Investigating the Methods of Developing Book Reading Among the Elementary Schools Students from their Teachers Point of View

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ABSTRACT

The main goal of the present research was to investigate the methods of developing book reading culture among the elementary schools' students in Tehran. The methodology of the present study applied descriptive research design of a survey type. The studied population were the total number of 93584 elementary schools teachers in Tehran city during 2013-14. Number of 382 teachers were chosen from the study population through the multistage random cluster sampling method. The questionnaire which utilized as the data collection instrument has been developed by the researchers of the study. Four main components including the name of family's culture enhancement, students personality traits, the level of teachers scientific attitude and improvement of schools facilities and equipment were identified, categorized and confirmed after the precisely studying the previous body of researches and existent theoretical bases. The questionnaire's validity confirmed by related experts including 10 specialists and its reliability highly reported using Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.95. The result showed that according to Tehran city elementary teachers' point of view each of the mentioned methods as family's culture enhancement, students' personality traits, the level of teachers' scientific attitude and improvement of schools facilities and equipment confirmed as the main ways to develop book reading among the elementary schools students.

Keywords: Strategies, Promotion of Book Reading Culture, Elementary Schools Students
JEL Classifications: I2, A2, A3

1. INTRODUCTION

The rate of access to the information resources and the extensive reading rate per capita are the development indices of a society; that is why the current world is called the information world or the network society. The main feature of the network society is the elimination of spatial and temporal distances and information accessibility and utilizing them. Research, study and survey are being conducted in the variety of ways from written, oral to audiovisual. However, despite the increasing extension of mass media, technology and internet, the matter of studying and book reading is still crucial and the increasing number of printed books, library memberships and booksellers thriving markets is indicating their importance as well. The reason can be seek in the increasing number of university students and applicants, people's general interest in acquiring knowledge and skill, understanding the

influence of reading in social life and its role in the development of creativity, innovation and initiative spirit (Nouri, 2004).

Nowadays, extensive reading and reading in general into the consideration is indicating the cultural and national growth of a country. The number of published books, journals, libraries, readers, writers, translators and publishers of a country are all indices and fundamental criteria of its development. Thus, extending the culture of studying and book reading, developing the libraries, publication and distribution of books, utilizing this unrivaled cultural instruments are the requirements and necessities of each society's growth and encouraging kids and teenagers to read and study is a crucial point in this regard (Ravi, 2003).

Students need to get use to study and read in a joyful way. To do so, they need to allocate a time to reading books (Aliye, 2014).

According to the common belief among scientists, the first years of human's life are decisive in the formation of the foundations of his/her personality and the learnings of this period will have a profound impact one's future. Therefore, access to useful and constructive reading materials can turn reading to the permanent habit of kids and teenagers and assist them to make the best decision about their life and future under the influence of moral messages of the stories and books which will lead to also using books as the solution during their adulthood (Afruz, 2001).

Unfortunately, a glance on the reading rate in Iran in comparison with the developed countries would reveal Iran's unsatisfactory position as well as the demand to imply suitable strategies to promote the culture of reading in the country. For example, there are 4000 libraries in Sweden with the population of 9 million while in Iran with the population of more than 70 million the total number of public libraries is only 1500, and if compared to the population it should be around 25000 libraries across the country. This cultural poverty is the source of the significant gap between Iran and a country like Sweden in terms of economic growth, welfare and healthy social institutions (Joekar and Karami, 2001).

Niknami and Raisdanai (1999) have also reported the significant gap between Iran and developed, industrialized countries or even other developing countries in terms of reading rate per capita as well as the number and the quality of he published.

The results of some studies conducted by Zareshahabadi (2008) and Bohrani (2005) have also showed the unsatistying rate of reading and studying among Iranian teenagers and youth. According to Zareshahabadi (2008) many factors including watching Tele Vision (TV), the high volume of school homework and also lack of interest are the barriers on the way of developing the culture of reading. Bohrani (2005) showed that most of students' leisure time is wasted (36.2%), 22.8% is spent on academic studies, 17.6% on watching TV and only 1.1% on reading nonacademic materials and extensive reading, that is each student only spends 5.5 min on reading per day.

Other researches in the context of Iran are mostly analyzing the librarian content and Information Sciences and the subjects of book reading and students libraries have been neglected or at least.

The major cultural, economic and industrial evolutions in developed countries is owe to their great attention toward family, educational system, research and study, development and equipping the libraries to enhance the culture and teachers' attention about their students' rate of book reading (Joekar and Karami, 2001).

Family is a very important factor in creating a reading habit and promoting the culture of reading. Its environment and condition, parents' method of upbringing and education, their attitudes about studying and reading, access to books and journals, financial level and social position of the family are all decisive factors in promoting the culture of book reading in children (Mahdavi, 2006).

Parents are the child's best teachers to get them to read books. Considering a specific place in home as the library and showing children the passion for books is the best way to use the strong emotional bonds between the members of the Iranian families and it helps them to promote the habit of reading among children (Mahdavi, 2006).

Utilizing the following methods by parents can have great influence in encouraging children to read, as the effectiveness of an example or a role model on human is a natural matter and comes from the instinct to imitate:

1. One of the influential methods for parents to encourage their children to get the habit of book reading is to take them to libraries, to company them to a library for the first time and help them to select a book. It shows them that going to a library and choosing a book to read worth their time. In fact, parents or elder siblings are the best examples for the children.

2. Have specific planning for the children: A suitable plan and program is an essential need for humans and successful persons are always having a precise plan for every physical and spiritual aspect of their life. Though this important point has been neglected among Iranian families. A comprehensive program must encompass prayer and religious practices, games, sports, homework, TV, collaborating in home chores, participating in familial discussions as well as studying and reading books. The result of the researches shows that students with a program for reading books at home have high rate of book reading copare to those who do not follow any specific program for their reading (Fakhrai, 1997).

3. Tell stories to your children: Stories can create and strengthen the emotional bonds between children and parents and are the way for interaction among them. Parents can attract children's attention and trust with storytelling and take them to a happy, imaginary land and flourish their imagination which makes them create thinkers. Children are naturally attracted to stories and like listening to them and do not consider them as a fictional story but a real event which make the stories more interesting for them and they listen with more interest. This passion and interest can be directed to the useful habit of book reading and studying. The results of the various studies (Osare and Golchubi, 2007; Aftabiarani and Batuli, 2007; Riazi, 2006; Priscilla, 2011; Greany, 2009; Olery, 2006; Clark, 2002) have showed family members and specially parents can have a motivative role for encouraging the habit of book reading among their children.

Osare and Golchubi (2007) have noticed a positive relation between parents' reading rate and their children's and also a positive relation between the educational level of parents and their children's rate of reading. Encouraging children to read, access to the library in school and holding reading competitions are all encouraging factors with high explained variances to increase students' rate of reading. On the other side, the deterrent components were: Books' expensive prices, financial issues and lack of free time. Aftabiarani and Batuli (2007) in another study indicated that proper behavioral patterns on the side of parents and teachers regarding the nonacademic studies can promote the sense of book reading among students. Riazi (2006) also revealed that speed, studying, public libraries' membership, investigating the familial rate of reading, the accessibility of books, storytelling

during childhood, grade point average and occupational level of parents are all important and significant variables in predicting the rate of book reading in a society. Fakhrai (1997) in a study entitle investigating the influential methods on increasing the rate of reading level among high school students in Tabriz found out that the students average rate of reading in 5.26 h/day with 6.17 h for female students and 4.46 h for male students. The results showed that students with certain planed time for reading at home had higher rate of book reading compare to those who were not following a specific program. Parents' attitude toward reading had also a significant relation with students' reading rate which means students with parents who had positive attitude toward reading were also had higher rate of book reading.

According to the results of the study conducted by Priscilla (2011), the culture of reading can be promoted through several factors such as educational practitioners, teachers and parents; teachers and parents can encourage the habit of book reading among their students as there are a very strong role model. Greany (2009) has also mentioned the bedtime as an opportunity which half of the reading time can happen during that and parents who provide books as well as suitable condition for reading have children with higher rate of reading. Olery (2006) has suggested parents to read for their children loudly in a routine. Clark (2002) suggested that children whose parents are regular readers have higher chance to learn to read faster than other kids. Aliye (2014) research showed that to strengthen the culture of book reading among students, the family foundation and also the scientific base of teachers need to be improved.

School and educational environment as the second place for human cultivation has influential role in encouraging reading. Therefore, schools' main duty is to develop and implement suitable educational programs for any age and level to encourage students follow a reading routine; and teachers are the main factor as the most popular and influential person among students who can make a strong model for their students and encourage them to read books in their free time (Larik, 2007).

The first grade teacher can bring out an attractive simple story book on the first day and show its pictures to the students and read it to them and repeat it in the following days. This activity can follow a discussion among students about the story and asking their opinion so that they would be encourage to read more and more (Jahantab, 2010).

Beside the role modeling effect of the teacher, his/her teaching methodology is also important. If book reading and studying become part of the school activities schedule, encouraging students to read nonacademic materials would become inevitable. Teaching methodologies are the efficient ways to direct students toward the useful habit of book reading, which is a kind of methodology which actively involves students. Fortunately, the recently published Persian school books contain the Book Reading activity as a great positive step toward this aim (Mahdavi, 2006).

In fact, a teaching methodology which aims in directing the students to libraries and studying their surrounding environment

and encourage them to research is the best method. The teacher-centered method is not effective anymore and the school books cannot be the mere source of knowledge for obtaining the best educational results (Mahdavi, 2006).

The teacher ought not to directly provide the answers for the students, but she/he should introduce the useful books and resources and show them the way to search their answers among the numerous resources; however, to avoid overwhelming the students, it is better to direct them precisely by giving them the exact book or the pages of the book to study at the beginning. Introducing the complementary resources of each subject before instructing it, can be another practical method to boost students' research aptitude (Taher, 2005).

When the students observe their teachers' habit of carrying a book all the time, will consider it as a role mode. Teachers who are aware and wise would bring interesting books and journals to read a short and informative text for them to encourage them follow this way and read beside their usual homework and direct them to the joy of reading and researching while attracting the students' trust and confidence as well (Taher, 2005).

The followings are some suggested strategies to encourage elementary students to read books and promote this culture from the early ages:

• It is recommended to read books for elementary students and use the books' illustrations to convey the meaning better and make them interested.
• The teacher should enjoy reading herself/himself so that s/he can transfer this feeling to the students as well.
• The teacher (or the reader) should not omit hard words or terms but to simply explain the students the meaning.
• Encourage the students to think and discuss the message hidden in the story and ask them to pose questions about it.
• Use subsidiary materials from other books and journals while teaching the main subject in the class to attract students and once they start to get curious, encourage them to search and try to find their answers.
• Using creative teaching methodologies such as learning-teaching process.
• Distributing story books among students and exchange questions and analyze them after reading. This session can be held with the presence of the writer or the illustrator with a contest (Nouri, 2004).

Numerous studies (Aftabiarani and Batuli, 2007; Riazi, 2006; Zarafshan, 1993; Lynn et al., 2013; Schlichter and Burke, 1994) are indicating and emphasizing the influencial role of the teacher on increasing the students' interest about book reading and studying.

Zarafshan (1993) showed the important role of the teacher in attracting students toward book reading. Lynn et al., (2013) also proved that speed reading skill and practicing the reading skill in elementary level is essential for students and teachers can attract the students by training them with these skills. Schlichter and Burke (1994) examined the books' utilization to strengthen the social and emotional development of gifted students, they

suggested that the process of bibliotherapy is further than reading books or stories and discussing them. They have identified five or six stages for this process which begin with preparing students' minds. Once they become interested and attracted with the primary questions about the events of the book, they would be encouraged to listen to the story or read it. After listening to the story or reading it, they are required to reflect about it. A considerable time needs to be spent with exchanging questions and answers and the following discussion, because students can relate the stories' characters and events to their own life and experience during this time. Teacher has the facilitator role and pose questions to direct the students taught in gaining insights.

Strengthening students' personal characteristics is another method to promote the reading culture. Having knowledge of self and surroundings is a distinctive human feature and make humankind to believe they are different. That is why many anthropologists have defined humankind as an "explorer" creature. From the philosophical point of view, the "truth-seeking" behavior is associated with humankind nature and recently psychologists have considered that this feature is driven from human's "self-actualization" in order to activate his/her potentials and develop and extend his existence. Human's curious mind has always wanted to reveal the world's mysteries and answer its numerous questions and construct its personal and social life based on the facts.

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The members of the humankind are all different from each other and these differences had led to the difference in the quality and quantity of book reading among them. These differences become more decisive and clearer during puberty. Larik (2007) have mentioned four major distinctive factors among people: Gender, demands, interests and leisure time.

Several studies such as Fazel (2001), Imani (2001), Gardenier (2001) and Croy (2002) have focused on the personal factors' role on promoting the book reading culture. Fazel (2001) showed a significant difference between female and male students' choices of nonacademic subjects to read. Huge volume of homework, books' expensive prices, lack of interest and motivation were also the major factors in decreasing students' level of book reading. Imani (2001) in another study entitled "Pathology of students' studying and controlling method" identified ADHD (Hyperactivity) as one of the disorders which negatively affect kids' reading routine. Neglecting these students would make them not to be able to focus on anything and lose their attention in short term. Croy (2002)

concluded about the influence of conversation on students' choice of books that they need to choose a book based on their interest not based on the external awards. Gardenier (2001) in an study entitle "10 min a day for silent reading" showed that if students are being given a time to read whatever they want at the end of the class, they will be motivated to read and charmed by their books instead of longing for the class to finish. The results of other studies showed that those who have gotten familiar with the book reading habit, will have better working schedule, better social and mental development, more efficient language structure and educational performance and better grades in reading standard tests. Also their attitudes about studying and reading would improve and their vocabulary and comprehension would promote.

Considering the structure of the developed countries, it can be interpreted that great cultural, economic and industrial evolutions in these countries is owe to their great attention toward family, educational system, research and study, development and equipping the libraries to enhance the culture and teachers' attention about their students' rate of book reading (Joekar and Karami, 2001).

School's library is the heating center and the school spirit and even it is not exaggerating to call it the school's heart. Because this place can be a space for intellectual and spiritual nourishment of all students and school personnel and effect their future progress and prosperity wonderfully and profoundly. School's library has two major role:
1. Motivating the students to read specially those who had no background of reading nonacademic books besides their usual school books to and their families could not provide such a condition for them for certain reasons.
2. Strengthening the motivation of those students who have already started the habit of book reading in their families and providing them with useful resources.

School's library should naturally have specific programs for each group and even make the second group help motivating the first group (Taher, 2005). Allocating part of the classroom space to build a class's library is also a practical, simple solution to compromise the lack of space for public library of the school and accessibility of books (Dadashzadeh, 2007).

Schools can motivate students to book reading and studying through the following suggestions:
1. Creating a school book store: Cooperative companies in schools are a good place to sell books. If schools can provide books with good prices motivate them to read more. This idea has been implied in England and has been successful.
2. Book introduction: Book reviewing and introducing as a motivational activity to promote the culture of reading Book Reading can be very effective. Summarizing books and introducing them in the school board and reading the summery of the book to introduce it are another strategies.
3. The parent-teacher meetings are the best opportunities: Parents should be informed that currently reading is an essential requirement and part of one's daily life; so they can play a major role in encouraging their kids to read. Parents can be provided with series of useful books in this regard.

These meeting can be held in the library if possible or at least give the parents a tour to the library and familiarize them with its activities and programs. School can give books to the parents who had high cooperation with the school (Taher, 2005).

4. Introducing the library's active members in each class and school: Identify the active members and appreciate their activities in a meeting with all of the students or announce their name on the board to show the importance of book and reading.

5. Holding reading contest: Holding reading contest is an efficient way to encourage students to read and take home some books. Reading contest are best to come with research and studying programs for students in order to select the most useful and interesting books and at the end receive a proper award to encourage for later participation as well.

6. Using books as reward: Giving books to students as the reward is a positive step in encouraging them to read, note that these books should suite their age and knowledge or come with other gifts as well (Tabrizi, 2009).

The results of different studies (Nikoonam and Raisdana, 2008; Osare and Golchubi, 2007; Joekar and Karami, 2001; Edrisi, 1998) show the importance of equipment and facilities in schools on encouraging and motivating students to read. Nikoonam and Raisdana (2008) showed that points such as support and encouragement, governmental and public actions, educating and enriching libraries, facilities and human resources equipment are all factors to strengthen the culture of reading. Joekar and Karami (2001) in a study entitled "investigating the reading amount of high school students and Shiraz University students and proposing suitable strategies" showed that the reading time between female and male students is equal. Books' expensive prices, homework volume and lack of facilities are among the barriers. Constructing equipped libraries, allocating subsides to buy books, holding book reading contests are also the recommendations to increase reading among students. Edrisi (1998) indicated that schools should consider the imoirtance of planning for students' leisure time and train them for well spending it.

Regarding the mentioned body of literature, the present study aims in proposing strategies to strengthen the culture of book reading among students of elementary schools and to answer the following research questions:

- What factors are strengthening the culture of book reading among students?
- Which strategy among the proposed strategies were the more efficient from the teachers' point of view on Tehran elementary schools?

2. METHODOLOGY

The present study followed a descriptive research design of a survey type. The statistical population of the study were the total number of 93584 male and female elementary schools' teachers in Tehran during 2013 - 2014 academic year. However, regarding the large statistical population, the sample size was determined using Krejcie and Morgan table and 382 teachers were chosen from the study population through the multistage random cluster sampling method. A 40-item questionnaire developed by the researchers have been used as the research instrument. The validity of the questionnaire have been confirmed by professors and experts in this field and its reliability was examined through a pilot study among 30 teachers and highly reported using Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.95.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Research Question

From teachers' point of view, how strengthening different components such as family's culture, students' personality traits, and scientific attitude level of teachers, schools' equipment and facilities can promote the culture of book reading among elementary students?

One-sample t-test has been conducted to answer the research question and the results are as following:

Regarding the indicated results in Table 1 and the significance level of $P < 0.05$, it can be concluded that the test is significant. That is, there is a significant relation between the estimated mean and the statistical population mean (120) and elementary school teachers' responses about strengthening different components such as family's culture, students' personality traits, scientific attitude level of teachers, schools' equipment and facilities as proposed strategies to promote the book reading culture is different from the statistical population mean. Regarding the estimated mean (156.206) which is higher than the statistical population mean (120) it is concluded that strengthening any component including family's culture, students' personality traits, teachers' scientific level, schools' equipment and facilities can widely influence the promotion of book reading culture.

3.1.1. The subsidiary question 1

From teachers' point of view, how strengthening family's culture can promote the culture of book reading among elementary students?

One-sample t-test has been conducted to answer the research question and the results are as following:

Regarding the indicated results in Table 2 and the significance level of $P < 0.05$, it can be concluded that the test is significant. That is, there is a significant relation between the estimated mean and the statistical population mean (30) and elementary school teachers' responses about strengthening family's culture as a proposed strategies to promote the book reading culture is different from the statistical population mean. Regarding the estimated mean (38.571) which is higher than the statistical population mean (30) it is concluded that strengthening family's culture can significantly increase the book reading culture among elementary students.

3.1.2. The subsidiary question 2

From teachers' point of view, how strengthening students' personality traits can promote the culture of book reading among elementary students?

One-sample t-test has been conducted to answer the research question and the results are as following:

Regarding the indicated results in Table 3 and the significance level of P < 0.05, it can be concluded that the test is significant. That is, there is a significant relation between the estimated mean and the statistical population mean (30) and elementary school teachers' responses about strengthening students' personality traits as a proposed strategies to promote the book reading culture is different from the statistical population mean. Regarding the estimated mean (40.297) which is higher than the statistical population mean (30) it is concluded that strengthening students' personality traits can significantly increase the book reading culture among elementary students.

3.1.3. The subsidiary question 3

From teachers' point of view, how strengthening scientific attitude level of teachers can promote the culture of book reading among elementary students?

One-sample t-test has been conducted to answer the research question and the results are as following:

Regarding the indicated results in Table 4 and the significance level of P < 0.05, it can be concluded that the test is significant. That is, there is a significant relation between the estimated mean and the statistical population mean (30) and elementary school teachers' responses about enhancing the scientific attitude level of teachers as a proposed strategies to promote the book reading culture is different from the statistical population mean. Regarding

the estimated mean (37.091) which is higher than the statistical population mean (30) it is concluded that enhancing the scientific attitude level of teachers can significantly increase the book reading culture among elementary students.

3.1.4. The subsidiary question 4

From teachers' point of view, how strengthening schools' equipment and facilities can promote the culture of book reading among elementary students?

One-sample t-test has been conducted to answer the research question and the results are as following:

Regarding the indicated results in Table 5 and the significance level of P < 0.05, it can be concluded that the test is significant. That is, there is a significant relation between the estimated mean and the statistical population mean (30) and elementary school teachers' responses about enhancing the scientific attitude level of teachers as a proposed strategies to promote the book reading culture is different from the statistical population mean. Regarding the estimated mean (40.245) which is higher than the statistical population mean (30) it is concluded that strengthening schools' equipment and facilities can significantly increase the book reading culture among elementary students.

4. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The results of the analysis indicated that strengthening and enhancing any of the mentioned components including family's

Table 1: One-sample t-test

Promoting the culture of book reading	t	df	Significant level	Mean difference	Confidence interval		Mean
					Low	High	
	49.187	382	0.000	36.206	34.759	37.653	156.206

P<0.000

Table 2: One-sample t-test

Strengthening family's culture	t	df	Significant level	Mean difference	Confidence interval		Mean
					Low	High	
	23/987	382	0/000	8/571	7/862	9/274	38/571

P<0.000

Table 3: One-sample t-test

Strengthening students' personality traits	t	df	Significant level	Mean difference	Confidence interval		Mean
					Low	High	
	40/276	382	0/000	10/297	9/794	10/800	40/297

P<0.000

Table 4: One-sample t-test

Enhancing scientific attitude level of teachers	t	df	Significant level	Mean difference	Confidence interval		Mean
					Low	High	
	25/964	382	0/000	7/091	6/554	7/628	37/091

P<0.000

Table 5: One-sample t-test

Strengthening schools' equipment and facilities	t	df	Significant level	Mean difference	Confidence interval		Mean
					Low	High	
	41/179	382	0/000	10/245	9/756	10/734	40/245

P<0.000

culture, students' personality traits, scientific attitude level of teachers and schools' equipment and facilities can significantly and positively increase the reading level of elementary schools' students. The results of the present study are consistent with the results of similar studies such as Osare and Golchubi (2007), Aftabiarani and Batuli (2006), Riazi (2006), Priscilla (2011), Greany (2009), Olery (2006) and Clark (2002).

The analysis results for the first subsidiary question showed that promoting the family's culture can significantly increase the book reading level among students which is consistent with the results of other studies conducted by Osare and Golchubi (2007), Aftabiarani and Batuli (2007), Riazi (2006), Bohrani (2005), Fakhrai (1997), Priscilla (2011), Greany (2009), Oleary (2006) and Clark (2002).

The analysis results for the second subsidiary question also revealed that strengthening students' personality traits is an efficient strategy to increase the book reading level among students. This result is consistent with the results of studies conducted by Fazel (2001), Imani (2001), Gardiner (2001) and Croy (2002).

The analysis results for the third subsidiary question showed that increasing scientific attitude level of teachers can increase the book reading level among students which is consistent with the results of other studies conducted by Aftabiarani and Batuli (2007), Riazi (2006), Zarafshan (1993), Lynn et al., (2013), Priscilla (2011), Schlichter and Burke (1994).

The following suggestion are proposed regarding the results of the present study and also considering the similar studies:

- Strengthening the family's culture has been identified as a strategy to promote the culture of book reading among elementary students, thus parents are advise to increase the level of reading in the family by variety of ways such as reading book to their children before bed time, allocating part of the library to their children's books, include books in the gifts that they offer to their children in different occasions and encourage them to become a member of a library.
- Regarding strengthening the students' personality traits, education officials and managers are recommended to create a positive environment for students about books and reading books by holding reading contests, offering books as awards and making the library an attractive place for students to encourage reading more and more.
- Increasing teachers' scientific attitude level is a promoting strategy for reading among students of elementary schools. Thus teachers ought to pay more attention to this point in ways such as reading story books in students' free time or enhancing their speed reading skill.
- Enhancing schools' equipment and facilities is another strategy to promote the culture of cook reading. Therefore, dedicating

specific fund to equipping the school's library and updating the books beside other programs such as reading contests can invite students to the schools' library.

5. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was limited from the time duration and also the scale of the studied was limited to the city of Tehran. Utilizing a questionnaire as the data collection instrument was another limitation of the present study.

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