

The Effect of Dress Nudity on The Interpersonal Attraction of Female College Students: The Moderating Role of Body Shapes

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Purpose: The current study examined the influence of dress nudity of female college students on three dimensions of interpersonal attraction, and how their body shapes moderate this influence.

Methods: First, we designed pictures of clothes with different levels of nudity and body shape. Second, we designed two studies. Study 1 was a field experiment in which 45 subjects were recruited to fill in interpersonal attraction situation questions. Study two was an online experiment that recruited 247 participants to fill out an interpersonal attraction scale.

Results: Compared to low dress nudity, high dress nudity triggered higher appearance attraction, but lower social attraction and task attraction. In addition, body shapes play a moderating role in how female college students' dress nudity affects interpersonal attraction.

Conclusion: The results of this study reveal the influence of dress nudity and body shape on interpersonal attraction of female college students. These results provide a new perspective for the study of dressing and interpersonal interaction, and provide practical enlightenment for wearers to improve their own attractiveness in different situations.

BACKGROUND

“A man depends on his clothes and a Buddha depends on his gold”, the influence of dress on people is obvious and almost every day we have to make small choices about what to wear. Dress also expresses a person's identity and provides cues that observers use to form first impressions, and people create first impressions as well as make daily decisions through their perceptions and judgments of the person who is dressed.¹ However, with the progress of the times, young women are more and more daring to express themselves in their dress, and “nudity”, which is different from the nakedness of primitive societies, has once again come into

people's attention and become a sensitive and focused topic.² In particular, dress plays an important role in interpersonal attraction, so what changes do naked women cause in the observer's perception of interpersonal attraction? Interpersonal attraction is an important perception when we come into contact with others, and different levels of attraction can have a profound effect on interpersonal interactions; the more attracted a person is to us, the more we will try to interact with that person interpersonally.^{1,2} McCroskey developed the Interpersonal Attraction Scale in 1974, which divides interpersonal attraction into three dimensions: social attraction based on social or personal favorite attributes, appearance

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attraction based on closling and physical features, and task attraction based on the ease or value related to cooperation with others. This scale has been used by a large number of researchers and has good reliability.^{2,3} Therefore, the present study explored the effects of female college students' dress nudity on appearance attraction, social attraction, and task attraction from each of the three dimensions of interpersonal attraction.

Dress nudity and interpersonal attraction

Appearance attractiveness measures the attractiveness dimension of appearance features, including the overall beauty of closling, appearance, posture and so on. More skin is exposed when the dress is more naked, and studies have shown that people have a higher gaze bias towards naked skin, and this is true for both women and men.¹ In addition, the degree of nudity became an important criterion for assessing sexiness. Women who wear tight or more revealing closling are perceived as sexier than women who wear loose, less revealing closling. Therefore, we hypothesize higher dress nudity was associated with higher appearance attraction scores than lower dress nudity.

H1a: Appearance attraction scores are higher for high dress nudity than for low dress nudity

Social attraction measures good feelings and affection for others, and high social attraction is expressed as a willingness to approach and become friends with others. Studies have generally found that men are more attracted to women who dress naked, but regardless of mating motivation, high levels of nudity can lead to negative stereotypes about women. Women who wear nudity are generally considered sexier. However, they are less faithful to marriage, more likely to flirt with the opposite sex, more likely to use sex for personal gain, and more likely to have sexual experience.² As a result, women with high nudity tend to evoke negative stereotypes and greater social distance perception, making people feel less approachable. Therefore, we hypothesized that higher nudity of dress would result in lower social attraction scores than lower nudity of dress.

H1b: Lower social attraction scores for high dress nudity than for low dress nudity.

Task attraction measures the attraction dimension of perceived "ability" and "value" attributes of others. The study found that women who dressed conservatively were evaluated more favorably than women who dressed scantily, and the negative impact of sexy closling on competence ratings was exacerbated, especially for women in leadership positions. Women's nudity is always accompanied by a derogation of competence.^{3,4} Therefore, we hypothesized that lower task attraction scores for high dress nudity than for low dress nudity.

H1c: Lower task attraction scores for high dress nudity than for low dress nudity.

The moderating role of body shapes

The human body is one of the most common visual stimuli, and unlike facial features, physical features can be perceived from a distance and thus may have a more direct impact on impression perception. Being fat or slim often involves making conscious or unconscious judgments about attractiveness.

The study found that body types with obesity and low waist-to-hip ratio were associated with shy, lazy and careless stereotypes; slim and high waist-to-hip ratios have more agreeableness, carefulness, and trust.⁵ Compared with normal-sized individuals, obese individuals appear less confident and attractive, and obese individuals also indicate laziness, stupidity, lack of willpower, and indulgence.⁶⁻⁸ Biyanling measured the difference in other people's perception of their ability and attractiveness through 9 continuously changing body shapes (1 being the slimmest and 9 being the fattenest), and found that slim body shapes (2 and 3) were considered the most attractive body shapes, while 4 were considered the most capable and cooperative body shapes.⁹ Under the influence of the mainstream aesthetic culture of the society that regards slimness as beauty, the mass media propaganda and the portrayal of the image of ideal beautiful women, fat body is rarely regarded as the representative of beauty, while slimness is the rational body standard of most women, and it is easier to obtain the ideal social results. Therefore, we propose the following research hypothesis:

H2a: When the individual is slim, wearing high nudity can improve appearance attraction compared to wearing low nudity, and being fat can blunt this positive effect.

H2b: When the individual is slim, dressing with high nudity can reduce social attraction compared to dressing with low nudity, and being fat can reinforce this negative effect.

H2c: When the individual is slim, wearing high nudity can reduce task attraction compared to wearing low nudity, and being fat can reinforce this negative effect.

Study 1 The effect of dress nudity on the interpersonal attraction of female college students

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Overview

To explore the effects of nudity on the three dimensions of interpersonal attraction of female college students, a single-factor two-level (nudity: high VS low) in-subject design was used. The picture was taken by a model wearing two levels of dress nudity and posing in the same pose. Other additional variables are fully controlled. Participants were asked to make judgements about interpersonal attraction based on the images.

Participants

Forty-five college student subjects, 25 males and 20 females, were recruited at Southwest University to voluntarily participate in the experiment ($M_{age}=23.76$, $SD_{age}=2.87$). Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and they were free to withdraw from the study at any time. The study was approved by the University Ethics Committee at Southwest University.

Stimuli Materials

A large number of pictures were collected on the Internet, and female attire diagrams were selected for frontal standing in a neutral position with a medium-sized body, and three common female attire styles were chosen, namely, blouse and

pants, blouse and skirt, and dress. According to the medical profession's nine rules of skin area to calculate the naked area of the body,¹⁰ five levels of nudity were set for each style, which were 64%, 52%, 40%, 28%, and 16%, and a total of 15 diagrams were screened (See Appendix A). A total of 124 college students were called and asked to rate the nudity levels of the 15 charts. The results indicate that the nudity most consistent with high nudity of female college students was 64% and the nudity most consistent with low nudity of female college students was 16%. The results of the paired samples t-tests for high and low nudity for all three styles were significant.

Based on the above results selected high and low nudity level of the dress code picture, through the Alibaba's Taofenba app virtual fitting function to achieve the same model presenting different dress code,¹ with Photoshop 2020 to unify the background of the picture as pure white, pixels are all 750x400, as shown in Figure 1.

Measures

The Interpersonal Judgment Scale, developed by Byrne, uses two questions to measure interpersonal attraction ("How much do you like him/her", "Would you be happy to be his/her partner at work?").¹¹ Based on this, three situational questions were used to measure the three dimensions of interpersonal attraction.

Appearance attraction: Which of the two girls in front of you do you think looks the most attractive?

Social attraction: If the reward for this experiment was to "pick a restaurant and have a meal", which girl would you like to invite to join you?

Task attraction: If the college organizes a knowledge contest that requires two people to work together, the winning group will receive prizes and awards. Given the chance to choose, which girl would you choose to be your partner?

Procedure

The subjects entered the experimental room, showed the instructions, and then told the subjects to open the prepared pictures in the folder.

Figure 1: High and low dress nudity picture material.



The subjects were asked to take out a questionnaire to answer questions after looking at two photos of people. And fill in the control test.

Experiment instruction: A brand clothing company is planning a competition with the theme of "Campus clothing aesthetics". A student from the School of Fine Arts in our school is going to participate in the competition. The student provided two pictures of people. Please complete the following questions according to your first impression of the picture. There is no right or wrong answer, just make a choice according to your real idea.

RESULTS

Subjects were subjected to a paired samples t-test on the two women's dress code nudity ratings, and there was a significant difference in dress code nudity ($t(44) = 10.643, p < 0.001$), indicating that the stimulus pictures were well differentiated. A paired samples t-test of subjects' ratings of the overall aesthetics of the two women's dress codes showed no significant difference in overall aesthetics ($t(44) = 0.533, p > 0.05$), suggesting that the aesthetics of the pictures were well controlled. The chi-square test revealed that dress nudity was significantly correlated with interpersonal attraction, Pearson chi-square $\chi^2(2) = 30.44, p = 0.000$, and a two-by-two

comparison revealed that social attraction of individuals with high dress nudity was significantly higher than that of those with low dress nudity ($p < 0.05$), and appearance attraction of individuals with high dress nudity was significantly higher than that of those with low dress nudity ($p < 0.05$), but task attraction was significantly lower for individuals with high dress nudity than for individuals with low dress nudity ($p < 0.05$).

DISCUSSION

Study 1 verified the effect of dress code nudity on different dimensions of interpersonal attraction by means of within-group comparative selection, i.e., dress code appearance attraction was greater at high levels of nudity than at low levels of nudity, Hypothesis H1a was verified. and social attraction was greater at low levels of nudity than at high levels of nudity, Hypothesis H1b was verified. Low levels of nudity were found to be more task-appealing than high levels of nudity, Hypothesis H1c was tested. Other studies have also found that dress code nudity can be perceived as attractive, but it can also trigger negative evaluations of competence, intelligence, and approachability.^{4,12}

Study 2 The moderating role of body shape on the influence of dress nudity on interpersonal attraction

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Overview

Since dress and body are inseparable two parts, body shape is also one of the factors that affect women's interpersonal perception. Therefore, study 2 added the variables of fat and slim body to explore the regulating effect of body shape on the influence of naked dress on interpersonal attraction. Two factors of 2(nudity: high and low) x 2(body shape: slim and fat) were used to design between the subjects.

Participants

A total of 247 subjects participated in the study. After screening out those whose answers did not conform to the real situation or did not answer seriously, 233 effective subjects were obtained, including 91 males and 142 females, aged between 18 and 29. Mage=21.87, SDage=2.54.

Stimuli Materials

Body shape is measured by body mass index (BMI). The BMI standard for Asians is 18.4-23.9kg/m². A BMI below 18.4 is slim, between 18.4-23.9 is normal, and more than 28 is fat. Therefore, BMI was set to five levels: 15, 18.5, 21, 24, 28. According to the fifth China National Physique Monitoring Bulletin, the average height of women aged 20-24 is 160.63cm, so this study takes 161cm as an example, therefore the weight is 39kg, 48kg, 54kg, 62kg and 73kg, respectively. The height and weight of the model can be entered through the ai function of Alibaba's Taotie software to achieve different bodies of the same model. Through the ai function of Alibaba's Taotie software, the height and weight of the model are input to achieve different bodies of the same model (See Appendix B). 124 college students were called to choose the body shape, 85 people chose 39kg body shape to best represent the slim body of female college students, 97 people chose 73kg body shape to best represent the fat body of female college students.

The number of fat and slim body was weighted by non-parametric test, and the result was significant ($p < 0.001$).

Through the virtual fitting function of Alibaba's Tao Powder Bar app, the same model can form two types of slim and fat bodies respectively, and wear high and low nudity clothes, and a total of 4 pictures are obtained. With Photoshop 2020 to unify the background of the picture as pure white, pixels are all 750x400, as shown in Figure 2.

Measures

The interpersonal attraction Scale developed by McCroskey McCain contains 18 questions. Zhang Guoguang did translation and localization tests on this scale, and both obtained good reliability and validity.¹³ Therefore, we selected the items with the highest load in each dimension of the original scale, with three questions in each dimension, and a total of 9 questions constituted the simple version of Interpersonal Attraction Scale (S-IAS), and the wording of the question is adjusted according to the research purpose and situation. In this study, the appearance attraction dimension Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.783$; Task attraction Dimension Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.825$; Social attraction dimension Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.750$.

Procedure

Using online testing, participants were randomly assigned to one of four groups and then presented with the following situational instructions: This survey is commissioned by a clothing developer to do preliminary market research for the development of a clothing matching app. Next, we will randomly show you a picture provided by the developer. Please choose the following description based on your first impression of the model's dress to what extent you feel about her. Each of your sincere evaluation is dedicated to product development.

RESULTS

Independent sample T-test showed significant difference in high and low nudity ($t(231) = 14.53$, $p < 0.001$). There was significant difference in body

Figure 2: Fat and slim shape in high and low dress nudity picture

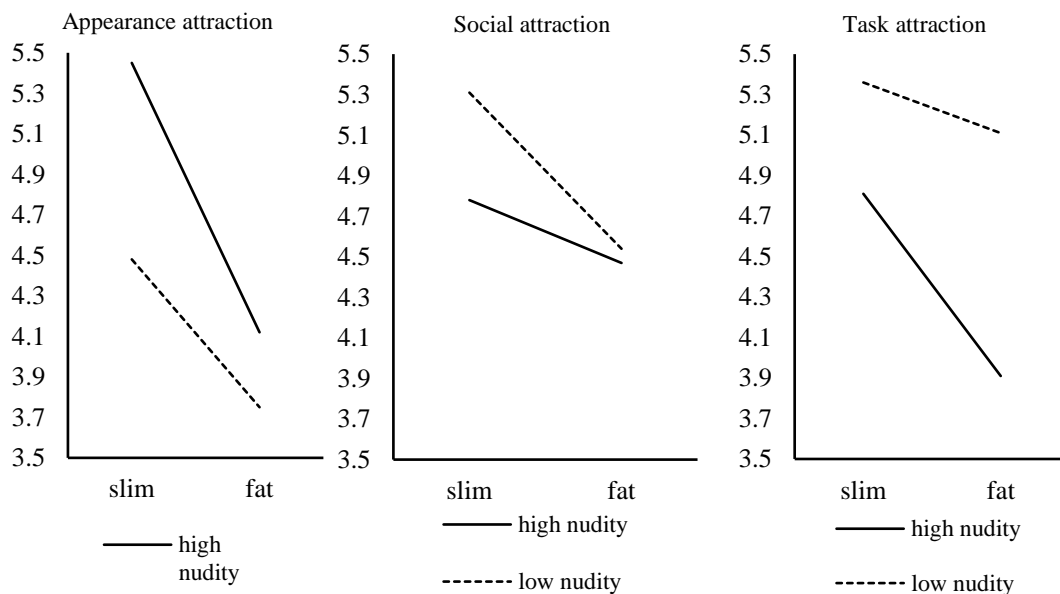
shape score, ($t(231) = -11.48, p < 0.001$). There was no significant difference in the overall beauty of the dress of the naked group, ($t(231) = 0.931, p = 0.35$). Study 2 once again verified the significant main effects of nudity on appearance attraction, social attraction and task attraction. Independent sample T-test showed that the appearance attraction of the high nudity group was significantly higher than that of the low nudity group ($t(231) = 3.72, p = 0.000$). The social attraction of the low nudity group was significantly higher than that of the high nudity group ($t(231) = -2.81, p = 0.005$). The task attraction of the high nudity group was significantly lower than that of the low nudity group ($t(231) = -8.79, p = 0.000$).

To test the moderating role of fat and slim shape, with nudity (high vs. low) and body shape (slim vs. fat) as independent variables, appearance attraction, social attraction and task attraction as dependent variables, 2x2 two-factor ANOVA was used to examine the regulating effect of body shape. All variables were standardized. The results showed that there was a significant interaction between dress nudity and body shape in appearance attraction, ($F(1, 227) = 5.04, p = 0.02$), the main effect of dress nudity was significant, ($F(1, 227) = 21.22, p = 0.000$), the main effect of body shape was significant ($F(1, 227) = 55.94, p = 0.000$).

In social attraction, the interaction effect between dress nudity and body shape was significant ($F(1, 227) = 3.51, p = 0.062$), and the main effect of dress nudity was significant ($F(1, 227) = 8.08, p = 0.005$). The main effect of body shape was significant ($F(1, 227) = 22.97, p = 0.000$). In task attraction, the interaction effect between dress nudity and body shape was significant, ($F(1, 227) = 11.54, p = 0.001$), and the main effect of dress nudity was significant, ($F(1, 227) = 80.08, p = 0.000$), The main effect of body shape was significant ($F(1, 227) = 35.10, p = 0.000$). So being fat or slim and dress nudity have an interactive effect on all three dimensions of interpersonal attraction.

The results of simple effect analysis further showed that in the slim body group, that is, high dress nudity can improve the appearance attraction ($t(111) = 5.08, p = 0.000$). High dress nudity decreased social attractiveness, ($t(111) = -3.58, p = 0.001$). High dress nudity reduced task attraction ($t(111) = -4.18, p = 0.000$). This result once again verifies hypothesis H1a, H1b, and H1c. However, in the fat body group, the effect of high nudity on appearance attraction was weakened ($t(118) = 1.95, p = 0.005$). But high nudity was enhanced in reducing task attraction ($t(118) = 8.27, p = 0.000$). Being fat has a negative impact on both appearance attraction and task attraction to some extent. In

Figure 3: The moderating effect of slim and fat shape on the influence of dress nudity on appearance attraction, social attraction and task attraction.



study 2, high nudity had a positive effect on appearance attraction, but this extreme effect was weakened with female body shape. High nudity had a significant negative effect on task attraction, and this negative effect increased as women gained weight. This result supports the hypothesis H2a and H2c. In addition, there was no significant difference in the influence of dress nudity on social attraction in the fat body group ($t(118) = -0.415, p = 0.68$). When the individual was slim, the subjects rated the low dress nudity women as significantly more social attraction than the high dress nudity women. However, when individuals were fat, high or low dress nudity did not cause differences in social attraction. This result does not support the hypothesis H2b.

In addition, we also want to know whether gender plays a regulating role in the influence of nudity on interpersonal attraction. Therefore, we take nudity and gender as independent variables, and the three dimensions of interpersonal attraction as dependent variables to test the interaction. The results showed that dress nudity had a significant interaction margin on appearance attraction ($F(1,227) = 3.24, p = 0.07$), while nudity had no significant interaction margin on social attraction and task attraction ($F(1,227) = 0.30, p = 0.59$,

$F(1,227) = 0.002, p = 0.96$). It can therefore be found that gender only moderates the effect of nudity on appearance attraction in study 2.

DISCUSSION

Study 2 found that being fat attenuates the positive effect of high nudity on appearance attraction, which is consistent with previous studies.¹⁴ slim women are rated as equally attractive compared to fat women regardless of what they wear.¹ Both male and female observers prefer a lower BMI when evaluating a woman's physical attractiveness, while a higher BMI decreases the evaluation of physical attractiveness.¹⁵ In addition, study 2 showed that fat body enhanced the negative effect of dressing with high nudity on task attraction. Compared with dressing with low nudity, dressing with high nudity reduced task attraction. Compared with dressing with low nudity, dressing with high nudity reduced task attraction. However, for women with fat body, the negative effect of dressing with high nudity on task attraction increased significantly, that is, obesity had a significant negative effect on ability evaluation. This is consistent with previous

research on the perception of obesity. Obese people are often seen as lazy, unmotivated, incompetent, sloppy, and lacking self-discipline and willpower.¹⁶ Obese women are more discriminated against at work, and their career achievements and earnings are lower than those of normal-weight women of the same condition.¹⁷ People who are fat or obese are less likely to be hired, have lower wages, and are less likely to be promoted than people of normal weight.¹⁸

Overall Discussion

This study mainly discusses the relationship between nudity and interpersonal attraction of female college students. The results of the study showed that compared with low dress nudity, high dress nudity induced high appearance attraction, low social attraction and low task attraction, which was consistent with false H1a, H1b and H1c, and also indicated that female naked dress would cause negative interpersonal consequences. Yan found that naked women were rated lower in competence, warmth and humanity, as well as attractiveness and likability.¹⁹ The results of this study also show that women with high nudity are inferior to women with low nudity in terms of task ability and social attractiveness, which is also similar to Daniels,²⁰ the findings are consistent. However, in terms of appearance attraction, this study found that women with high levels of nudity received higher evaluation of appearance attraction, which is inconsistent with previous studies, because of the manipulation of nudity and setting of scenarios. In this study, the degree of nudity was manipulated only through the manipulation of nudity and the setting of daily interpersonal communication on campus, while in previous studies, nudity was more sexually suggestive. For example, low-cut red dresses,²⁰ underwear and thong,¹⁹ and the research background were set as dating mate selection. The degree of nudity in this study is still a daily aesthetic degree, which has a positive impact on attractiveness. In previous studies, nudity is more of a sexual implication, which has a negative impact on attractiveness.

Study 2 discusses the regulating effect of female body shape on the influence of naked dress on interpersonal attraction. The research results show

with slim individuals, fat body shape will bring a negative regulating effect, that is, fat body shape will reduce the positive effect of wearing high nudity on appearance attraction and strengthen the negative effect of wearing high nudity on task attraction, which is consistent with hypothesis H2a and H2b. The negative perception results caused by fat body shape are consistent with the results of Biefeld and Brown.²¹ Weight bias has serious perceived consequences for women, and they are prone to a series of fat discrimination and weight stigma in interpersonal communication.²² This is because sociocultural ideals favor slender women.⁸ However, the results of study 3 found that in the obese group, there was no significant difference in the impact of high and low nudity on social attraction, which is not consistent with null hypothesis 3b. In the dimension of social attraction, there is no difference in perceived social attraction between fat female college students wearing high or low nudity clothes. The interaction was statistically only marginal, and the effect size of fat and slimness ($\eta^2=0.09$) was nearly three times that of closimg ($\eta^2=0.03$). Therefore, when participants perceived the social attraction of the target, whether they wanted to be friends with the target, and whether they liked the target, the influence of body perception masked the influence of closimg, and did not show significant differences.

The study has some potential limitations that warrant further exploration. Firstly, the manipulation of dress nudity could be considered as a continuous variable. In this study, two levels of high and low nudity were contrasted, which effectively highlighted the perceptual differences induced by varying levels of nudity. However, it falls short of capturing the changing trends in dress nudity and interpersonal attraction. Therefore, future considerations may involve calculating the pixel values representing the ratio of exposed skin area to the total body area²³ or the Skin-to-Closimg Ratio²⁴, and implementing them as continuous variables. Second, other moderating variables can be selected, such as posture and closimg color. For posture, the presentation of body posture is also an important factor affecting interpersonal attraction. Studies have shown that both exposed closimg and posture suggestion may lead to sexual objectification and thus affect

interpersonal perception, especially the sense of morality. Compared with women who do not adopt suggestive postures, women who make suggestive postures are considered to have a lower degree of morality.²⁵ Posture is also strongly linked to perceptions of competence, with people feeling more positive adopting a strong, confident posture than a weak, submissive one, and people feeling more powerful adopting a powerful posture. As for the color of clothing, red is often closely associated with sex. In the context of mate selection, red will increase the perception of sexual intention, and red is associated with desire, fertility and sexual desire.²⁶ So when nudity and red work together on interpersonal attraction, what is the effect of their interaction? It can be further studied in the future.

CONCLUSION

The following conclusions were drawn from this study. Compared to low dress nudity, high dress nudity among female college students triggered higher appearance attraction but lower social and task attraction. Body shape plays a moderating role in how female college students' dress nudity affects interpersonal attraction. When individuals are slim, high dress nudity increases appearance attraction compared to low dress nudity, while fatness diminishes this positive effect; when individuals are slim, high dress nudity decreases task attraction compared to low dress nudity, while fatness enhances this negative effect.

DECLARATIONS

Authors' contributions

Conceptualization and research design, Z.D., J.D. and X.P., methodology and results for study 1, Z.D., J.D. J.L. and H.Z., methodology and results for Study 2, Z.D. and J.D., writing and editing, Z.D., J.D. and X.P. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Institutional Review Board Statement

The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki, and approved by the Ethical Committee of Southwest University (approved no: H23221).

Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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