



Preschool Teaching Students' Prediction of Decision Making Strategies and Academic Achievement on Learning Motivations

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to identify problems and motivation sources and strategies of decision-making of the students' attending preschool education teacher department, was to determine the relationship between learning motivation and strategies of decision-making, academic achievement of students, was to determine whether strategies of decision-making and academic achievement of students predicts learning motivation. The study group was composed by 360 students attending in Faculty of Vocational Education and Faculty of Education in Selçuk University. The data were collected using the Motivation Source and Problems candidate Teacher Occupation Questionnaire, and The Questionnaire of Decision Strategies. Students' until attending semester accumulative grades are taken as a criteria for academic achievement Analysis of data was used descriptive statistics, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients and multiple regression analysis. The results of the study indicated that students would prefer more strategy of reasonable decision making. Also students' cognitive and lifelong learning goals motivation is very high, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is high and negative factors for learning motivation is low. The results of the seen that strategies of decision -making and academic achievement of the students significantly predicted sub dimensions of motivation source and problems candidate teacher occupation. There was a negative relationship between academic achievement, strategy of reasonable decision- making, and strategy of independent decision-making and negative factors for learning motivation. There was a negative relationship between strategy of impulsive decision- making and cognitive and lifelong learning goals motivation, intrinsic motivation. There was a positive relationship between strategy of reasonable decision-making and cognitive and lifelong learning goals motivation. Also, there was a positive relationship between strategy of impulsive decision-making, strategy of indecisive decision making and negative factors for learning motivation.

Key Words

Pre-School Teacher Candidates, Learning Motivation, Strategies of Decision-Making, Teacher Education.

The process of establishing identity contains many trials and decisions in many fields of life including love, profession and general philosophy of life. Although the processes of trials and decisions in

those fields begin in the puberty period, they are fully crystallized in the emerging adulthood period. In this period individuals focus on their conceits in terms of what they want to do, where they want to go and who they want to be with (Arnett, 2007). The temporary researches in the nature of trial in the puberty period in professional and study life are perceived as more serious identity trials in the emerging adulthood period (Arnett, 2000). While the emerging adults search for job opportunities and education opportunities which shall prepare them for profession (Arnett, 2004), they search about the issues which are important in terms of their identity at the same time (Atak, 2011; Atak & Çok, 2010). Owing to trying different job and different education alternatives they learn better

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about themselves and take a further step toward clarifying what sort of a future they want. In this period the decisions taken on issues including selection of job, professional life and university affect the health, careers, psychological wellbeing as well as social acceptance of the individuals for their lifetime (Baiocco, Laghi, & D'Alessio, 2009; Man, Harmon, & Power, 1989).

How individuals make decisions is as much important as the decisions of individuals about their lives. Decision making processes are significant psychological structures that allows for examination and that enables one to discover the connection between thinking and action (Kiener, 2006). Decision making is defined as the process of selecting one in the case any individual has two or more alternatives about his/her targets. The talent of making decision is important because the decisions of people may lead to important critical consequences that may affect their own lives, the lives of other people and societies (Miller & Byner, 2001a).

Decision making styles are defined as the general responses and comments of the individuals in the position of making decision. Decision making strategies explain why the individuals who encounter with similar situations use different decision processes (Baiocco et al., 2009). Kuzgun (1992) stated that individuals use four different decision making strategies while they make their decisions, namely independent decision making strategy, logical decision making strategy, indecisive decision making strategy, impulsive decision making strategy. Independent decision making strategy is the skill of individual making decision alone. Logical decision making strategy is collecting information about alternatives, examining the alternatives carefully while making a decision and making decision by assessing the positive and negative aspects of each. Indecisive decision making strategy is the desire to change the decisions made frequently and not to be content with any decision. Impulsive decision making strategy is making decision on feelings without thinking about the alternatives sufficiently. The approach of the individual in decision making situations and the strategies he/she used in his/her decision making behaviors gain significance. The individual should be assisted for gaining the appropriate and unique skill of decision making in order to be satisfied with his/her life and realize himself/herself (Ersever, 1996).

Motivation is the power that mobilizes one for certain purposes. Motivation is influential on behaviors or is the continuity of voluntary efforts which

mobilizes the person inside the individual, which directs it and which is purpose oriented (Ames, 1992; Lee, McInerney, Liem, & Ortiga, 2010; Steers & Porter, 1979; Woolfolk, 1999). Motivation is diversified depending on the features that mobilize the individual (Ford, 1992; Ghazi, Ali, Shahzad, Khan, & Hukamdad, 2010). Internal motivation situation may be defined as the experience of a person to reveal his/her talents. Internal motivation tools are directly related to the nature of work and originate from the content of the work. It covers factors including interesting and coercive work, independency in work, significance of the work for the employee, participation in the work, responsibility, diversity, creativity, opportunities of the person to use his/her talents and skills satisfactory feedbacks regarding the performance of the person (Mottaz, 1985, p. 366 cited in Dündar, Özutku, & Taşpınar, 2007). According to Mottaz external motivation tools include two dimensions. While the first dimension is concerned with social motivation tools the second dimension is concerned with organizational tools. It covers factors including social motivation dimension, friendship, benevolence, the support of the colleagues and the chief and is based on the nature of interpersonal relations. And the organizational dimension of external motivation tools is concerned with the opportunities offered by the organization for the purpose of improving work performance. Those tools are concrete and cover factors including the sufficiency of the sources in the working environment, wage equality, chance to promote, additional benefits and job security (Mottaz, p. 366 cited in Dündar et al.). And learning motivation whether it is interesting in essence or not is the meaningfulness of academic works for education, deeming them valuable and useful (Yavuz, 2006).

How individuals make decisions is related to the decision strategy. In the emerging adulthood period, before going to the university, the decision strategies they use when making their decisions regarding the selection of profession which is one of their most important decisions may affect their productivity, efficiency and creativity in their professional lives and may contribute to their efforts for realizing themselves by meeting their top level requirements (Byrnes, 1998; Cannon-Bowers & Salas, 2002; Cannon-Bowers, Salas, & Pruitt, 1996; Erden & Akman, 1995; Sanz de Acedo-Lizarraga, Sanz de Acedo-Baquedano, Oliver, & Closas, 2009). It is considered that candidate teacher use the decision strategies which they had used for the decisions they make in their lives while selecting

the profession of teaching as well which is an important decision of their lives and that the decision strategies they used while making their decisions may affect their efforts for realizing themselves in professional terms by meeting their top level requirements related to the profession of teaching. For this reason, the purpose of this study was to identify problems and motivation sources, strategies of decision-making of the students' attending preschool education teacher department, was to determine the relationship between learning motivation and strategies of decision-making, academic achievement of students, was to determine whether strategies of decision-making and academic achievement of students predicts learning motivation.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to identify problems and motivation sources, strategies of decision-making of the students' attending preschool education teacher department, was to determine the relationship between learning motivation and strategies of decision-making, academic achievement of students, was to determine whether strategies of decision-making and academic achievement of students predicts learning motivation.

Method

This study is a quantitative and relational study aimed at examining the whether strategies of decision-making and academic achievement of students predicts learning motivation and whether the relationship between learning motivation and strategies of decision-making, academic achievement of students (Büyüköztürk, 2005; Karasar, 2010). The data were collected by Motivation Source and Problems candidate Teacher Occupation Questionnaire developed by Acat and Yenilmez (2004), The Questionnaire of Decision Strategies developed by Kuzgun (1992). Students' until attending semester accumulative grades are taken as criteria for academic achievement.

Participants

In the study, the sample set of the research was composed of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th grade class students at Faculty of Vocational Education and Faculty of Education of department of preschool education and were chosen by random set sampling method. The research was carried out with the data

gathered from 245 (68.05 %) female and 115 (31.95 %) male university students. The students were in 18-24 age range and, average age was 20.40. 22.2 % of the participants were 1st grade students, 33.3 % of the participants were 2nd grade students, 22.2 % of the participants were 3rd grade students and 22.2 % of the participants were 4th grade students.

Instruments

Motivation Source and Problems Candidate Teacher Occupation Questionnaire:

Preparation of the questionnaire was based on the study by Acat and Demiral (2002). It was reoriented for the recruited students in Education Faculties by Acat and Yenilmez, (2004). Likewise, in order to verify the reliability of the questionnaire, the test re-test method was applied to the same group at two-week intervals. Correlation coefficients were determined between the application results. 0.05 was deemed as significant, while 0.40 and over was deemed as representing high consistency of the items. Also, a significant correlation was sought between the results of the two separate applications. Items that did not show a significant difference at 0.05 and thus validity of each item was tested. Each of the items was studied for the intrinsic consistency of the questionnaire to determine the overall correlation. The items achieving levels of 0.40 and over were included in the questionnaire. In order to verify the reliability of the test, Cronbach alpha was calculated and was found to be 0.92. (Acat & Özabacı, 2008; Acat & Yenilmez, 2004). These analyses confirmed the reliability of the questionnaire. A factor analysis was computed to verify the validity of the structure of the questionnaire, as a result of which factor loadings for each item were determined. The factor loadings of items achieving levels of 0.40 and over were included in the study. The factors obtained were determined to account for 54% of the variance. The items were categorized into four basic factors as a result of the conversion. Following are the four basic factors determined upon the analysis of the items: Cognitive and lifelong learning goals, negative factors for learning, extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation.

The Questionnaire of Decision Strategies: The Questionnaire of Decision Strategies developed by Kuzgun (1992) as a tool strategy of decision making among high school students and adults. In the scale, the process of strategies of decision making was measured in four dimensions with 40 items. They are strategy of reasonable decision making, strategy of impulsive decision- making, strategy of

indecisive decision making, strategy of independent decision- making. This scale Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficients were ranged .74 (strategy of impulsive decision- making), .72 (strategy of reasonable decision making), .55 (strategy of independent decision- making), .70 (strategy of indecisive decision making). The test-retest reliability coefficients for the strategy of impulsive decision- making, strategy of reasonable decision making, strategy of independent decision- making and strategy of indecisive decision making were .81, .80, .52, .82, respectively. At the same time different vocation, gender and age group mean differences were conducted and mean differences were significantly all of the groups (Kuzgun).

Procedures

The data were gathered from selected faculty of vocational education and faculty of education in preschool department and randomly selected classes by researcher. The data collection procedure was carried out by providing students with the appropriate environment and sufficient time for answering the questions in groups in the classroom.

Data Analysis

SPSS 15.0 was used in order to evaluate the data which were collected by the scales employed in the research. Basic regression analysis was used to determine whether or not academic achievement of students predict learning motivation of university student. Multiple regression analysis was used to determine whether or not strategies of decision-making of students predict learning motivation of university student. Descriptive analysis was used to determine to level of strategies of decision-making and learning motivation of students. The Pearson correlation coefficient technique was used to determine the relationships among the strategies of decision-making, academic achievement and learning motivation.

Results

It is understood from Table 1 that students would prefer more strategy of reasonable decision making ($\bar{X}=27.8$) and would prefer almost the same level of other strategies of decision making [$\bar{X}=21.8$; strategy of impulsive decision- making), ($\bar{X}=22.4$, strategy of independent decision- making), ($\bar{X}=20.4$, strategy of indecisive decision making)]. It is understood from Table 2 that students cognitive

and lifelong learning goals is very high ($\bar{X}=4.53$), intrinsic motivation ($\bar{X}=4.15$) and extrinsic motivation ($\bar{X}=4.13$) is high and negative factors for learning is low ($\bar{X}=2.44$).

The relationships among 4 subscales of learning motivation and academic achievement and the 4 subscales of strategies of decision were analyzed by using Pearson correlation analysis technique and the results are presented in Table 3. According Pearson correlation coefficient that is a negative relationship between negative factors for learning and academic achievement ($r=-.200, p<.01$), strategy of reasonable decision- making ($r=-.138, p<.01$), strategy of independent decision-making ($r=-.262, p<.01$). There was a negative relationships between strategy of impulsive decision- making and cognitive and lifelong learning goals motivation ($r=-.111, p<.05$), intrinsic motivation ($r=-.121, p<.05$). There was a positive relationships between strategy of reasonable decision-making and cognitive and lifelong learning goals motivation ($r=.146, p<.01$). Also, there was a positive relationship between negative factors for learning motivation and strategy of impulsive decision-making ($r=.118, p<.05$), strategy of indecisive decision making ($r=.223, p<.01$).

A simple regression analysis was performed to predict subscales of learning motivation by academic achievement and results given in table 4. Also, multiple regression analysis was performed to predict learning motivation by strategies of decision-making results are given in Table 5, 6, 7, and 8.

Results indicates that academic achievement ($R^2=.040, F=11.619, p<.01$) are significant on responsibility of negative factors for learning. This result indicates that academic achievement explains 4.0 % of total variance of negative factors for learning. According to the standardized regression coefficient, significance of precursor variables on negative factors for learning in a negatively is academic achievement ($\beta=-.20; p<.01$).

Results indicates that strategies of decision-making ($R^2=.046, F=4.310, p<.01$) are significant on responsibility of extrinsic motivation. This result indicates that strategies of decision-making explain 4.6 % of total variance of extrinsic motivation. According to the standardized regression coefficient, significance of precursor variables on extrinsic motivation in positively is strategy of indecisive decision making ($\beta=.177; p<.01$).

Results indicates that strategies of decision-making ($R^2=.104, F=8.005, p<.01$) are significant on re-

Table 1.

Descriptive Statistics

Strategies of decision	Mean/Std.Error	Min-Max.	Range of score
Strategy of reasonable decision- making	27.8±.25178	17.00-39.00	00-50.00
Strategy of impulsive decision-making	21.8±.24534	13.00-36.00	00-50.00
Strategy of independent decision-making	22.4±.19613	14.00-31.00	00-50.00
Strategy of indecisive decision making	20.4±.26297	10.00-35.00	00-50.00

sponsibility of negative factors for learning. This results indicates that strategies of decision-making explain 4.6 % of total variance of extrinsic motivation for learning According to the standardized regression coefficient, significance order of precursor variables on negative factors for learning is a follows: Strategy of independent decision-making ($\beta = -.214$; $p < .01$), strategy of indecisive decision making ($\beta = .136$; $p < .01$); and strategy of reasonable decision- making ($\beta = -.127$; $p < .05$)

Results indicates that strategies of decision-making ($R^2 = .037$, $F = 3.40$ $p < .01$) are significant on responsibility of cognitive and lifelong learning goals. This result indicates that strategies of decision-making

explain 4.6 % of total variance of cognitive and lifelong learning goals. According to the standardized regression coefficient, significance of precursor variables on cognitive and lifelong learning goals in positively is strategy of reasonable decision- making ($\beta = .158$; $p < .05$).

Results indicates that strategies of decision-making ($R^2 = .086$, $F = 8.306$ $p < .01$) are significant on responsibility of intrinsic motivation. This result indicates that strategies of decision-making explain 8.6 % of total variance of cognitive and intrinsic motivation. According to the standardized regression coefficient, significance of precursor variables on intrinsic motivation in positively is strategy of in-

Table 2.

Descriptive Statistics

Learning motivation	Mean/Std.Error	Min-Max.	Range of score
Extrinsic motivation	4.13±.0313	2.50-5.00	1.00-5.00
Negative factors for learning	2.44±.0385	1.00-5.00	1.00-5.00
Cognitive and lifelong learning goals	4.53±.0250	2.50-5.00	1.00-5.00
Intrinsic motivation	4.15±.0328	2.00-5.00	1.00-5.00

Table 3.

Correlations among Subscales of Learning Motivation and Academic Achievement, Subscales of Strategies of Decision

	Extrinsic motivation	Negative factors for learning	Cognitive and lifelong learning goals	Intrinsic motivation
Academic achievement	.070	-.200**	.110	.087
Strategy of reasonable decision- making	.003	-.138**	.146**	.013
Strategy of impulsive decision-making	.042	.118*	-.111*	-.121*
Strategy of independent decision-making	-.019	-.262**	-.044	.061
Strategy of indecisive decision making	.031	.223**	-.044	-.027

** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

Table 4.

Multiple Regression Analysis on Learning Motivation

	R ²	F	df	Learning Motivation	β	t
Academic achievement	.005	1.390	1	Extrinsic motivation	.070	1.179
	.040	11.619**	1	Negative factors for learning	-.200	-3.419**
	.012	3.459	1	Cognitive and lifelong learning goals	.110	1.860
	.008	2.139	1	Intrinsic motivation	.087	1.462

** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

Table 5.

Multiple Regression Analysis on Extrinsic Motivation

	R ²	F	df	Strategies of Decision	β	t
Extrinsic motivation	.046	4.310**	4	Strategy of reasonable decision- making	.001	.008
				Strategy of impulsive decision-making	.088	1.395
				Strategy of independent decision-making	-.060	-9.32
				Strategy of indecisive decision making	.177	2.796**

** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

dependent decision- making ($\beta = .158$; $p < .05$) and significance of precursor variables on intrinsic motivation in negatively is strategy of impulsive decision- making.

Discussion

At the end of the research it was found that the students of the department of pre-school teaching generally used the strategy of reasonable decision. The students' preference to use rather the strategy of reasonable decision may be a consequence of their thinking first the results of their decisions in the cognition level while making their important decisions in life and their thought of self-protection. Janis and Mann (1977) expressed that the individuals who make effective decisions are such persons who can make the appropriate selection among a wide range of alternatives in their behaviors, who assess the data they will acquire a result of their selections, who can be objective and who are able to take the negative and positive results that each alternative may have into consideration carefully, who research information, and use new information in undesired situations and who can make plans for their decisions. They argued that the more sufficient is each of those items the more effective shall be the decision taken. The ability of the individuals to estimate that the decisions they will make have important critical consequences may have increased the use of the strategy of reasonable decision.

Research findings coincide with the findings of Alver (2003), Alver, Ada and Çakıcı (2006) that the

strategy of reasonable decision strategy is more used by school administrators; the findings of Çoban and Hamamcı (2006) that it is more used by different control focused adolescents at the ages of 15-20, the findings of Kuzgun (1992) that it is more used by adults and high school students; the findings of Demirbaş (1992) that it is more used by criminal or non-criminal adolescents. Furthermore, they coincide with the findings in the study where Eldeleklioğlu (1996) examined the relation between decision strategies and parent attitudes that the adolescents used rather strategy of reasonable decision and strategy of independent decision as well.

Examining the motivation score averages of the students of the department of pre-school teaching regarding the profession of teaching; it is found that their cognitive and lifelong learning goals are very high, their extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivations are high and negative factors for learning motivations are low. Cognitive and lifelong learning goals motivation whether it is interesting in essence or not is the meaningfulness of academic works for education, deeming them valuable and useful (Yavuz, 2006). Highness of the cognitive and lifelong learning goals of the students may result from teaching-learning processes in the process of teaching education, the features of the materials used in teaching as well as awareness of the factors that facilitates learning the knowledge they gain. Both extrinsic and intrinsic motivations of candidate teachers being high indicate that they have a positive attitude toward the profession of teaching.

Table 6.

Multiple Regression Analysis on Negative Factors for Learning

	R ²	F	df	Strategies of Decision	β	t
Negative factors for learning	.104	8.005**	4	Strategy of reasonable decision- making	-.127	-2.146*
				Strategy of impulsive decision-making	-.039	-.642
				Strategy of independent decision-making	-.214	-3.496**
				Strategy of indecisive decision making	.136	2.155**

** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

Table 7.
Multiple Regression Analysis on Cognitive and Lifelong Learning Goals

	R ²	F	df	Strategies of Decision	β	t
Cognitive and lifelong learning goals	.037	3.450**	4	Strategy of reasonable decision- making	.158	2.582*
				Strategy of impulsive decision-making	-.050	-.642
				Strategy of independent decision-making	-.048	-.790
				Strategy of indecisive decision making	-.009	-.748

** p<.01, * p<.05

This result may indicate that candidate teachers shall continue to teach and learn during their professional lives.

There was a negative relationship between academic achievement, strategy of reasonable decision- making, and strategy of independent decision-making and negative factors for learning motivation. There was a negative relationship between strategy of impulsive decision- making and cognitive and lifelong learning goals motivation, intrinsic motivation. There was a positive relationship between strategy of reasonable decision-making and cognitive and lifelong learning goals motivation. Also, there was a positive relationship between strategy of impulsive decision-making, strategy of indecisive decision making and negative factors for learning motivation. According to Janis and Mann (1977), the talent of making decision covers social and motivational factors including avoiding to make a decision or trying to make a decision with regard to the structures of coping with problems. It has been observed that those individuals who have motivation in an autonomous manner without being affected by other individuals are more aware of their requirements and feelings, there much consistency between their thoughts and actions. And the individuals with control motivation pay attention to external factors more and may only be aware of their limited requirements and feelings (Koestner, Bernieri, & Zuckerman, 1992). Individuals having strategy of reasonable decision and strategy of independent decision are more aware of their needs and feelings and there much consistency between their thoughts and actions, compared to individuals having other strategies. Candidate pre-school

teachers' use of indecisive decision making strategy and impulsive decision making strategy in profession selection as they do in making decisions related to their lives may have increased their negative motivations toward teaching profession.

At the end of the research it was found that decision strategies and academic achievement of the candidate pre-school teachers predicts their motivations toward teaching profession. Academic achievement are significant on of negative factors for learning in a negatively way. Strategy of independent decision-making is significant on extrinsic motivation in a positive way. Strategy of reasonable – making and strategy of independent decision-making is significant on negative factors for learning in a negative way and strategy of indecisive decision making is significant on negative factors for learning in a positive way. Strategy of reasonable – making on intrinsic motivation in a negative way. Strategy of impulsive decision-making is significant on cognitive and lifelong learning goals in a positive way. Strategy of impulsive decision-making is significant on intrinsic motivation in a negative way and strategy of independent decision-making is significant on intrinsic motivation in positive way.

Self-inspection model in making decision is important and university its role in developing a strong and effective self-identity for the causality orientations of the students is clear. According to this model, if the motivation and talent of the individual for decision making increase, the harmony between thought and behaviors increase too. Furthermore, harmony between thought and behavior may be useful for completing the career identity and many complex tasks of discovery (Miller & Byrnes, 2001a).

Table 8.
Multiple Regression Analysis on Intrinsic Motivation

	R ²	F	df	Strategies of Decision	β	t
Intrinsic motivation	.086	8.306**	4	Strategy of reasonable - making	.045	.728
				Strategy of impulsive decision-making	-.160	-2.467*
				Strategy of independent decision-making	.158	2.490*
				Strategy of indecisive decision making	.011	.166

** p<.01, * p<.05

Internal motives may include both desiring to get positive results in his/her decision and behavior and avoiding from negative results (Steinhart & Wyer, 2009). Accordingly it is likely that the decision strategies and motivations of the individuals influence each other. Furthermore positive (reasonable and independent) decision strategies, of the individual, increase in his/her talents and increase in his/her positive (Intrinsic, extrinsic, cognitive and lifelong learning goals) motivations, the individual's increasing the harmony between his/her thought and behaviors, may affect the individuals in terms of being successful, productive creative in their lives and contribute positively to his/her efforts for self-realization by meeting his/her top level requirements. However individual's use of negative (impulsive and indecisive) decision strategies more frequently may cause decrease in positive (intrinsic, extrinsic, cognitive and lifelong learning goals) motivations and increase in negative factors for learning and thus may corrupt harmony between thought and behaviors of the individual and cause them to fail to pay effort for self-realization by meeting his/her top level requirements. Furthermore according to Miller and Byrnes (2001b), the academic targets of the students and their perfection of decision making are generally the best determinants of success behaviors.

Motivation is at the same time defined as the cognitive, emotional and behavioral indicators of student attempts and loyalty to education. Those students who are not motivated shall not study for success fervently. Researchers suggested that only motivation affected academic success and the other factors affected motivation and thus increased academic success (Tucker et. al., 2002). For this reason the negative motivations of the students toward teaching profession may have decreased academic success.

It is considered that the decisions particularly for profession selection may be effective on their motivations. For this reason individual may be given training related to how they can use positive decision strategies (independent and reasonable). It has been found that learning motivation was the most important motivation for the candidate teachers. One may pay attention to organize events, learning-teaching process that would support teachers' learning motivations. The same research may be conducted on a different sample group and the results may be compared. Research for examining the factors that affect decision strategy and teaching motivation may be conducted. The candidate teachers may be given training on developing decision strategy and the results may be assessed.

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