

Evaluation of the Intergenerational Perception of the Midwifery Profession: A Cross-Sectional Research

Kuşaklararası Ebelik Meslek Algısının Değerlendirilmesi: Kesitsel Araştırma

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This study was presented as a summary orally in 6th International 7th National Midwifery Congress in September 25-27, 2023.

ABSTRACT Objective: The present study aims to evaluate the intergenerational perception of the midwifery profession. **Material and Methods:** This research was conducted cross-sectionally and descriptively. The data of the study were collected between July 21-August 31, 2023. No sample selection was made in the study and 300 midwives who agreed to participate in the study were included in the study. The Personal Information Form and the Midwifery Profession Perception Scale (MPPS) were used in data collection. **Results:** The majority of the midwives who participated in the study were millennials. It was found that 49.3% of the midwives worked in the hospital, 73% had a bachelor's degree, and 29.7% had worked in the profession for 16 years or more. 73.9% of midwives in generation X, 68.4% of midwives in generation Y, and 80.0% of midwives in generation Z stated that they chose the profession willingly. 52.2% of midwives in generation X did not find the profession economically satisfactor. A statistically significant difference was found in the total scores of the MPPS according to the generations of midwives participating in the study ($p<0.05$). The role perception sub-dimension score of midwives in generation s X and Z was found to be significantly higher than midwives in generation Y ($p<0.05$). **Conclusion:** As a result of the research; positive job perception and role perception are higher in generation X than in generations Y and Z.

ÖZET Amaç: Bu araştırmanın amacı, kuşaklararası ebelik meslek algısını değerlendirmektir. **Gereç ve Yöntemler:** Bu araştırma, kesitsel ve tanımlayıcı olarak gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırmanın verileri 21 Temmuz-31 Ağustos 2023 tarihleri arasında toplanmıştır. Araştırmada, örneklem seçimine gidilmemiş araştırmaya katılmayı kabul eden 300 ebe araştırmaya dâhil edilmiştir. Verilerin toplanmasında Kişisel Bilgi Formu ve Ebelik Meslek Algısı Ölçeği [Midwifery Profession Perception Scale (MPPS)] Kullanılmıştır. **Bulgular:** Araştırmaya katılan ebelerin büyük bir çoğunluğunu Y kuşağı oluşturmaktadır. Ebelerin %49,3'ünün hastanede çalıştığı, %73'ünün lisans mezunu olduğu, %29,7'sinin meslekte 16 yıl ve üzerinde çalıştığı belirlenmiştir. X kuşağındaki ebelerin %73,9'u, Y kuşağındaki ebelerin %68,4'ü ve Z kuşağındaki ebelerin %80,0'ı mesleği isteyerek seçtiğini belirtmiştir. X kuşağındaki ebelerin %52,2'si mesleği ekonomik açıdan tatminkâr bulmamıştır. Araştırmaya katılan ebelerin kuşaklarına göre MPPS toplam puanı açısından istatistiksel olarak anlamlı düzeyde farklılık gösterdiği belirlenmiştir ($p<0,05$). X ve Z kuşağındaki ebelerin rol algısı alt boyutu puanının, Y kuşağındaki ebeler göre anlamlı düzeyde daha yüksek olduğu saptanmıştır ($p<0,05$). **Sonuç:** Araştırmanın sonucunda; olumlu meslek algısı ve rol algısı Y ve Z kuşağına göre X kuşağında daha yüksektir.

Keywords: Midwifery; professional; generation effect

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ebelik; mesleki; kuşak etkisi

The concept of generation is a definition made for those who were born in the same period, formed under the influence of economic and social move-

ments, or are members of a certain social group.¹ It is considered that generations cover a 20-25-year biological process in sociological terms.²

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The environment in which generations live, their upbringing styles, their experiences, and the technological changes they face are reflected in their emotions, thoughts, and behaviors, causing differences among generations.^{1,3,4} For this reason, generations have different characters, professional futures, and social lives.^{1,5}

Different generations work together in our present day (generations X, Y, and Z).⁶ Each generation might have different values, desires, attitudes, needs, and expectations. The basic philosophy of generation X is to work to live. Work-life balance is important for this generation. They strive to develop their skills to improve their careers.⁶⁻⁸ Individuals in generation Y are more inclined to technology and add fun to the work environment.^{9,10} generation Z individuals are those who have been acquainted with technology since the moment they were born and spend more time on social media and digital games, thus spending less time on reading and researching.^{11,12} For generation Z, who embrace working from home and flexibly in their working lives, working is considered a guarantee of the future.¹³

It is very important for generations that have various characteristics to work together in agreement. Therefore, it is necessary to uncover the differences among generations. Understanding generational differences in the work environment, and evaluating the expectations of employees regarding work and motivation-related problems can be useful for resolving conflicts originating from generational differences and for a harmonious work environment.^{14,15} The basis of these conflicts is that each generation has different attitudes and behaviors because of different opportunities of the period they live in, the different cultures they grow up in, and the differences in their perceptions and judgments.¹⁶

One of the conditions needed for adaptation to the profession, professional development, and a productive work setting in the work environment is to have positive opinions and attitudes toward the profession.^{17,18} In this context, the perception of a profession is defined as the feelings, attitudes, behaviors, and worldviews of individuals toward a profession. The perception of the profession also involves the

“professional competencies” and “professional status” concepts.^{19,20}

Midwives, who have important roles in health-care services, also have important perceptions and opinions about their profession which might affect their motivation, place in society and professional performance.^{19,21} In previous studies conducted to date, the relationship between social intelligence, emotional intelligence and professional perception of midwifery students, their metaphors for midwives and the midwifery profession, their perception of the profession, career plans, and perspectives on their profession, how they perceive their profession and their expectations from the future, and their perceptions of the profession and social intelligence levels were investigated.²¹⁻²⁸ No study was detected evaluating the perception of different generations about the midwifery profession. In our present day, there are generations X, Y, and Z who practice the profession of midwifery. The present study aimed to determine intergenerational professional perception.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

TYPE OF THE STUDY

The present study had a cross-sectional and descriptive design.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE OF THE STUDY

The population of the study consisted of 451 midwives affiliated with a provincial healthcare directorate in the southeast of Türkiye. No sample selection was made in the study, and 300 midwives who were not on leave during the study period (July 21, 2023-August 31, 2023) and agreed to participate in the study were included.

DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

The Personal Information Form and the Midwifery Profession Perception Scale (MPPS) were used to collect the data in the study.

Personal Information Form

The Personal Information Form had 10 questions on the sociodemographic characteristics (marital status, having children, educational status, generations etc.)

and professional characteristics (working duration in the profession, choosing the profession willingly, job contract status, working method, etc.) of midwives.^{3-5,11,19}

Midwifery Profession Perception Scale

MPPS was developed by Bilgin and Doğan Merih in 2021.¹⁹ The scale consists of 16 items and 3 sub-dimensions. The sub-dimensions of the scale are role perception, professionalism perception, and duty-responsibility perception. The scale items are in a 5-point Likert style and score between 16-80. Increased scores obtained on the scale show that the perception of the profession and professional views increase positively. The Cronbach's alpha value of MPPS was determined as 0.86.¹⁹ In the present study, Cronbach's alpha value for the overall MPPS was calculated as 0.89. The Cronbach's alpha value of the "role perception" sub-dimension of the MPPS was 0.87. It was 0.80 for the "professionalism perception" sub-dimension and 0.71 for the "task-responsibility perception" sub-dimension.-

DATA COLLECTION

The data of the study were collected by the researcher through face-to-face interviews with midwives between July 21, 2023-August 31, 2023. The data of the study were collected in Diyarbakır the administration of the questionnaires took approximately 10 minutes. The working hours of the midwives were taken into consideration while collecting the data. Hours when there were no treatments and practices were preferred.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data obtained from the questionnaire form and scales were analyzed with the SPSS (ver: 23.0) software. The chi-square analysis was used to evaluate the descriptive characteristics of midwives. To evaluate the normal distribution of the data obtained from the scales and sub-dimensions, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used. The mean score, standard deviation, range value, maximum and minimum values of the scales and their sub-dimensions were determined. The internal consistency coefficient of the scales and their sub-dimensions, Cronbach alpha coefficient, was calculated with reliability analysis. The

two way analysis of variance was used in the data that were normally distributed to compare whether there was a difference between the means in independent groups. In the evaluation of the data, $p < 0.05$ was accepted as the significance level.

ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

Before starting the study, permissions were obtained from the Non-Interventional Clinical Research Ethics Committee of the Atatürk University and from the institutions where the study would be conducted (date: March 30, 2023; no: B.30.2.ATA.0.01.00/215). Before collecting the study data, all the midwives were informed about the purpose of the study, and those who agreed to participate were included in the study. The midwives were told that their personal information would be kept confidential. The principles of the Declaration of Helsinki were followed at every stage of the study.

RESULTS

It was found that 78% of the midwives participating in the study were from the Y generation, 49.3% worked in hospitals, 56.7% were married, 53.7% had children, 29.7% had worked in the profession for 16 years or more, 73% had a bachelor's degree, 45.3% did not find their profession economically satisfying at all, 69.3% worked all day, 70% chose the profession willingly, and 77.3% worked in a permanent position (Table 1).

It was found that 45.7% of the midwives in generation X worked in hospitals, 78.3% were married, 91.3% had children, 95.7% had worked in their profession for 16 years or more, 60.9% had a bachelor's degree, 52.2% found their profession economically unsatisfactory, 80.4% worked continuously during the day, 73.9% chose the profession willingly, and 93.5% worked in a permanent position. Also, 48.7% of the midwives in generation Y worked in hospitals, 55.1% were married, 51% had children, 35% had worked in their profession for 16 years or more, 73.5% had a bachelor's degree, 44.4% found their profession economically unsatisfactory, 67.9% worked continuously during the day, 68.4% chose the profession willingly, and 77.4% worked in a permanent position. A total of 65% of the midwives in generation Z worked in hos-

TABLE 1: The distribution of the descriptive characteristics of the midwives (n=300)

Characteristics	n	%
Generations		
Generation X	46	15.3
Generation Y	234	78.0
Generation Z	20	6.7
Workplace		
District healthcare directorate	64	21.3
Hospital	148	49.3
Family healthcare center	88	29.4
Marital status		
Married	170	56.7
Single	130	43.3
Having children		
Yes	161	53.7
No	139	46.3
Working duration in the profession		
1-5 years	86	28.7
6-10 years	83	27.6
11-15 years	42	14.0
16 years and above	89	29.7
Educational status		
Vocational high school	21	7.0
Associate degree	44	14.7
Undergraduate	219	73.0
Postgraduate	16	5.3
Economic satisfaction		
Very good	8	2.7
Moderate	101	33.7
Little	55	18.3
None at all	136	45.3
Working method		
Continuous daytime	208	69.3
Shift	80	26.7
Other	12	4.0
Choosing the profession willingly		
Yes	210	70.0
No	90	30.0
Job contract status		
Regular	232	77.3
Contractual	56	18.7
Other	12	4.0

pitals, 75% were married, 90% did not have children, 95% had been working in the profession for 1-5 years, 95.5% had a bachelor's degree, 40% did not find their profession economically satisfying at all, 60% worked continuously during the day, 80% chose the profession willingly and 45% worked in a permanent position. Significant differences were detected in the

marital status, employment status, and position of the midwives according to their generations ($p<0.05$), but there were no significant differences in the institution where the midwives worked according to their generations, having children, educational status, economic satisfaction of the profession, working style and choosing the profession willingly ($p>0.05$) (Table 2).

The midwives in generation X received an average score of 72.82 ± 7.04 on the MPPS, those in generation Y received an average score of 69.94 ± 7.77 , and those in generation Z received an average score of 72.75 ± 6.00 . The midwives in generation X had the highest positive perception of their profession, while those in generation Y had the lowest perception. A statistically significant difference was detected in the total score of the MPPS according to the generations of midwives participating in the study ($p=0.032$). According to the advanced analysis (Tukey "post hoc" test) conducted to determine the difference, it was found that the total score of the MPPS of the midwives in generation X was higher than that of the midwives in generation Y (Table 3).

The midwives in generation X received an average of 27.89 ± 2.78 points from the role perception sub-dimension, those in generation Y received an average of 26.47 ± 3.25 points, and those in generation Z received an average of 27.20 ± 3.01 points. The midwives' role perception sub-dimension score was highest in generation X. A statistically significant difference was detected in the role perception sub-dimension score according to the generations of the midwives participating in the study ($p=0.018$). Based on the results of the advanced analysis (Tukey "post hoc" test) conducted to determine which group the difference originated from, it was found that the difference between the groups originated from the midwives in generation Y (Table 3).

It was also found that the midwives in generation X received an average of 26.84 ± 3.64 points from the perception of professionalism sub-dimension, those in generation Y received an average of 26.03 ± 3.43 points, and those in generation Z received an average of 27.15 ± 2.75 points. The midwives in generation X received an average of 18.08 ± 2.16 points from the perception of duty-responsibility sub-

TABLE 2: The comparison of the descriptive characteristics of the midwives according to their generations (n=300)

Characteristics	Generation X (n=46)		Generation Y (n=234)		Generation Z (n=20)		Test value Significance level
	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Institution worked							
Family healthcare center	15	32.6	68	29.1	5	25.0	$\chi^2=2.736$
District healthcare directorate	10	21.7	52	22.2	2	10.0	p=0.603
Hospital	21	45.7	114	48.7	13	65.0	
Marital status							
Married	36	78.3	129	55.1	5	25.0	$\chi^2=17.128$
Single	10	21.7	105	44.9	15	75.0	p<0.001
Having a child							
Yes	42	91.3	118	51.0	2	10.0	$\chi^2=42.808$
No	4	8.7	117	49.0	18	90.0	p<0.001
Working hours							
1-5 years	0	0.0	67	28.6	19	95.0	$\chi^2=154.425$
6-10 years	0	0.0	82	35.0	1	5.0	
11-15 years	2	4.3	40	17.1	0	0.0	
16 years and above	44	95.7	45	19.2	0	0.0	
Educational status							
Vocational high school	5	10.9	15	6.4	1	5.0	$\chi^2=9.191$
Associate degree	10	21.7	34	14.5	0	0.0	
Undergraduate	28	60.9	172	73.5	19	95.0	
Postgraduate	3	6.5	13	5.6	0	0.0	
Economic satisfaction							
Very good	3	6.5	5	21.1	0	0.0	$\chi^2=6.998$
Moderate	15	32.6	78	23.3	8	40.0	
Little	4	8.7	47	20.1	4	20.0	
None at all	24	52.2	104	44.4	8	40.0	
Working method							
Continuous daytime	37	80.4	159	67.9	12	60.0	$\chi^2=5.829$
Shift	7	15.2	67	28.6	6	30.0	
Other	2	4.4	8	3.4	2	10.0	
Choosing the profession willingly							
Yes	34	73.9	160	68.4	16	80.0	$\chi^2=1.582$
No	12	26.1	74	31.6	4	20.0	

 χ^2 : chi-square test value**TABLE 3:** The comparison of the MPPS and sub-dimensions of midwives according to generations (n=300)

MPPS and its sub-dimensions	Generation X ^a (n=46) $\bar{X}\pm SD$	Generation Y ^b (n=234) $\bar{X}\pm SD$	Generation Z ^c (n=20) $\bar{X}\pm SD$	Minimum	Maximum	Test value (F) Significance level (p value)
Role perception	27.89±2.78	26.47±3.25	27.20±3.01	18.00	30.00	F=4.085 p=0.018*
Perception of professionalism	26.84±3.64	26.03±3.43	27.15±2.75	12.00	30.00	F=1.835 p=0.161
Perception of duty and responsibility	18.08±2.16	17.43±2.42	18.10±2.51	4.00	20.00	F=1.952 p=0.144
MPPS total	72.82±7.04	69.94±7.77	72.75±6.00	48.00	80.00	F=3.474 p=0.032* Difference: a>b

*p<0.05; F: Analysis of variance test value, differences between groups were determined by Tukey "post hoc" test. MPPS: Midwifery Profession Perception Scale; SD: Standard deviation

dimension, those in generation Y received an average of 17.43 ± 2.42 points, and those in generation Z received an average of 18.10 ± 2.51 points. The midwives in generation X had the highest scores for perception of professionalism and perception of duty-responsibility, while those in generation Y had the lowest scores for perception of professionalism and perception of duty-responsibility. There were no statistically significant differences in the scores of the perception of professionalism sub-dimension and the

perception of duty-responsibility sub-dimension according to the generations of midwives participating in the study ($p > 0.05$) (Table 3).

There were no statistically significant differences between the groups in terms of the total MPPS score of the midwives in the X, Y, and Z generations, in terms of the institution worked in, marital status, having children, length of service in the profession, working style, choosing the profession willingly and the position worked in (Table 4).

TABLE 4: Comparison of MPPS mean scores of the midwives in generations x, y, and z based on descriptive characteristics (n=300)

Descriptive characteristics	MPPS total score			Test value (F) Significance level (p value) Eta square (η^2)
	Generation X (n=46) $\bar{X} \pm SD$	Generation Y (n=234) $\bar{X} \pm SD$	Generation Z (n=20) $\bar{X} \pm SD$	
Institution worked				
Family healthcare center	68.53 \pm 7.88	66.86 \pm 7.00	71.80 \pm 8.37	F=1.563
District healthcare directorate	73.90 \pm 6.70	73.32 \pm 6.01	67.00 \pm 4.24	p=0.184
Hospital	75.38 \pm 5.18	70.22 \pm 8.24	73.53 \pm 5.07	η^2 =0.021
Marital status				
Married	72.19 \pm 7.35	70.18 \pm 7.73	71.40 \pm 4.33	F=0.788
Single	75.10 \pm 5.52	69.63 \pm 7.84	72.80 \pm 6.55	p=0.456
				η^2 =0.005
Having a child				
Yes	72.92 \pm 7.13	70.71 \pm 7.53	74.50 \pm 6.36	F=0.013
No	71.75 \pm 6.99	69.16 \pm 7.95	72.22 \pm 6.11	p=0.987
				η^2 =0.001
Working time in the profession				
1-5 years	0	67.82 \pm 7.62	72.57 \pm 6.14	F=0.713
6-10 years	0	69.69 \pm 8.04	70.00 \pm 0.00	p=0.494
11-15 years	75.00 \pm 7.07	69.95 \pm 7.80	0	η^2 =0.005
16 years and above	72.72 \pm 7.11	73.53 \pm 6.27	0	
Educational status				
Vocational high school	74.40 \pm 9.52	70.60 \pm 8.12	70.00 \pm 0.00	F=0.488
Associate degree	71.50 \pm 6.48	71.97 \pm 7.14	0	p=0.745
Undergraduate	72.64 \pm 7.06	69.19 \pm 7.76	72.57 \pm 6.14	η^2 =0.007
Postgraduate	76.33 \pm 6.35	73.69 \pm 7.84	0	
Economical satisfaction				
Very good	69.66 \pm 7.02	63.40 \pm 8.20	0	F=0.793
Moderate	71.40 \pm 8.42	69.12 \pm 8.28	70.00 \pm 5.15	p=0.556
Little	77.25 \pm 3.20	68.68 \pm 6.49	75.00 \pm 3.91	η^2 =0.014
Not satisfactory at all	73.37 \pm 6.48	71.43 \pm 7.63	73.62 \pm 7.24	
Working method				
Continuous daytime	72.62 \pm 7.58	70.00 \pm 7.39	70.33 \pm 6.42	F=0.614
Shift	73.00 \pm 4.89	69.82 \pm 8.51	75.50 \pm 3.93	p=0.653
Other	76.00 \pm 0.00	69.75 \pm 9.57	76.00 \pm 4.24	η^2 =0.008
Choosing the profession Willingly				
Yes	72.47 \pm 7.35	70.30 \pm 7.71	73.37 \pm 6.05	F=0.810
No	73.83 \pm 6.29	69.16 \pm 7.89	68.75 \pm 4.71	p=0.446
				η^2 =0.005

*p<0.05, the comparison between the groups was made by using two-way analysis of variance. MPPS: Midwifery Profession Perception Scale; SD: Standard deviation

DISCUSSION

In the study where we evaluated generations X, Y and Z, there is no difference in choosing a profession willingly between the generations. As stated in the literature, this might have occurred because generations have different characters, professional futures, and social lives.^{1,5} The basic philosophy of generation X is to work to live. This generation “enjoys the profession they have to live”. Similar norms of generation X members include being goal and task-oriented, having high professional motivation, wanting flexibility and control in business life, and having the ability to solve their problems.^{5,29} Generation Y individuals are more inclined to technology and add fun to the work environment.^{9,10} Generation Z individuals who have been acquainted with technology since the moment they were born spend less time reading and researching because they spend more time on social media and digital games.^{11,12} Generation Z adopts working from home and working flexibly in their working lives.¹³ The rate of choosing the profession willingly has been high in all 3 generations. It is considered that the high rate of choosing the profession willingly among generations may be because of the existence of flexible working in the profession and the inclusion of developing technology in the health system. It may also be because there are common characteristics that will enable the three generations of the midwifery profession to work together.

A significant difference was detected between the generations with the role perception sub-dimension of the MPPS scale, and it was found that the difference occurred because of generation Y. Generation Y's score was lower than the other 2 generations. When the characteristics specific to generation X are considered, being goal and task-oriented, having high work motivation, and being loyal to the institution might have caused the role perception to be higher than generation Y.^{5,11,29}

It has been found that the perception of professionalism is highest in generation Z. Generation Z started using high-tech devices from the moment they were born. For this reason, it is the most connected and therefore collaborative, open-minded, and cre-

ative generation on earth.³⁰ The fact that generation Z grew up in the technological age and the increasing use of technology in healthcare services might be effective in increasing the perception of the role of this generation.¹¹

In all 3 generations, the perception of professionalism, duty, and responsibility had average high scores. This might have been affected by the high rate of choosing the profession willingly. Also, the ability to solve individual problems, which are among the characteristics of generation X, and being goal and task-oriented are important characteristics in performing the midwifery profession. Generations Y and Z are also individuals who keep up with technological developments and like to use them. The rapid inclusion of developing technology in the healthcare field and the use of these technological developments in the midwifery profession might have been effective in the high perception of professionalism, duty, and responsibility in these 3 generations.

The perception of the profession was also high in the groups that said “yes” and “no” to the condition of choosing the profession willingly. A positive perception of the profession is an important factor in individuals' adoption of their profession. The high average score of the perception of the profession might also be an indication that all midwives participating in the study embraced their profession. Midwifery integrates science, art, and ethical values at the most critical moments of life.^{31,32} The fact that the midwifery profession is at the center of human life might have been effective in the high perception of the profession and whether or not they chose the profession willingly. The profession of midwifery requires direct communication with the group they provide care for.³³ Also, the fact that the profession is at the center of maternal and child healthcare might have been effective in not revealing any intergenerational differences.

LIMITATIONS

The limitation of the study was that it was conducted in one city and the data were collected only from the midwives who agreed to participate in the study.

CONCLUSION

The midwives who participated in the study differed according to their generations. Developing a positive perception of the profession in all generations can increase the status of the profession in society and professional efficiency. It can also prevent intergenerational conflicts. For this reason, it is recommended that in-service training be provided regarding the profession that can create a positive perception of the profession and that courses that will affect the perception of the profession be added to the midwifery curriculum for four years.

Source of Finance

During this study, no financial or spiritual support was received neither from any pharmaceutical company that has a direct connection with the research subject, nor from a company that pro-

vides or produces medical instruments and materials which may negatively affect the evaluation process of this study.

Conflict of Interest

No conflicts of interest between the authors and / or family members of the scientific and medical committee members or members of the potential conflicts of interest, counseling, expertise, working conditions, share holding and similar situations in any firm.

Authorship Contributions

Idea/Concept: Safiye Ağapınar Şahin, Sibel Öztürk; **Design:** Safiye Ağapınar Şahin; **Control/Supervision:** Sibel Öztürk; **Data Collection and/or Processing:** Ayşe Tunç Koçak; **Analysis and/or Interpretation:** Safiye Ağapınar Şahin, Sibel Öztürk; **Literature Review:** Safiye Ağapınar Şahin; **Writing the Article:** Safiye Ağapınar Şahin, Sibel Öztürk; **Critical Review:** Sibel Öztürk; **References and Fundings:** Safiye Ağapınar Şahin, Sibel Öztürk; **Materials:** Ayşe Tunç Koçak, Safiye Ağapınar Şahin, Sibel Öztürk.

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