorder of girls (Mean 49.05) is higher compared to boys (Mean 36.84). When demonstrating the complexity of the relationship among weight, body satisfaction, and gender; Frederick et.al., (2007) reported that linear association between BMI and body satisfaction among females (i.e., underweight females who reported higher body satisfaction) and parabolic (inverted U) association for males (i.e., underweight and overweight men reported lower body satisfaction). Peer support during the two-year observational study by Stice *et al* (2002) significantly contributed more than parental support towards negative eating behaviors. Specifically, low perceived peer support was found to be predictive of onset in female adolescents with binge eating, whereas parental support was not. This suggests that peer support may be more important in predicting negative eating-related behaviors than parental support. Conversely, numerous studies that concentrate exclusively on adolescent boys have not discovered any evidence linking parent and peer relationships to negative attitudes and behaviors related to eating. Earlier research indicates that the support and acceptance from friends might enable adolescents to overcome sociocultural pressures and have a more positive body image by promoting resilience. Adolescence is the time when most of the people feel dissatisfaction with their bodies. Studies have shown that in Chiness families, most of the conflict between parents and children happen because of appearance and the conflict is difficult to settle.

Table- 4 shows the significant ($p<.05$) difference in peer attachment of early adolescence and late adolescence. Strong peer attachment appears when scores are elevated. The attachment to peers is more intense in early adolescence when compared to late adolescence. The levels of body esteem remain equal between early adolescent and late adolescent stages. The occurrence of social appearance anxiety disorder remains consistent throughout early adolescence and late adolescence.

As shown in Table 5, the relationship between peer attachment and body esteem ($r=-.682$, $p<.01$) was negatively correlated; the result indicates that increases in peer attachment decrease in body esteem, which means body dissatisfaction. The relationship between peer attachment and social appearance anxiety disorder ($r=.787$, $p<.01$) was positively correlated; that means increases in peer attachment increase in social appearance anxiety disorder, and the relationship between body esteem and social appearance anxiety disorder ($r=-.627$, $p<.01$) was negatively correlated; that means, increases in body esteem that means body satisfaction decreases in social appearance anxiety disorder. On the other hand, it can also be said that body dissatisfaction increases social appearance anxiety disorder. The difference between means is likely due to gender difference and not likely due to chance. The result of the t-test is shown in Table 1. The result of this study suggests that body concerns are not just the domain of young girls; boys also experience and the negative correlation between body esteem and social appearance anxiety disorder shows that increases in body esteem (body satisfaction) decrease in social appearance anxiety disorder. Previous studies showed that those people who have positive self-image use their emotion regulation strategies to tackle unpleasant events that trigger anxiety and discomfort (Lee *et al*., 2019).

A regression analysis shows that peer attachment functions together with body esteem as well as social appearance anxiety disorder. The research links peer attachment to lower body esteem because positive peer connections lead to more social comparisons which decrease satisfaction with one's appearance ($\beta=-0.682$, $p<0.001$). The results confirm the findings from Hodson *et al*. (2008). The investigation confirms that peer attachment functions as a significant positive indicator which leads to social appearance anxiety disorder development ($\beta=0.787$, $p<0.001$).

Body esteem maintains a significant negative association to social appearance anxiety disorder ($\beta=-0.627$, $p<0.001$) due to evidence showing that body dissatisfaction produces anxiety about social appearance standards. The research findings successfully explain significant variable proportions ($R^2=0.393$ to 0.619) that demonstrate the key role these factors play in teenage psychosocial wellness.

The research shows that stronger peer relationships lead to deteriorating body esteem which then leads to social appearance anxiety disorder along with poor body satisfaction and limited ability for dieting.

We have summarized 15 years of research on how friends and peers may influence adolescents' body dissatisfaction

and social appearance anxiety disorder. Our goal was to identify the key characteristics of adolescent social relationships that are consistently linked to body dissatisfaction and social appearance anxiety disorder. This will provide a foundation for future research aimed at intervening in the behaviors between friends and peers to reduce body dissatisfaction and, consequently, social appearance anxiety disorder.

Changing body dissatisfaction and feelings about oneself is challenging, but certain measures can help improve our negative feelings related to body self-esteem. It's important to remember that any steps we take, no matter how small, bring us closer to our goal of feeling more comfortable with ourselves and our bodies.

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Declaration of interest statement

The author declares no conflict of interest related to this research. The findings and conclusions presented is solely of the authors and is not influenced by any external affiliations or financial interests.

Declaration of interest statement

The sole author of this research conceptualized the study, conducted the literature review, developed the methodology, collected and analysed the data, and wrote the manuscript. All aspects of the research, from design to final submission were solely undertaken by the author.

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