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Explaining intrapreneurial behaviors of employees with perceived organizational climate and testing the mediating role of organizational identification: A research study among employees of Turkish innovative firms

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Abstract

This study examines perceived organizational climate and organizational identification as potential antecedents of employees' intrapreneurial behaviors. In particular, the study suggests positive relationships between perceived organizational climate components-structural support and recognition- and intrapreneurial behaviors construct. In addition, employees' organizational identification is suggested to have a mediating role on the relationship between organizational climate and intrapreneurial behaviors. The survey of this study is performed among employees working in high performing and innovative firms operating in White Good Manufacturing, Food and Drink, Telecommunication, and Textile industries in Turkey. The obtained data from the questionnaires are analyzed through the SPSS statistical packaged software. Analyses results revealed that both dimensions of organizational climate (structural support and organizational recognition) significantly and positively related to intrapreneurial behaviors and perceived organizational identification mediate the effects of the organizational climate on the intrapreneurial behaviors construct.

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1. Introduction

The current study aims to explain employees' intrapreneurial behaviors by focusing on the organizational climate dimensions of structural support and organizational recognition and perceived organizational identification. Based on the literature review and conceptualizations of the concepts, it is found meaningful to examine the relationship between organizational climate, organizational identification and intrapreneurial behaviours in high performing innovative organizations located in Turkey. Thus, the main concerns of this study are understanding intrapreneurial

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behaviours in innovative organizations and examining the relations of perceived organizational climate and organizational identification as potential antecedents.

2. Literature Review And Hypotheses

2.1. Intrapreneurial Behavior

Intrapreneurship concept has been linked to the entrepreneurial orientation of an organization and it has its roots in entrepreneurship literature, even though intrapreneurship as a concept has lately been mentioned in the management literature (Antoncic and Hisrich 2003; Heinonen and Korvela, 2003). In both literatures, intrapreneurship is seen as important for organizational survival, growth, profitability, and renewal (e.g., Zahra 1996; Heinonen and Korvela, 2003; Alpkın, Bulut, Günday, Ulusoy and Kılıç, 2010; Sijde, Veenker and During, 2013).

In broad definition, intrapreneurial behavior is described as entrepreneurship within an existing organization (Antoncic, 2007). The domain of intrapreneurial behavior has been defined in various concepts such as intrapreneuring (Pinchot, 1985), internal corporate entrepreneurship (Jones and Butler, 1992), corporate entrepreneurship (Stopford and Baden-Fuller, 1994; Antoncic and Hisrich, 2004) and corporate venturing (Vesper, 1990). Stevenson and Jarillo (1990) saw intrapreneurship as a process by which employees inside organizations pursue opportunities without regard to the resources they currently control. A long with this definition, Vesper (1990) implied that intrapreneurial behavior was doing new things and departing from the customary to pursue opportunities. Besides, Antoncic and Hisrich (2001) addressed that intrapreneurship was employees' spirit of entrepreneurship within the existing organization. In addition, it is mentioned that intrapreneurial behavior is initiated in established organizations for purposes of profitability, strategic renewal, fostering innovations, gaining knowledge of future revenue streams and international success. It was indicated that the intrapreneurs acted like entrepreneurs in that they realize their own ideas without being the owner of the enterprise (Cunningham and Lischeron, 1991). Thus, intrapreneurial behavior can be defined to mean an entrepreneurial way of action in an existing organization. In their precise conceptual definition of intrapreneurial behavior, Antoncic and Hisrich (2003) defined the concept as the pursuit of creative or new solutions to challenges confronting the firm, including the development or enhancement of old and new products and services, markets, administrative techniques and technologies for performing organizational functions, as well as changes in strategy, organizing, and dealing with competitors (p.8).

On the other side, Heinonen (1999) implied that the basis of intrapreneurial behavior was recognizing an opportunity, exploiting it and trusting that exploiting an opportunity in a new way that deviates from previous practice will succeed and support the realization of the organization's goals (as also cited by Heinonen and Korvela, 2003, p.3). Antoncic and Hisrich (2001) classified intrapreneurial behavior into four dimensions: new business venturing, innovativeness, self-renewal and pro-activeness. Antoncic (2007) indicated that new business venturing dimension refers to the creation of new businesses related to existing products or markets without regard to the level of autonomy or size; innovativeness dimension refers to product and service innovation with an emphasis on development in technology; self-renewal dimension reflects the transformation of organizations through renewal of the key ideas on which they are built; and proactiveness dimension includes initiative and risk taking, and competitive aggressiveness that are reflected in activities of top management (p.311).

Moreover, Antoncic and Antoncic (2011) addressed that intrapreneurship occurs on two levels: the level of the organization and on the level of the individual. Referring to the view of Antoncic and Antoncic (2011), in the current study we focus on both of the levels and more specifically on the perceived organizational climate (organizational level) and organizational identification (individual level). Supporting and recognizing organizational climate by the organization and organizational identification are suggested to be beneficial for intrapreneurship (Carrier, 1996).

2.2. Antecedents of Intrapreneurial Behavior

Several researchers have attempted to understand the elements that stimulate or effect intrapreneurial behavior. Areas such as external environment (Zahra, 1993), organization (Schollhammer, 1982; Kanter, 1984; Antoncic and Hisrich, 2001; Antoncic and Zorn, 2004), organizational strategies and research and development activities (Antoncic and Hisrich, 2001; Sijde, Veenker and During, 2013), management activities (Antoncic and Hisrich, 2004;

Fitzsimmons, Douglas, Antoncic and Hisrich, 2005), and organizational culture (Heinonen and Korvela, 2003) have been examined as factors affecting intrapreneurial behavior. As mentioned earlier, intrapreneurship is a process, which occurs in interaction with the environment and the organizational setting and the environment plays an important role in influencing intrapreneurship. Basically, the literature on intrapreneurial behavior has identified two main categories of antecedents: one pertains to the external environment of the firm, the other to its organizational characteristics. The external environment has been viewed as a determinant of entrepreneurial activity at the organizational level (Miller, 1983; Khandwalla, 1987; Covin and Slevin, 1991). It was indicated that the more dynamic, hostile and heterogeneous the environment, more emphasis the company puts on intrapreneurial activities (Zahra 1993; Heinonen and Korvela, 2003). Researchers explained and predicted intrapreneurship and its outcomes with internal variables and external environment variables by building on contingency theory models (Zahra, 1993; Badguerahanian and Abetti, 1995; Antoncic and Hisrich, 2004; Antoncic, 2007). The other category named as organizational characteristics has been viewed as a determinant of intrapreneurial activity at the individual level. Previous research has focused on characteristics of intra-organizational environments that could represent stimulants or antecedents for intrapreneurship development (Schollhammer, 1982; Kanter, 1984; Antoncic and Hisrich, 2001; Antoncic and Zorn, 2004). Organizational characteristics (communication openness, control mechanisms, environmental scanning intensity, organizational and management support, organizational climate, organizational values) compose the group of predictors of intrapreneurship (Antoncic, 2007).

2.3. Organizational Climate and Intrapreneurial Behavior

Organizational climate of an organization refers to the form of the existing conditions and nature of organizational life perceived by the employees. With a pioneering definition, organizational climate is a set of individual, organizational and environmental character features which gives an identity to the organization by separating it from others, perceived by individuals and has an effect on their behaviors (Friedlander and Greenberg, 1971). Litwin and Stringer (1974) defined organizational climate as the set of measurable properties of the work environment that is either directly or indirectly perceived by the employees who work within the organizational environment that influences and motivates their behavior (p.13). More particularly, the extant literature has confirmed the links between organizational climate and employee performance, productivity, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, organizational justice, motivation, anxiety, intention to leave, and organizational effectiveness (e.g., Dickson, Resick and Hanges, 2006; Bellou and Andronikidis, 2009; Zhang and Liu, 2010; Holloway, 2012; Rahimic, 2013).

In the literature, organizational climate has been studied as an independent or intervening variable between organizational systems and motivational tendencies variables, and as one of the system determinant, the concept has been indicated as influencing motivational tendencies of the individuals and organizational consequences (e.g., Litwin and Stringer, 1974; Özdemir, 2006; Ergülen, 2011). It was revealed that organizational climate created a sense of belonging for employees and the characteristics of the climate which are internalized by individuals are related to a variety of employee behavioral outcomes. After conducting a research study among employees working in Turkish family-owned organizations, Ergülen (2011) has demonstrated that organizational climate was significantly related to individuals' organizational attachment, organizational identification and organizational commitment. Zhang and Liu (2010) has implied that organizational climate influenced organizational and individual variables. When employee's perceived a supportive climate, they exhibited positive behaviors and identification and when they perceived unpleasant working conditions, they tended to commit counterproductive behaviors. In addition, a study performed in Turkey has also revealed that positive organizational climate perceptions related to positive employee behaviors, however negative organizational climate perceptions related to counterproductive behaviors (Kanten and Ülker, 2013). As further, some other researchers argued that organizational climate promoted positive behaviors in organizations such as organizational citizenship behavior, innovative behavior, creative and proactive behaviors (Patterson, West, Shackleton, Dawson, Lawthom, Maitlis, Robinson and Wallace, 2004; Bindl ve Parker, 2011; Farooqui, 2012; Moghimi and Subramaniam, 2013).

On the basis of that rationality, in the current study, we discussed how perceived organizational climate was related to intrapreneurial behavior and organizational identification. We conceptualized organizational climate as a global construct, covering two basic climate aspects: recognition of the organization and structural support. It is suggested that the two climate aspects could provide a good representation of the organizational climate within an innovative

organization, and provide information about how recognition and structural support of the organization are related to individuals' organizational identification and intrapreneurial behavior. Thus, the following hypothesis is generated;

H1: A significant and positive relationship is expected between perceived organizational climate and intrapreneurial behavior.

2.4. The Mediating Role of Organizational Identification on the Relationship between Organizational Climate and Intrapreneurial Behavior

Social Identity theory suggested that an individual's sense of self exerts a significant effect on his or her perceptions, attitude and behaviors (Tajfel and Turner, 1985). Being the pioneer of Social Identity Theory, Tajfel (1978) defined social identity as "that part of an individual's self concept which derives from his or her knowledge of his or her membership to social group (or social groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (p.63). Based on the rationality of Social Identity Theory, Mael and Ashforth (1995) have asserted that organizational identification is a specific form of social identification where the individuals define themselves in terms of their membership in a particular organization (p.310). Hatch and Schultz (1997) have viewed organizational identity as consisting of attributes that members feel are central, distinctive, and enduring, or it may refer broadly to what members perceive, feel, and think about their organization (p.357). Moreover, it was indicated that individuals' evaluation of whether the organization's identity is favorable or unfavorable is based on the individuals' subjective assessment of (a) those subjective factors believed to comprise an organization's identity, and (b) the perceived attractiveness of those compositional factors as they are understood by the organizational member (Dukerich, Golden and Shortell, 2002, p.509).

The extant literature provides a number of studies which confirmed strong link of organizational identity to several individual work outcomes as well as the particular organizational and individual antecedent to identification (e.g., Miller, Allen, Casey and Johnson, 2000; Mael and Ashforth, 2001; Kreiner and Ashforth, 2004; Harris and Cameron, 2005; Riketta, 2005; Cole and Bruch, 2006). Schrodt (2002) examined the relationship between organizational identification and organizational culture and revealed that employee perception of culture significantly influenced identification in retail sales organizations (p.189). Lee (2004) indicated the link between perceived organizational trust and identification. Cole and Bruch (2006) demonstrated that organizational identification has significant relationships with organizational commitment and turnover intention of employees (p.585). Tüzün and Çağlar's (2009) study confirmed that organizational identity was significantly related with trust construct (p.284). Vondey (2010) has revealed that there were significant relationships among servant leadership, organizational citizenship behavior, person-organization fit, and organizational identification (p.3). Moreover, a recent study conducted in Turkish context has showed that employees' perception of organizational identification mediated that relationship between psychological empowerment and voluntary performance behaviors (Taştan, 2012, p.227).

Though there is a body of findings related to the potential antecedents and outcomes of organizational identification construct, it is noticed that there are insufficient research studies positing its links to employees' intrapreneurial behaviors at work and organizational climate. Therefore, in line with the previous findings, the following hypotheses are generated in this study;

H2: A significant relationship is expected between perceived organizational climate and organizational identification.

H3: A significant relationship is expected between perceived organizational identification and intrapreneurial behavior.

Furthermore, in the current study, it is suggested that organizational identification mediates the relationship between perceived organizational climate and intrapreneurial behavior. The theoretical framework for this argument is derived from social identity theory (Ashforth and Mael, 1989), in which the perception of oneness with or belongingness to an organization defines the individual in terms of the organization. In addition, it is argued that such identification with the organization leads the individual to act in ways that are congruent with that identity (Vondey, 2010). The implication of a mediating effect of organizational identification for this study is that the perceived

organizational climate would relate to intrapreneurial behavior with the intervention of organizational identification. Hence, it is suggested:

H4: The perceived organizational identification mediates the relationship between perceived organizational climate and intrapreneurial behavior.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Aim

In this survey it is aimed to identify the mediating effect of organizational identification on the relationship between organizational climate and intrapreneurial behavior. To test the hypothesized relationships, a field survey using questionnaires was conducted.

3.2. Sample and Data Collection

The survey of this study was conducted on 210 employees working as lower and middle level managers and as non-managers of 5 high performing and innovative firms operating in White Good Manufacturing, Food and Drink, Telecommunication, and Textile industries in Turkey. The firms were selected from the list of Turkish Time Journal (2011). The official report of Turkish Time Journal (2011) listed the “The Most Innovative Firms in Turkey”. 36 firms were placed in that report however, 5 of them were identified from different industries and were contacted via email or phone and with personal interviews in order to be informed about the research study. About 250 questionnaires were distributed to the sample group and 210 usable questionnaires could be obtained. Data were analyzed through the SPSS statistical packet program and three proposed hypotheses were tested through regression analyses.

3.3. Instrument

To measure “organizational climate”, Litwin and Stringer’s (1974) “Organizational Climate Scale” composed of 3 dimensions with totally 24 items was used. For the aim of this study, 2 dimensions with totally 17 items were utilized. The two dimensions used in the current study were named as; Structural Support and Organizational Recognition. Structural support dimension was composed of 10 items and Recognition dimension had 7 items. The Cronbach’s alpha for “perceived organizational climate” construct was 0.91. For measuring “intrapreneurial behavior”, “Intrapreneurial Behavior Scale” is adopted from Heinonen and Korvela (2003), which uses 39 items to measure 7 dimensions (Encouragement, individual motivation, transparency, openness and communality, individual competence, enabling working environment, encouragement to innovations, development). The Cronbach’s alpha for “intrapreneurial behavior” construct was 0.88. “Organizational identification” measure was evaluated by a 25-item scale developed by Cheney (1983). The internal reliability (Cronbach α) is calculated as .89 for organizational identification construct. All items were translated via a procedure of double-back translation and during the pre-testing process; questionnaire items were found comprehensive. Overall, 81 items using 5 likert-type scale (ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree) were used to measure 3 constructs of the research model.

3.4. Descriptive Results

The sample comprised of 210 employees working in 5 high performing and innovative firms operating in White Good Manufacturing, Food and Drink, Telecommunication, and Textile industries. 71% of the respondents were male, 72.2% were married; 72% were between ages 25–45. Majority of the samples (61.6%) had a university degree and 33.5% had occupational experience of 5-10 years. 81% of the respondents were working for 1–12 years in their current organization.

3.5. Reliability

Internal consistency of scales is calculated by Cronbach Alpha value. P-value (i.e. Sig. value) which indicates the likelihood of a particular outcome by chance, less than 5% were not considered statistically significant. Reliability analysis of the values of all the measuring instruments is greater than 0.80 as presented on Table 1.

Table 1. The summary statistics of survey (N=210)

Factors	N	Mean	α
Structural Support	10	3.78	0.90
Organizational Recognition	7	4.09	0.91
Organizational Climate	17		0.91
Encouragement	16	3.45	0.89
Individual Motivation	5	3.92	0.88
Transparency&Openness&Communality	5	3.71	0.84
Individual Competence	4	4.02	0.91
Enabling Work Environment	3	4.05	0.82
Encouragement to Innovation	3	3.77	0.85
Development	3	3.88	0.89
Intrapreneurial Behavior	39		0.88
Identification	15	3.72	0.86
Integrity	10	4.08	0.91
Organizational Identification	25		0.89

3.6. Analyses and Results

It was revealed that all variables of the research model were significantly related to each other (Table 2). “Structural support” dimension of organizational climate had positive significant relationship with organizational identification ($r=0,585$; $p<.01$), had positive significant relationship with intrapreneurial behavior construct ($r=0,465$; $p<.01$). “Organizational recognition” dimension of organizational climate had positive significant relationship with organizational identification ($r=0,545$; $p<.01$), had positive significant relationship with intrapreneurial behavior construct ($r=0,418$; $p<.01$). In addition, organizational identification had positive significant relationship with intrapreneurial behavior construct ($r=0,592$; $p<.01$).

Table 2. Correlation Analysis of Variables (Pearson Correlation Analysis)

Variables:	1	2	3	4
1.Structural Support	1	0,423*	0,585*	0,465*
2.Organizational Recognition	0,423*	1	0,545*	0,418*
3.Organizational Identification	0,585*	0,545*	1	0,592*
4.Intrapreneurial Behavior	0,465*	0,418*	0,592*	1

Furthermore, the theoretical model of the study was expressed as organizational identification has a mediating role between organizational climate and intrapreneurial behaviors construct. To test this relationship, multiple regression analysis was conducted. In order to label organizational identification as a mediator between organizational climate and intrapreneurial behaviors, the following assessments were performed. Initially, independent variable's (structural support and organizational recognition) effect on the suggested mediating variable, organizational identification, (Hypothesis 2) was examined. Next, the suggested mediating variable's (organizational identification) significant effect on dependent variable (intrapreneurial behavior) (Hypothesis 3) was analyzed and independent variable's (organizational climate) significant effect on dependent variable (intrapreneurial behavior) (Hypothesis 1) was analyzed. In the final step, with the inclusion of the suggested mediating variable in the analysis, the effect of independent variable on dependent variable was tested (Hypothesis 4). According to the the three steps, the results of the regression analysis can be interpreted from the Table 3.

Table 3. Results of Regression Analysis

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables		
	1. Step	2. Step	3. Step
	Organizational Identification	Intrapreneurial Behaviors	Intrapreneurial Behaviors
Organizational Climate 1 (Structural Support)	0.427*	---	0.272*
Organizational Climate 2 (Organizational Recognition)	0.389*	---	0.783*
Organizational Identification	----	0.748*	0.683*
F-Value	36.574	173.125	45.185
R ²	0.454	0.542	0.571
* $p < 0.05$			

The first step in the model showed that organizational identification was taken as a dependent variable and organizational climate dimensions were taken as independent variables and regression analysis was applied. The results indicated that there was a significant and positive relationship between organizational identification and structural support and organizational recognition ($\beta_1 = 0.427$, $\beta_2 = 0.389$, $p < 0.05$). Hypothesis 2 was confirmed for both of the dimensions of organizational climate construct. In the second step, regression analysis was conducted in order to test whether the suggested mediating variable had an effect on the dependent variable (intrapreneurial behavior). The results revealed that organizational identification had a significant and strong effect on intrapreneurial behavior ($\beta_1 = 0.748$, $p < 0.05$). Thus, Hypothesis 3 was fully confirmed. Significant effect of both structural support and organizational recognition was found on intrapreneurial behavior ($\beta_1 = 0.463$, $\beta_2 = 0.822$, $p < 0.05$) and Hypothesis 1 was fully supported.

In the final step of the model, it was expected that in case of inclusion of the suggested mediating variable in the analysis, the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable must be lower when the mediating variable is not included. With the inclusion of organizational identification in the analysis, the effect of the structural support on intrapreneurial behavior declined ($\beta = 0.272$, $p < 0.05$) with respect to the case while organizational identification was not in the analysis ($\beta = 0.463$, $p < 0.05$). The same results were found for organizational recognition ($\beta = 0.783$, $p < 0.05$). With the inclusion of the organizational identification, the effect of organizational recognition on intrapreneurial behavior declined and organizational identification was significant with respect to the case while organizational identification was not in the analysis ($\beta = 0.822$, $p < 0.05$). Therefore, the final step of the model (Hypothesis 4) was confirmed for explaining intrapreneurial behavior. In accordance with the multiple regression analyses results, the final research model is presented with Figure 2.

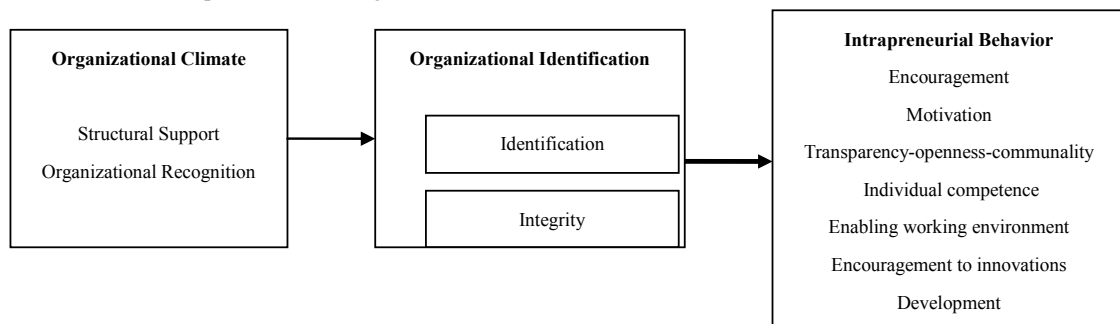


Figure 1. Final Research Model

4. Conclusion

The results of the current study have revealed that all variables of the research model had significant relationships between each other. The regression analyses reported that organizational climate dimensions of structural support and organizational recognition had significant positive effects on both organizational identification and intrapreneurial behavior construct. These findings supported the previous literature evidences which have indicated that organizational climate and organizational identification of employees had association with employee outcomes of intrapreneurial behaviors (e.g. Schollhammer, 1982; Kanter, 1984; Heinonen and Korvela, 2003; Antoncic and Hisrich, 2004; Antoncic and Zorn, 2004; Fitzsimmons et al, 2005; Antoncic, 2007; Vondey, 2010; Ergülen, 2011). Thus, the current study confirmed that organizational climate is regarded as a sense of belonging for employees and the characteristics of the structural support and recognition served by the organization which are internalized by individuals are related to a employee behavioral outcomes intrapreneurial behaviors. This result can be supported with the implications of “social exchange theory”, “social identity theory” and “organizational climate typology” since employees show intrapreneurial behaviors in accordance with their identification with the organization and how much they are structurally supported and recognized by the organization. In this study, establishing an intrapreneurial behavior in the organizations were viewed from a strategic management point of view since it has been addressed that intrapreneurial behavior has crucial role in improving organizational competitiveness and enhancing growth. As known, today’s managers have to face rapidly changing and fast-paced competitive environments and they are challenged to manage a wide variety of uncertainties. As Guth and Ginsberg (1990) indicated in 1990s, to cope with such challenges, the firms are increasingly turning to employee intrapreneurship as a means of growth and strategic orientation. Adopting intrapreneurship for establishing a long turn intrapreneurial orientation and strategic implementation has been also considered as a strategic choice (Jacobs and Kruger, 2001). Therefore, we suggest that enhancing intrapreneurial behaviors via supportive and innovative organizational climates should be seen as a crucial process among strategic planning approaches of the organizations. As such, this study integrated theory and practice from the fields of management, organizational behavior, strategic management and intrapreneurship.

However, as a limitation of this study, the current survey was performed among the employees working as lower and middle level managers and as non-managers of 5 innovative firms operating in White Good Manufacturing, Food and Drink, Telecommunication, and Textile industries in Turkey and which were selected from the official report of Turkish Time Journal (2011). Moreover, this study focused on the employees’ perspective on each of the variables of the model. Both identification and intrapreneurial behavior constructs were measured through self-report method. It is suggested that future studies can be conducted within larger samples in different sectors and different size organizations for the reliability of the findings. Moreover, it is recommended that supervisor-report method or multiple source method for measuring intrapreneurial behavior can be used in future studies. Finally, it is suggested to investigate other potential determinants and antecedents of intrapreneurial behavior such as personality factors, environmental factors, organizational factors, leadership factors etc..

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