

Reliability and Validity Study of the Turkish Version of the Perceptions of Love and Sex Scale

ABSTRACT

Objective: The aim of this study is to investigate the psychometric properties of the Turkish version of the Perceptions of Love and Sex Scale.

Methods: The sample of this study consists of 384 individuals (71.91% of them were female, 28.09% of them were male) living in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and having a partner. The sociodemographic information form and Perspectives of Love and Sex Scale were used. Statistical Package for Social Sciences 21.0 and AMOS 21.0 software have been used in the statistical analysis of the research data. Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin test, Bartlett’s sphericity test, exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, Cronbach’s alpha test, Spearman’s correlation test, and item-total correlations have been examined within the scope of the validity–reliability study of the scale. The significance level in the research is the type I error rate ($\alpha=0.05$).

Results: The exploratory factor analysis revealed that the total explained variance is 57.08%. Items 2 and 13 were excluded from the 4-factor and 17-item scale settled by exploratory factor analysis because their factor loads were not appropriate and they disrupted the model fit. When the Cronbach’s alpha test results of the scale are examined, it has been settled that it was 0.702 for the “love is most important” subdimension, 0.861 for the “sex demonstrates love” subdimension, 0.763 for the “love comes before sex” subdimension, and 0.760 for the “sex is declining” subdimension.

Conclusion: Consequently, Perceptions of Love and Sex Scale is determined to be a valid and reliable measurement tool.

Keywords: Love, sex, scale adaptation, validity, reliability

Introduction

Sexuality is the basis of romantic relationships. Sexuality is based on facts that form the basis of being human such as gender, sexual identity, sexual compatibility, eroticism, emotional attachment/love, and reproduction.^{1,2} World Health Organization describes sexuality as the integration of somatic, emotional, intellectual, and social aspects that enrich personality, communication, and love.³ Love, on the other hand, is named as the deepest and the most meaningful emotion that is of central importance for close relationships.⁴ The concept of love has different meanings in many cultures and differs from person to person. The way researchers handle love varies according to their perspectives on love. These perspectives are often based on evolutionary history, neuropsychology, individual, or social characteristics. The concept of love as a complex set of feelings, thoughts, and behaviors is an integral element of people’s social relations. Many different theorists have made many different definitions of love. Freud defines love as the glorification of sexuality at its peak points.⁵ It is important to associate sexuality with love and to examine both in the context of a relationship.⁶ Considering love in the context of a passion also reveals that it has an ending aspect, that is, it means ending with reaching passion. On the other hand, sexuality is shown with affection and love as well as the situation or distinctive features that appear different from routine. Although the concepts put forward about love until today are parts of a whole, it reveals that this whole shows diversity in different contexts.²



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Gender differences play a key role in sexuality and love in terms of attitudes, expectations, and behaviors. The reason for these differences can be examined in many different perspectives and may cause differences in sexual strategies. While men may head for sexually liberated and free reproductive strategies more than women, it is observed that women tend to head for more friendship and communication-oriented strategies than men.⁷ However, the genders do not differ in their beliefs about sexual desire levels.⁸ It was also observed that while women focus on their needs for love, intimacy, or commitment to experience more sexual desire than men, men define the purpose of desire as sexual activity. In general, it has been found that women adopt a more relational or person-centered orientation toward sexuality, whereas men adopt a more recreational or body-centered orientation.⁹ Studies have found that people generally believe that sexuality is enjoyable when they are in a loving relationship. Close partners (e.g., women) are motivated with sex to express their love, and people desire to have sex to express their affection.¹⁰ It is regarded that a positive relationship exists between experienced love and sexuality. The love between the flirt partner, the frequency of having sex and these desires are directly affected. These findings show solid connection between love and sex. By contrast, some social scientists deprecate the evolutionary perspective and support the social forces, pressures, and scenarios that drive gender differences in close relationships.¹¹

When current studies on love and sex are examined, it can be said that there are very few studies in this area. Researchers that are closest to this area have focused on issues such as sexual dysfunction and sexual satisfaction in heterosexual individuals in their clinical-oriented studies. At this point, it has been determined that studies on individuals without sexual dysfunction are almost not focused on. On the other hand, love and sexuality are concepts that are very difficult to separate from each other in close relationships.⁶ When sexuality in the evolutionary context is discussed, it is indispensable in the context of reproduction. And love contributes to the establishment of these bonds. It will not be functional to consider these two variables separately. Love and sexuality cannot be said to be the same concept or synonyms, but they are defined as 2 closely related concepts. It is an accepted fact that a healthy sexual relationship in romantic relationships includes passion and intimacy.¹² In the light of our research on love and sex attitudes, we expected to find that themes that stress love have occurred more than the themes that stress sex. Moreover, it was foreseen that we would discover that the association of love themes would be stronger with love variables than with sex variables in existing measures and that the association of sex themes would be stronger with sex variables than with love variables in existing measures. Finding both gender similarities and differences in quantitative linkages between sex and love were

anticipated. It was generally predicted that the themes emphasizing love would be more supported by women, whereas the themes emphasizing sex would be more supported by men. However, it is seen that the studies conducted on these concepts in Turkey are quite limited and especially the studies on the development and adaptation of measurement tools. Therefore, there is a need for psychological measurement tools, whose validity and reliability is tested in this field and which provide the opportunity to evaluate all subscales in order to shed light on the studies on the concepts of love and sex.

Methods

This study was carried out using the screening method as it was a validity and reliability study. The screening model is a research method that describes the existing situation as it is.¹³

Sampling

The universe of this study consists of individuals living in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) and having a partner. Since the number of people in the universe of the research population is not known, 384 people were included in the sampling by using the unknown population sampling method to determine the sampling number. Accordingly, the number of people to be interviewed was calculated as 384, with 95% confidence and 5% sampling error. The distribution of the introductory (sociodemographic) characteristics of the participants was shown, 71.91% of them were female, 28.09% of them were male, 25.26% of them were 30 years old and younger, 34.79% were 31-35 years old, 22.16% were 36- It was determined that they were in the 40 age group, 49.48% of them had university education and 38.14% of them had postgraduate education. 34.28% of the participants are working in the private sector, 33.76% are working in the public sector, 25.77% are self-employed, 78.61% are TRNC nationals, 13.66% are Turkish citizens, 66%. It was determined that 75% of them were married. The sampling of the study was selected by using the purposive sampling method. Purposive sampling is a sampling method in which participants with experience in the existing situation can be selected in order to have profound information about the subject. Only individuals that are in relationships are included in the study for the purpose.

Data Collection Tools

The measurement tools used in the study are the sociodemographic information form and the Perceptions of Love and Sex Scale (PLSS). Data collection started in June 2021 after the approval of the owners of the scale and the ethics committee of Near East University (Approval no: NEU/SS/2021/1053). Written informed consent was obtained from participants. The sociodemographic information form includes 12 questions created by the researcher to reach the personal information of the participants. In the study, first of all, PLSS was translated into Turkish by 3 experts who are fluent in English and have experience in the field of psychology, and then back-translated into English by 3 different people who are also experts in the field of psychology. The PLSS was developed by Hendrick and Hendrick.¹⁴ The 17-item PLSS has 4 subscales: "love is most important" (6 items), "sex demonstrates love" (4 items) "love comes before sex" (4 items), and "sex is declining" (3 items).¹⁴ Names of subscales and reliability coefficients are as follows: The first subscale, "love is most important" (6 items; $\alpha=0.67$); second subscale, "sex demonstrates love" (4 items; $\alpha=0.80$); third subscale, "love comes before sex" (4

MAIN POINTS

- The exploratory factor analysis revealed that the total explained variance is 57.08%.
- Items 2 and 13 were excluded from the 4-factor and 17 item scale settled by exploratory factor analysis because their factor loads were not appropriate and they disrupted the model fit.
- Perceptions of Love and Sex Scale is determined to be a valid and reliable measurement tool.

items; $\alpha = 0.78$); and fourth subscale, "sex is declining" (3 items; $\alpha = 0.62$). The intercorrelations among the subscales range between -0.26 (first and fourth subscales) and 0.47 between (first and third subscales).

Statistical Analysis of Data

Statistical Package for Social Sciences 21.0 (IBM SPSS Corp.; Armonk, NY, USA) and AMOS 21.0 software have been applied in the statistical analysis of the research data. The normal distribution of scale total scores was examined with the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test and it was found that it was not normally distributed. Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) test, Bartlett's sphericity test, exploratory factor analysis (EFA), confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), Cronbach's alpha test, Spearman's correlation test, and item-total correlations have been examined within the scope of the validity–reliability study of the scale. The level of significance in the research is the type I error rate ($\alpha = 0.05$).

Results

Construct Validity Analysis of the Perceptions of Love and Sex Scale

The EFA and CFA were conducted for investigating the construct validity of the PLSS.

Exploratory Factor Analysis

Exploratory factor analysis has been applied to find out the factor structure of the scale. Exploratory factor analysis is a process for analyzing factors which is used to produce new factors that don't have any connection with each other, supplied that they are less than k numbered variables, using the correlation matrix or covariance matrix of the data acquired through a measuring tool.¹⁵

Before proceeding with the EFA processes, if the data set fulfilled the required expectations for factor analysis had been inspected. In the framework; the suitability of the drawn up form of the PLSS to the multivariate normal distribution has been inspected, moreover, it was defined that it conformed to the multivariate normal distribution, and the KMO coefficient as well as Bartlett's sphericity tests, which were applied to settle the convenience for explanatory purposes, have been applied.

When Table 1 is examined, the KMO coefficient of the PLSS was seen to be 0.866 . The KMO coefficient yields information about if the data matrix is suitable for factor analysis. It also yields about the suitability of the data structure for factor extraction. The KMO is expected to be greater than 0.60 for factorability. The Bartlett test studies if an association between the variables on the basis of partial correlations is present.¹⁶ When the outcomes of Bartlett's test of sphericity are examined, the calculated chi-square value of the test is found to be 1973.139 . Accordingly, this value was seen to be statistically

Table 1. PLSS and KMO and Bartlett's Test Results

		Values
KMO.	Coefficient	0.866
Bartlett's sphericity test	χ^2	1973.14
	Df	136
	P	$<.001$

KMO, Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin test; PLSS, Perceptions of Love and Sex Scale.

Table 2. EFA Findings of the PLSS

	F1	F2	F3	F4
Q1	0.54	0.35	-0.07	-0.36
Q2	0.40	0.38	-0.19	-0.18
Q3	0.67	0.03	0.37	0.04
Q4	0.60	0.19	0.50	-0.04
Q5	0.61	0.16	0.20	0.04
Q6	0.54	0.34	-0.24	-0.24
Q7	0.04	0.79	0.03	0.21
Q8	-0.08	0.76	-0.03	0.19
Q9	-0.04	0.80	0.21	0.16
Q10	0.01	0.81	0.18	0.04
Q11	0.30	0.02	0.66	-0.49
Q12	0.34	0.09	0.59	-0.57
Q13	0.26	0.09	0.31	0.07
Q14	0.16	0.02	0.61	-0.02
Q15	0.06	-0.34	0.09	0.57
Q16	-0.09	-0.41	-0.04	0.69
Q17	-0.14	-0.37	0.04	0.69
Eigenvalue	3.59	3.15	1.76	1.21
Explained variance	21.10	18.51	10.37	7.10
Cumulative explained variance	21.10	39.61	49.98	57.08

EFA, exploratory factor analysis; PLSS, Perceptions of Love and Sex Scale. Bold values are high related factor load.

significant ($P = .001$). Consistent with the results, it was determined that the PLSS was suitable for EFA.

The eigenvalues acquired as a result of the EFA have been applied in the PLSS and the variances explained by these eigenvalues alone or together with other factors are shown in Table 2.

Principal Components method has been applied in the EFA to settle the factor structure of the PLSS, while varimax rotation was utilized to the data set.

When Table 2 is examined, EFA revealed a 4-factor structure with an eigenvalue above 1 in the PLSS, and 57.08% of the total variance has been explained. When the factor loads of the items in the PLSS were examined, it was defined that the factor loadings ranged between 0.31 and 0.81 . The factor load of an item on a factor is anticipated to be no less than 0.30 , and the load can be negative or positive.¹⁷ Accordingly, it was determined that the factor loads of the items in the PLSS ranged from -0.78 to 0.76 . Due to the fact that there was no item in the scale below ± 0.30 , no items were excluded from the scale at this stage. In line with these results, it was seen that the factor structure of the PLSS consisted of a 4-factor structure in accordance with the original scale.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Subsequent to the presentation of the factor structure of the PLSS, CFA has been conducted to confirm the suitability of the factor structure of the scale and to look into the relationships between the factors. Confirmatory factor analysis is an extension of EFA. The EFA clarifies the factor structure of a measurement tool. On the other hand, CFA examines to see if the relationship between the factors settled by EFA is satisfactory. It is used to determine which factors the variables are associated with and whether the factors are independent from each

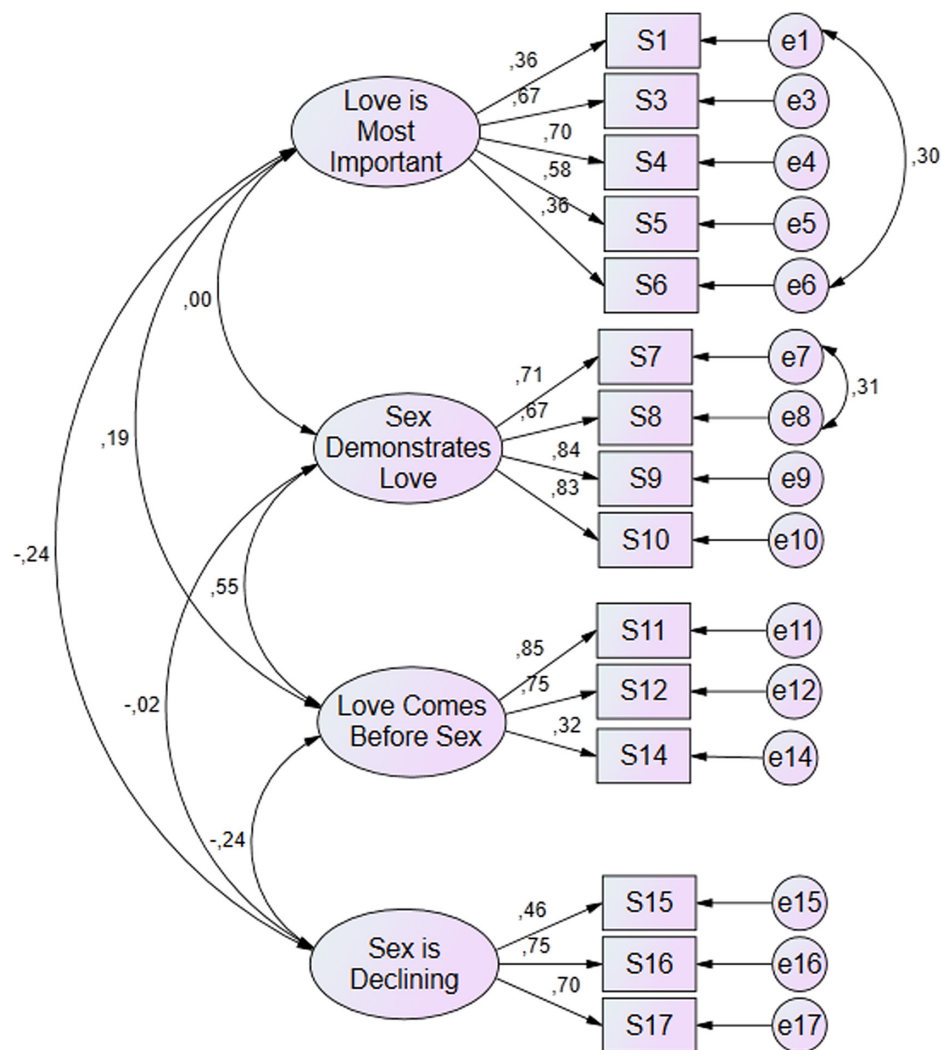


Figure 1. Confirmatory factor analysis path diagram of Perceptions of Love and Sex Scale.

other. It is also used to test whether the settled factors are satisfactory for clarifying the organized model.¹⁸

According to the CFA path diagram of the PLSS which is presented in Figure 1, items 2 and 13 were excluded from the 4-factor and 17-item scale calculated by EFA because their factor loads were not suitable and they disrupted the model fit.

In Table 3 when the CFA values of the PLSS are looked into, it has been settled that the χ^2/df was 3.607, which suggests that the PLSS has an

acceptable fit in terms of χ^2/df . A value of $\chi^2/df < 3$ suggests a perfect fit, whereas a value between "3" and "5" implies an acceptable fit.¹⁹

A goodness of fit index (GFI) ranging between 0.95 and 1.00 implies the existence of a perfect fit, and a range between 0.90 and 0.95 indicates the existence of an acceptable fit.²⁰ Goodness of fit index determined for the PLSS is 0.957 and is found to be perfect.

According to the CFA results of the PLSS, the normed fit index (NFI) value of that scale has been observed as 0.927. The limit value determined for the NFI ranges from 0.90 to 1.00.²¹ The NFI value is anticipated to be within the stated limit values and this suggests an acceptable fit.

Among the critical values settled for the comparative fit index (CFI), the 0.95-1.00 range suggests a good fit and the 0.90-0.95 range suggests an acceptable fit.²¹ The CFI value settled for the PLSS is 0.967, and this value shows that it has a perfect fit in the matter of the PLSS CFI.

The root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) value of the scale is 0.074. According to Brown (2006), an RMSEA value between

Table 3. Goodness of Fit Indices of the PLSS

Index	Value	Limit	Fitness
χ^2/df	3.607	3 and 5	Acceptable
GFI	0.957	0.90 and 0.95	Perfect
NFI	0.927	0.90 and 0.95	Acceptable
CFI	0.967	0.90 and 0.95	Perfect
RMSEA	0.074	0.05 and 0.08	Acceptable
RMSA	0.078	0.05 and 0.08	Acceptable

CFI, comparative fit index; GFI, goodness of fit index; NFI, normed fit index; PLSS, Perceptions of Love and Sex Scale; RMSA, Root Mean Square of the Residuals; RMSEA, root mean square error of approximation.

Table 4. Cronbach's Alpha Results of PLSS

	Alpha
Love is most important	0.702
Sex demonstrates love	0.861
Love comes before sex	0.763
Sex is declining	0.760

PLSS, Perceptions of Love and Sex Scale.

0.00 and 0.05 suggests a perfect fit, whereas a value between 0.05 and 0.08 suggests an acceptable fit.²² According to this, it is seen that PLSS has an acceptable fit in terms of RMSEA.

In consequence of the CFA, it has been observed that all the goodness of fit indices of the PLSS except GFI were appropriate and the construct validity of the scale has been assured.

Reliability Analysis of the Perceptions of Love and Sex Scale

In order to assess the reliability of the PLSS, the Cronbach's alpha test and the Split-Half test have been performed. The item-total correlations of the scale have been looked into.

When we look at Table 4, it has been determined that the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the Cronbach's alpha test results of the PLSS was 0.702 for "the love is most important" subdimension, 0.861 for "the sex demonstrates love" subdimension, 0.763 for "the love comes before sex" subdimension, and 0.760 for "the sex is declining" subdimension. If the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient is above 0.70, the measurement tool shows that it is reliable.²³

Table 5. Item-Total Correlations of the PLSS

		Estimate	P
Q1	← Love is most important	0.36	<.001
Q3	← Love is most important	0.674	<.001
Q4	← Love is most important	0.703	<.001
Q5	← Love is most important	0.584	<.001
Q6	← Love is most important	0.358	<.001
Q7	← Sex demonstrates love	0.707	<.001
Q8	← Sex demonstrates love	0.668	<.001
Q9	← Sex demonstrates love	0.845	<.001
Q10	← Sex demonstrates love	0.83	<.001
Q11	← Love comes before sex	0.85	<.001
Q12	← Love comes before sex	0.751	<.001
Q14	← Love comes before sex	0.321	<.001
Q15	← Sex is declining	0.463	<.001
Q16	← Sex is declining	0.753	<.001
Q17	← Sex is declining	0.696	<.001

PLSS, Perceptions of Love and Sex Scale.

When the item-total correlations of the PLSS given in Table 5 are examined, it is determined that the items in the scale had high item-total correlations that ranged from 0.378 to 0.746.

When we assess Table 6, it was discovered that there was a negative correlation between the scores of the participants in the PLSS, "the love is most important" subdimension and the scores they got from "the sex demonstrates love" subdimension ($r = -0.141$; $P = .005$). It was determined that there was a positive correlation between the scores of the participants in the "sex demonstrates love" subdimension and the scores they got from "the love comes before sex" ($r = 0.468$; $P = .001$). It was determined that there was a negative correlation between the scores of the participants in "the love comes before sex" subdimension and the scores they got in "the sex is declining" subdimension ($r = -0.139$; $P = .006$).

Accordingly, the results of the validityreliability study given earlier, it is seen that the construct validity of the PLSS has been achieved. It has been in line with the original scale, and the reliability values have been outstanding. According to this, the PLSS is settled to be a valid and reliable measurement tool.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study aimed to adapt the PLSS developed by Hendrick and Hendrick (2002) into Turkish and to inspect the validity and reliability of the Turkish version. A validity and reliability study has been conducted to understand whether the psychometric characteristics of the PLSS of the scale used in the research for the TRNC culture differ from those of the United States. As a result of this study, it has been settled that there was no difference between the psychometric properties of the aforementioned scale.

These subscales are "love is most important (love is the primary entity)," "sex demonstrates love (sex is important but in some ways is encompassed by love)," "love comes before sex (love comes first)," and "sex is declining (sex is no longer part of the relationship)." By participating in this research, the participants provided a perspective not merely on the propositions of social scientists with regard to love and sex continuity but also on more philosophical and metaphysical issues. This research touches on the priority of love, even though love is related to sex. However, the priority of love, sex, or rather the refusal of sex was tremendously important and a negative indicator of commitment. The power of negative incidents has more influential power in relationships than positive incidents; love may be necessary, but it must also be a quality that does not erode sexuality.²⁴

This study has limitations, especially regarding sample size. Asking questions about love and sexuality to participants of different ages, life and relationship stages, family structures, and racial and ethnic background is very important to better understand these issues. In

Table 6. Correlations Between Scores and Subdimensions From the PLSS

	Median (Min-Max)	mean (SD)	1	2	3	4
Love is most important (1)	21 (6-30)	21.10 (3.85)	1			
Sex demonstrates love (2)	13 (4-20)	12.90 (3.97)	-0.141*	1		
Love comes before sex (3)	14 (4-19)	13.44 (2.54)	0.079	0.468*	1	
Sex is declining (4)	8 (3-15)	8.43 (2.88)	-0.099	0.002	-0.139*	1

PLSS, Perceptions of Love and Sex Scale.

More significant.

addition, culture appears to be an important generalizability limitation in the present study. However, some studies using the original open-ended question with married participants exposed several themes that were nearly identical to the PLSS subscales.²⁵ Therefore, it can be said that the measurement in the existing study is suitable for mature and married participants. For future researches, we think that the measure could be useful in various ways. For instance, it can be used in researches assessing how partners experience their love and their sexuality during important life transitions in a partner. The scale will be suitable for use in researches on infidelity in relationships, therapy settings where sexuality declines, and to distinguish more distressed couples seeking therapy from less distressed ones. This study aimed to adapt a valid and reliable measurement tool in Turkish to the literature in order to determine the love and sex perceptions of individuals. To achieve that objective, the study was carried out with individuals living in the TRNC and having a relationship. The sample of the study consisted of individuals living in the society, accepting to work, and having a close relationship, since the chosen subject is a subject that concerns all individuals and society. In consequence of the analysis of the data, the Love and Sex Perceptions Scale, which consists of 15 items in 4 dimensions, is determined to be a valid and reliable measurement tool. However, in conclusion, the most significant argument to be drawn from this research is that people seem to make a connection between sexuality and love in romantic relationships and such connections can be measured. The current research will also help to understand close relationships and the intertwining of love and sex in them.

Ethics Committee Approval: Ethical committee approval was received from the Ethics Committee of Near East University (Approval no: NEU/SS/2021/1053).

Informed Consent: Written informed consent was obtained from all participants who participated in this study.

Peer-review: Externally peer-reviewed.

Author Contributions: Concept – F.B.; Design – F.B., F.G.C.; Supervision – M.K., F.G.C.; Materials – F.B., F.G.C.; Data Collection and/or Processing – F.B., M.K.; Analysis and/or Interpretation – F.B.; Literature Review – F.B.; Writing Manuscript – F.B.; Critical Review – F.G.C., M.K.

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