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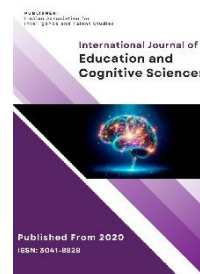
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Causal Analysis of the Financial Well-being Component of Teachers with Regard to Their School Attitude and Occupational Self-efficacy

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ABSTRACT

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Purpose: The aim of the present study was to conduct a causal analysis of the financial well-being component of teachers in relation to their attitude toward school and occupational self-efficacy.

Methods and Materials: The research followed a quantitative approach and employed a descriptive-correlational method. The statistical population included all lower secondary school teachers in public schools in District 20 of Tehran. Based on Cohen's sample size estimation method, a sample size of 245 was determined. Data collection instruments included the She Financial Well-being Questionnaire with 6 items, the Schaufeli Occupational Self-efficacy Scale with 6 items, and a researcher-made School Attitude Questionnaire with 32 items. The questionnaires were distributed using a cluster sampling method and through convenience sampling among the respondents. Relationships among variables were examined using Pearson correlation test and structural equation modeling (SEM). Data analysis was conducted using SPSS and AMOS software.

Findings: Findings revealed that financial well-being had a direct and positive effect on occupational self-efficacy ($\beta = 0.663$, $p < .05$). Financial well-being also had a direct and positive effect on attitude toward school ($\beta = 0.510$, $p < .05$). Fit indices indicated that the model including financial well-being, school attitude, and occupational self-efficacy had acceptable goodness of fit. Based on the findings, financial well-being was found to have a positive effect on both occupational self-efficacy and school attitude.

Conclusion: The results of this study demonstrated that the causal analysis of the financial well-being component of teachers in relation to their school attitude and occupational self-efficacy showed a positive and significant effect.

Keywords: *financial well-being, school attitude, occupational self-efficacy, causal analysis*

1. Introduction

In recent years, financial well-being has emerged as a critical focus in the field of social sciences, particularly in the context of teacher development and educational quality (Kamakia & Mwangi, 2017; Sorgente & Lanz, 2017). Financial well-being (FWB) is generally conceptualized as a subjective and multidimensional construct encompassing an individual's satisfaction with their current financial condition, their perceived ability to meet financial obligations, and their future economic security (Zemtsov & Osipova, 2016). In the educational sector, particularly among teachers, FWB plays a pivotal role in shaping not only personal life satisfaction but also professional effectiveness and commitment to the teaching profession (De Guzman & Reginalde, 2022; Martinez & Andal, 2022).

The significance of teachers' financial well-being becomes even more pronounced in contexts where economic instability and inadequate compensation challenge the sustainability of professional dedication. Studies consistently show that teachers, especially in public schools and developing nations, often experience moderate to low levels of financial well-being, despite exhibiting relatively responsible financial behaviors (Cabigao, 2020; Ronaldo et al., 2023). This paradox has spurred interest in the underlying factors influencing financial well-being among educators. Scholars argue that financial literacy, financial behavior, and financial self-efficacy are among the most crucial predictors of FWB (Bouziidi & Benmoussa, 2019; Ismail et al., 2017; Tabatabaei et al., 2024). These variables not only influence teachers' ability to make informed financial decisions but also shape their financial resilience and confidence in managing resources.

Financial literacy—the capacity to understand and use financial knowledge effectively—is often seen as the foundation for sound financial behavior (Ameliawati & Setiyani, 2018; Haque & Zulfiqar, 2016). Teachers with higher levels of financial literacy are more likely to budget effectively, plan for the future, and navigate financial challenges with greater confidence (Ecija, 2020; Kadoya & Khan, 2020). However, research also emphasizes that financial knowledge alone is insufficient. Financial attitude, socialization, and experience mediate the translation of financial literacy into meaningful behaviors (Dwiastanti, 2017; Payne et al., 2014; Shirbeigi et al., 2018). These mediating factors often manifest in the form of financial self-efficacy—individuals' belief in their ability to manage

financial matters—which has been found to significantly predict both financial decisions and broader measures of well-being (Demirhan et al., 2019; Ismail et al., 2017; Yeganeh & Zarei, 2019).

In the realm of education, a teacher's financial well-being can influence key occupational outcomes such as job satisfaction, psychological resilience, and self-efficacy (Imelda et al., 2017; Vosloo, 2014). Bandura's social cognitive theory highlights self-efficacy as a determinant of human functioning, proposing that individuals with high self-efficacy beliefs are more likely to engage in tasks with commitment, persistence, and adaptability (Ghasemzadeh Alishahi et al., 2024; Tabatabaei et al., 2024). In this light, job self-efficacy refers to a teacher's belief in their capacity to execute teaching responsibilities effectively and influence student learning outcomes. Financial security, as several studies have argued, reinforces this sense of professional confidence by reducing stress, enhancing focus, and fostering a sense of autonomy (Abaya et al., 2021; Matheson et al., 2020).

Another key construct that intersects with financial well-being is attitude toward school. Positive school attitudes—comprising perceptions of institutional support, collaboration with colleagues, and job satisfaction—are influenced by personal and professional circumstances, including financial health (Prasad & John, 2021; Villagonzalo Jr & Mibato, 2020). Teachers with stable financial conditions are more likely to report favorable attitudes toward their workplace, contributing to a more engaged and productive educational environment (Mohamed, 2017; Zarate, 2015). Conversely, financial distress may erode job satisfaction and diminish the psychological commitment teachers have to their institution (Mokhtar et al., 2015; Shaulskiy et al., 2015).

Despite the theoretical and empirical links between financial well-being, job self-efficacy, and school attitude, few studies have examined these relationships within a unified model, particularly in contexts where systemic financial support for educators is limited. While several scholars have examined financial behavior and literacy separately among teachers and education students (Widyastuti et al., 2016; Yap et al., 2018; Zulaihati et al., 2020), the complex interplay between these elements and professional identity development remains underexplored.

Notably, research by Henning and Lucey (2017) and Imelda et al. (2017) underscores a critical gap in preservice teacher training, where limited exposure to real-world financial decision-making often leaves educators unprepared

to manage personal and professional financial demands. This experiential void, compounded by inadequate curricular emphasis on financial literacy, limits teachers' capacity to develop both financial resilience and occupational efficacy (Ameliawati & Setiyani, 2018; Henning & Lucey, 2017). Matheson et al. (2020) further assert that formal financial education programs alone are insufficient unless they are complemented by practical financial tools, mentoring, and institutional support (Matheson et al., 2020).

Given the multi-layered nature of financial well-being, understanding its drivers among teachers necessitates a comprehensive and context-sensitive analysis. In particular, the intersection of financial well-being with psychological constructs such as self-efficacy and attitudinal variables like school perception offers a promising area for educational research and policy development. This study aims to fill this research gap by analyzing the causal effect of financial well-being on teachers' job self-efficacy and their attitude toward school

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study Design and Participants

This research employed a descriptive-correlational design within a quantitative research framework. The statistical population consisted of all teachers in lower secondary public schools located in District 20 of Tehran. To determine the appropriate sample size, Cohen's method for sample size estimation was utilized. The parameters used in Cohen's formula included an effect size of 0.30 (considered a medium effect based on Cohen's standard), a statistical power level of 95%, three latent variables in the model, and seventeen observed variables, with a conventional confidence level of 0.95. Based on these inputs, the minimum required sample size was estimated to be 184 participants. However, considering the potential for participant dropout and in order to enhance the generalizability of the findings, a total of 250 questionnaires were distributed. Ultimately, 245 completed questionnaires were collected and analyzed. Regarding demographic characteristics, 131 participants (53.5%) were female and 114 (46.5%) were male. In terms of marital status, 168 participants (68.6%) were married and 77 (31.4%) were single. Educational levels were distributed as follows: 10 participants (4.1%) held an associate's degree, 156 (63.7%) held a bachelor's degree, 59 (24.1%) held a master's degree, and 20 (8.2%) held a doctoral degree. The participants' mean age was 40.24 years with a standard deviation of 8.76, and

their ages ranged from 26 to 62 years. The average teaching experience was 13.81 years with a standard deviation of 8.66, ranging from 1 to 35 years.

2.2. Measures

The first instrument used to measure teachers' financial well-being was the She Financial Well-being Questionnaire, which consists of 6 items. This questionnaire assesses participants' perceived economic security, their ability to meet financial obligations, and satisfaction with their current financial situation. Each item is rated on a Likert scale, allowing for quantification of subjective financial perceptions. This tool has been widely utilized in educational and social science studies and has demonstrated acceptable internal consistency in prior research. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha for this scale was calculated to be 0.83, indicating high reliability.

The second instrument was the Occupational Self-Efficacy Scale developed by Schaufeli, which includes 6 items designed to measure teachers' beliefs in their ability to effectively manage and perform their professional responsibilities. The items cover domains such as problem-solving in the classroom, managing workload, and fostering student learning. Responses are provided on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." This scale is based on Bandura's theory of self-efficacy and has been validated in various professional contexts. In this study, the reliability of this scale was confirmed with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.74.

The third tool was a researcher-constructed School Attitude Questionnaire comprising 32 items. This instrument was specifically designed to capture teachers' attitudes toward their school environment, including dimensions such as school leadership, colleague cooperation, student engagement, and overall institutional climate. The items were developed following a review of existing literature and expert consultation to ensure content validity. Responses were measured using a Likert-type scale. The internal consistency of this questionnaire was excellent, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.96, indicating that the scale reliably measures the construct of school attitude.

2.3. Data Analysis

To investigate the relationships among the variables, both Pearson correlation and structural equation modeling (SEM) were employed. The threshold for statistical significance was set at $p \leq .05$. All data were analyzed using SPSS version

28 and AMOS version 24. Prior to conducting the main analyses, data screening was performed. Univariate outliers were identified and addressed using boxplot visualizations. The assumption of multivariate normality was evaluated through skewness values and critical ratios provided in AMOS output. The critical ratio obtained was 2.36, which falls within the acceptable range of -2.56 to +2.56, thus confirming that the assumption of multivariate normality was met. These preliminary checks ensured the appropriateness of the data for SEM analysis and enhanced the robustness of the study's findings.

Table 1

Pearson Correlation Test Between Study Variables Along with Descriptive Statistics

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Financial Well-being	1							
2. Occupational Self-efficacy	.48***	1						
3. Attitude Toward School (Total)	.40***	.56***	1					
4. Attitude Toward Teachers/Class	.33***	.51***	.94***	1				
5. Motivation/Self-regulation	.43***	.54***	.95***	.88***	1			
6. Attitude Toward the School	.36***	.50***	.92***	.83***	.33***	1		
7. Academic Self-perception	.44***	.56***	.94***	.56***	.33***	.33***	1	
8. Goal Valuation	.31***	.47***	.89***	.47***	.33***	.33***	.33***	1
Mean	2.75	2.80	2.62	2.65	2.68	2.70	2.78	2.29
Standard Deviation	0.90	0.57	0.94	1.05	0.98	0.98	1.06	1.01
Skewness	-0.08	-0.32	0.29	0.30	0.26	0.28	0.14	0.55
Kurtosis	-0.66	-0.50	-0.92	-1.01	-0.85	-0.84	-1.04	-0.63

The correlation results in Table 1 revealed statistically significant relationships between all variables ($p < .001$). A positive correlation was found between financial well-being and occupational self-efficacy, with a moderate correlation coefficient of 0.48. Additionally, financial well-being was positively associated with attitude toward school, with a moderate correlation of 0.40. Financial well-being also showed positive and significant correlations with all subdimensions of school attitude ($p < .001$).

The conceptual model of the study was tested using structural equation modeling (SEM) in AMOS. Figure 1 illustrates the empirical model with standardized path

3. Findings and Results

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of the variables along with the Pearson correlation coefficients between the study variables. According to the results in Table 1, the assumption of univariate normality was assessed using skewness and kurtosis indices. Since the values for all variables fell within the acceptable range of -2 to +2, the assumption of univariate normality was confirmed. Therefore, parametric statistical tests were deemed appropriate for the analysis.

coefficients, and statistically significant paths are marked with asterisks (***), indicating $p < .001$.

Figure 1 confirmed the direct effects of financial well-being on both occupational self-efficacy and school attitude ($p < .001$). The strength of the associations between observed variables and latent constructs exceeded the minimum threshold of 0.40, indicating good measurement model validity and supporting the reliability of the questionnaire items. The coefficient of determination (R^2) showed that the independent variable, financial well-being, explained 44% of the variance in occupational self-efficacy and 26% of the variance in attitude toward school. The model fit indices are presented in Table 2.

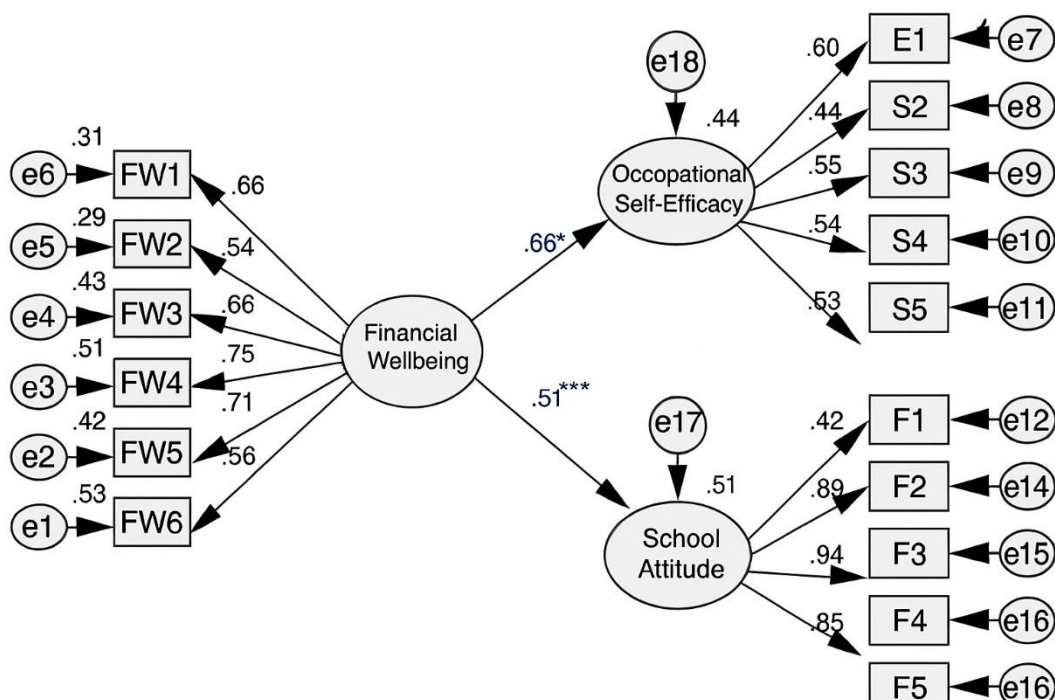
Table 2

Model Fit Indices

Fit Index	PGFI	IFI	NFI	CFI	GFI	RMSEA	Chi-square/df
Threshold*	>.70	>.90	>.90	>.90	>.90	<.08	1-5
Result	0.73	0.93	0.91	0.93	0.88	0.072	2.45

Figure 1

Empirical Model with Standardized Path Coefficients ($p < .001$)*



Overall, an evaluation of all fit indices in Table 2 indicates that the empirical model had acceptable and robust fit. None of the indices were weak; GFI showed an average level, while the remaining indices demonstrated desirable

levels, confirming that the model was supported and aligned with the conceptual framework and the observed data.

Table 3 displays the results of the direct effects between variables in the model.

Table 3

Results of Direct Effects in the Model

Type of Effect	Standardized Coefficient	Unstandardized Coefficient	Standard Error	t-value	p-value
Financial Well-being → Self-efficacy	0.663	0.412	0.061	6.72	<.001
Financial Well-being → School Attitude	0.510	0.534	0.073	7.31	<.001

The findings in Table 3 confirmed that financial well-being had a significant and positive effect on occupational self-efficacy ($p < .001$). The direction of the relationship was positive, suggesting that improvements in financial well-being were associated with higher levels of occupational self-efficacy among teachers. The strength of this effect was substantial, with a standardized coefficient of 0.663, indicating a strong and meaningful impact. Similarly, financial well-being had a significant and positive effect on teachers' attitudes toward school ($p < .001$). The standardized coefficient of 0.510 reflected a strong influence, demonstrating that higher financial well-being contributed to more favorable school attitudes.

Financial well-being among teachers is conceptualized as a subjective reflection of their perceptions and lived experiences, manifested in their ability to manage unforeseen expenses, ensure future financial stability, and attain desired standards of living. The findings suggest that feelings of financial security and confidence in one's ability to cope with economic challenges are significantly correlated with higher levels of financial well-being in this professional group.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The present study was conducted to examine the causal relationships between financial well-being, job self-efficacy, and attitude toward school among public high school

teachers. The analysis revealed two main findings. First, financial well-being had a statistically significant and positive effect on teachers' job self-efficacy. Second, financial well-being also positively influenced teachers' attitudes toward school. These results provide valuable empirical support for the proposed conceptual model and are in line with the theoretical framework of financial socialization and self-efficacy theory.

The findings indicated that teachers with higher levels of financial well-being also reported greater job self-efficacy. This result confirms previous research emphasizing the interconnection between financial security and occupational functioning. For instance, (Tabatabaei et al., 2024) found that employees with higher financial self-efficacy experienced increased professional performance and mental well-being, suggesting that confidence in managing financial matters contributes to enhanced job capabilities. Similarly, (Yeganeh & Zarei, 2019) identified financial literacy and financial attitude as key factors that impact financial self-efficacy and, consequently, professional self-confidence in high-responsibility professions such as teaching. This link is supported by the social cognitive theory of Bandura, which posits that individuals with high levels of perceived competence are more motivated, resilient, and productive. Financial stability may reduce stress and distraction, allowing teachers to focus more on instructional tasks and classroom management, thus reinforcing their sense of competence and control.

The positive relationship between financial well-being and school attitude suggests that economic satisfaction influences not only individual psychological factors but also broader institutional perceptions. Teachers who feel financially secure are more likely to report satisfaction with their school environment, higher engagement with their duties, and a stronger sense of belonging in their institution. This is consistent with findings from (Ronaldo et al., 2023) who reported that Filipino basic education teachers with higher financial well-being demonstrated stronger professional commitment and job satisfaction. Similarly, (Martinez & Andal, 2022) found that teachers' financial knowledge and decision-making competencies significantly contributed to their professional qualities and work attitudes. The current study extends these findings by empirically validating the direct effect of financial well-being on school attitude in a model that also includes job self-efficacy, providing a more comprehensive view of how economic conditions shape both personal and institutional experiences of teachers.

Moreover, the structural equation modeling confirmed that financial well-being explains 44% of the variance in job self-efficacy and 26% of the variance in school attitude, indicating substantial predictive power. These values suggest that financial well-being is not a peripheral factor, but a core determinant of professional identity and motivation in the teaching profession. As (Abaya et al., 2021) noted, financial literacy and management practices among teachers are crucial in enabling them to meet professional demands without being overwhelmed by personal economic stressors. In the same vein, (Ismail et al., 2017) emphasized that financial self-efficacy contributes significantly to behavior regulation and role clarity, which are essential for sustaining high performance and job satisfaction in educational settings.

The results also resonate with the work of (De Guzman & Reginalde, 2022), who underscored the role of financial literacy, perspectives, and practices in shaping the educational engagement of secondary school teachers. Likewise, the findings mirror the conclusions of (Bouziid & Benmoussa, 2019) and (Sabri & Zakaria, 2015), who asserted that financial behaviors grounded in sound knowledge and attitudes are instrumental in building a secure and motivated workforce. These scholars emphasize that awareness and capability are insufficient unless they are translated into consistent and effective financial actions. The current study reinforces this argument by showing that financial well-being, as an outcome of financial literacy and behavior, exerts measurable influence on teachers' psychological and attitudinal orientations.

One of the core contributions of this study lies in its attention to financial well-being as a central psychological construct rather than merely a material condition. Financial well-being encompasses subjective evaluations such as the ability to meet unexpected expenses, confidence in future stability, and satisfaction with current living standards (Kadoya & Khan, 2020; Zemtsov & Osipova, 2016). These subjective dimensions reflect internalized economic security, which in turn contributes to greater emotional regulation, interpersonal competence, and positive workplace behaviors. As (Ghasemzadeh Alishahi et al., 2024) point out, teachers' professional self-efficacy is significantly influenced by internal factors, including values, experiences, and confidence in external resources. The data from the current study align with this view by showing that subjective financial well-being underpins both individual motivation and institutional loyalty.

Another important implication of the study pertains to the mediating role of financial literacy and behavior in shaping financial well-being. While this study did not explicitly test mediational paths, the discussion is informed by prior literature indicating that literacy, attitude, and behavior collectively determine financial outcomes (Ameliawati & Setiyani, 2018; Yap et al., 2018). Teachers with greater awareness of financial systems, prudent financial practices, and proactive saving behaviors are more likely to achieve financial well-being. This aligns with the findings of (Zulaihati et al., 2020), who demonstrated that financial literacy among Indonesian teachers was a significant predictor of their financial behavior and overall financial health. Therefore, the role of education and training in financial domains cannot be overstated, particularly for public sector professionals such as teachers who may face systemic economic limitations.

The findings of this study also call attention to the need for institutional reform and support. As (Cabigao, 2020) observed, many teachers face persistent financial difficulties despite long years of service, not solely due to low income but also because of inadequate financial planning and insufficient institutional resources. The study by (Lianto & Sri Megawati, 2017) similarly reported that financial attitude, financial knowledge, and income collectively influence financial behavior among households, and by extension, professional outcomes. Hence, this study underscores the urgency of addressing the structural barriers to financial empowerment for educators by offering targeted training, tools, and policy support.

In addition to teacher-centered benefits, improved financial well-being has broader implications for educational systems. According to (Villagonzalo Jr & Mibato, 2020), financially stable teachers are more effective in the classroom, contribute positively to school culture, and serve as role models for students in terms of responsible citizenship and economic behavior. Furthermore, (Henning & Lucey, 2017) argue that integrating financial literacy into teacher preparation programs can help close the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical competence. The present study reinforces this view by showing how financial well-being directly enhances not only teacher self-efficacy but also their engagement with the school environment.

Despite its contributions, this study has certain limitations. First, the cross-sectional nature of the research design limits the ability to draw causal inferences over time. Although structural equation modeling allows for causal modeling, longitudinal data would provide stronger

evidence of directionality and change. Second, the study was conducted in a specific geographical and institutional context—public high schools in District 20 of Tehran—which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other educational settings or regions. Third, self-report questionnaires, while efficient for collecting large-scale data, are susceptible to biases such as social desirability and self-perception distortions. Finally, the study focused solely on financial well-being and did not measure related constructs such as financial anxiety or material deprivation, which may offer additional explanatory power.

Future research should consider employing longitudinal or experimental designs to better capture the dynamic and developmental aspects of financial well-being and its impact on teachers. Longitudinal studies can explore how changes in financial literacy and behavior over time influence teachers' professional self-concept and job satisfaction. Additionally, future studies should examine potential mediators and moderators such as financial self-efficacy, job stress, organizational support, and demographic variables like age, gender, or tenure. Expanding the model to include these constructs could offer more nuanced insights into the complex interplay between economic and psychological variables. Finally, cross-cultural and comparative research is encouraged to explore how contextual differences in financial systems, education policy, and cultural attitudes influence the observed relationships.

For practical applications, education policymakers and school administrators should prioritize financial well-being programs as a component of teacher development. Integrating financial literacy modules into professional development plans can equip teachers with the necessary skills and confidence to manage their financial lives effectively. Schools should consider partnerships with financial institutions to offer workshops, counseling, and access to financial planning tools tailored for educators. Furthermore, incorporating budgeting, saving, and investment strategies into institutional training can empower teachers to make informed financial decisions. School systems must also advocate for more equitable compensation policies and benefits that address the long-term financial security of teachers. By fostering a financially healthy teaching workforce, educational institutions can ultimately enhance teacher retention, job satisfaction, and instructional quality.

Authors' Contributions

All authors significantly contributed to this study.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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Ethical Considerations

In this study, to observe ethical considerations, participants were informed about the goals and importance of the research before the start of the interview and participated in the research with informed consent.

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