

A STUDY ON THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT, ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTIFICATION, AND ORGANIZATION-BASED SELF-ESTEEM: A CASE STUDY OF MINISTRY OF EDUCATION EMPLOYEES

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ABSTRACT

Organizational identification of the employees has a significant impact on the behaviors and attitudes of the organization's employees. Therefore, the managers need to strengthen the employees' organizational identification in order to overcome the environmental challenges. In fact, lack of sense of organizational identification is a huge obstacle on achieving the organization's goals. Accordingly, understanding the effective factors on organizational identification has become a main task for the organizations' managers. The current study aimed at evaluating the impacts of psychological empowerment on the employees' organizational identification with regards to intermediary role of organization-based self-esteem.

This study is of correlative type. The statistical population of the study included the employees of ministry of education in Tehran. Using the random sampling method, 306 employees were chosen. After designing the research instrument and confirmation of its validity and reliability, the Spearman test and structural equations model was used for data analysis. According to the results, the psychological empowerment was effective as an independent variable on organization-based self-esteem as an intermediary variable, and on organizational identification as dependent variable.

Keywords: organizational identification, psychological empowerment, organization-based self-esteem, empowerment

INTRODUCTION

The teachers face various challenges such as lack of occupational development opportunities and environmental changes due to continuous improvements of the government which have affected the school's system. The expectations from schools and the teachers have become higher and more complex. Therefore, the teachers are facing more responsibilities than ever. In terms of the students' legal responsibilities, they are responsible for the goals and welfare, and these challenges affect the employees' identification (Guglielmi et al, 2014). The organizational identification is effective on most behaviors and attitudes of organization's employees. For instance, Haslam et al. (2004) claimed that without a sense of identification between the employees and the organization, the efficient organizational relations, the effective planning, and leadership will not exist (Haslam, 2004). As Albert puts it, the sense of identity in an organization is similar to a rudder for sailing in hard waters which helps the organization to survive in harsh and critical conditions (Albert et al., 2000). Riketta, in a meta-analysis study, has stated that organizational identification is related to many behaviors and occupational attitudes. The organizational identification leads to increase in job satisfaction, job attachment, and organizational commitment, and reduces the employees' tendency for desertion (Nakara, 2011).

Hongwey concluded that the employees 'sense of identity with organization has a positive impact on financial performance of travel agencies, since it increases the customers' satisfaction and their loyalty (Hey Hongwey, 2013). The employees who feel identity create a mechanism based on which, they continue working with a high proficiency despite the top managers' dissatisfaction (Dexter et al., 2012). Therefore, the employees who feel identity with the organization, perform well even in presence of bad organizational condition and abusive supervisors (ibid and also they facilitate sharing of knowledge inside the organization (Carmeli, 2010). Several studies have confirmed the effectiveness of organizational identification on sellers' behavior (Rahim Nia, 2011), the organization's goals (Findik, 2012), supporting the organization (Nakra, 2006), and creativity in the organization (Greenberg, 2011).

So far, the researchers have sought to identify the effective factors on organizational identification, but none have attempted to evaluate the relationship between psychological empowerment and the employees' identification. Hongwey (2013) in a meta-analysis asserts that one of the current gaps in the concept of organizational identification is the impact of psychological empowerment on the employees' organizational identification. Moreover, studying the local researches reveals that there is no literature on this regard. In other words, this subject is new among the conducted researches and there are no research-based studies conducted on the relationship between employees' organizational identification and their empowerment and the intermediary role of self-esteem, neither locally nor in other countries. Therefore, the current study lead to knowledge-enhancement in management section and its main objective is "*evaluation of the relationship between organizational identification, psychological empowerment of the employees, and intermediary role of organization-based self-esteem in ministry of education employees*".

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Organizational Identification

Organizational identification refers to cognitive link between organization's identity and employee's identity (Rastegar, 2012). This theory states that affiliation and attachment of the employees to their organizations make them define themselves based on the organization's characteristics and in other words find their identity within their organizations (Allahyari, 2012). Gkorezis et al define organizational identity as people's attachment to an organization in a way the individuals assume themselves as the very organization (Gkorezis et al, 2001). Accordingly, the individual is identified through the organization and the organization provides his identity (Çeri-Booms, 2012). The organization's characteristics are transferred to the individual and that is why whatever that threatens the organization is also deemed as threat for the employees (Kalemci, 2009).

The social identification is formed based on the theory of social identity which brings up two motivations:

Self-classification: people classify others as insiders and outsiders based on perceived similarities and differences. Moreover, through taking such classifications, people are depersonalized and are included in certain groups and are identified just as distinct entities different from their collective and group "selves".

The need for promoting the self or self-enhancement, since people like to earn more credit and reputation through joining a larger group (Allahyari, 2012). The social identity theory defines identification as having emotional and cognitive components. The cognitive component of identification is the limit to which an individual feels attached to an

organization and perceives himself a member of that organization. The emotional component is the sense of pride in being a member of the organization (Van Riel, 2011).

Empowerment

The term “empowerment” was introduced to management since the middle of 20th century with the emergence of human relationships movement for promoting the human conditions (Littrell, 2007). They dealt with concepts such as people’s tendency for self-controlling experience, mastery motivation, effect motivation, and admiring themselves freedom in their studies. All these studies root back to empowerment (having the power and mastery) versus powerlessness and misery (Conger et al, 1998).

Empowerment means powering and helping people for enhancing self-confidence and overcoming powerlessness and misery (Menon et al, 2002). Also, it is creation of internal motivation and opportunities for people in order to enable them originate good ideas and put them in action (Nesan et al, 2002).

Studies in the field of empowerment divide it into two “structural” and “psychological” approaches (Roy et al, 2002), though the relationship between organizational identification and psychological approach of empowerment is the main focus of the current study.

Meantime, regarding the importance of Spreitzer researches (as the basis for hundreds of researches in the last 20 years). Spreitzer (1994) model introduces four aspects for psychological empowerment. These aspects are consistent with those of Thomas & welthous (1990) (Rapp et al, 2006).

Self-Efficacy (competence): it is the necessary ability and expertise to perform the job successfully; a sense of confidence in well accomplishment of the tasks (Amichai et al, 2008).

Self- Determination (optionality): it is the individual’s feeling for optionality and being Initiative to regulate the activities, independence and continuity in the processes (Rapp et al, 2006).

Personal acceptance of the consequence (effectiveness): it is the extent of an individual’s authority and influence on the strategic, administrative, or operational consequences of job activities (Dimitriades et al, 2005).

Sense of Meaningfulness (being valuable): it is the extent of occupational or job objectives value, the person is judged on personal ideals or standards (Thomas, 1990).

Organizational Self-confidence

Organizational self-confidence is the image about personal value based on self-assessment and the organizational self-confidence is the value people perceive of themselves as the active members of organizational context (Creetner, 2011). Self-confidence is a degree to which people introduce themselves as a competent person, satisfying their needs (Pearse & Gardner, 2004). The organizational self-confidence is the degree to which the employees perceive of them as an important, meaningful, influential, and valuable person to the company they are working in (Pearse et al).

The organization-based self-esteem is developed in the social context of the organization and the outcome of the messages received from others about his competencies. The organization-based self-esteem is increased when the managers create encouraging challenges and opportunities. It is also improved when the job is complicated and challenging (Phillips,

2001). Employees find themselves important, valuable, and influential in the organizational context in which significant attention is paid to self-esteem (Creetner, 2011).

In this case, the employees' organization-based self-esteem is increased. Therefore, increasing the psychological empowerment of the employees lead to increase in their organization-based self-esteem, so the hypothesizes of the study is provided as follows:

Hypothesis 1: the psychological empowerment is effective on employees' organization-based self-esteem.

Hypothesis 2: the psychological empowerment is effective on organizational identification.

Hypothesis 3: the organization-based self-esteem has an intermediary role in the relationship between psychological empowerment and organizational identification.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research method was correlation-descriptive field type and in terms of time, it is a cross-sectional research. The statistical population of the study was the ministry of education staff. For calculation of the sample size, firstly a pilot study was conducted distributing the questionnaires between 30 samples in the statistical population and using ANOVA in 95% significance level and 5% error tolerance interval, the sample size was calculated as 300 participants and 350 questionnaires were distributed. Ultimately, 306 questionnaires were usable. The conceptual model of the current study included the aspects of feeling such as self-effectiveness, self-determination, self-acceptance of the result, being meaningful (for evaluation of psychological empowerment) and aspects of membership, loyalty, and similarity (for evaluation of organizational identification), besides organization-based self-esteem as an intermediary variable which is divided into two components of self-efficacy and the feeling of being valuable for the organization. The following figure represents the research conceptual model.

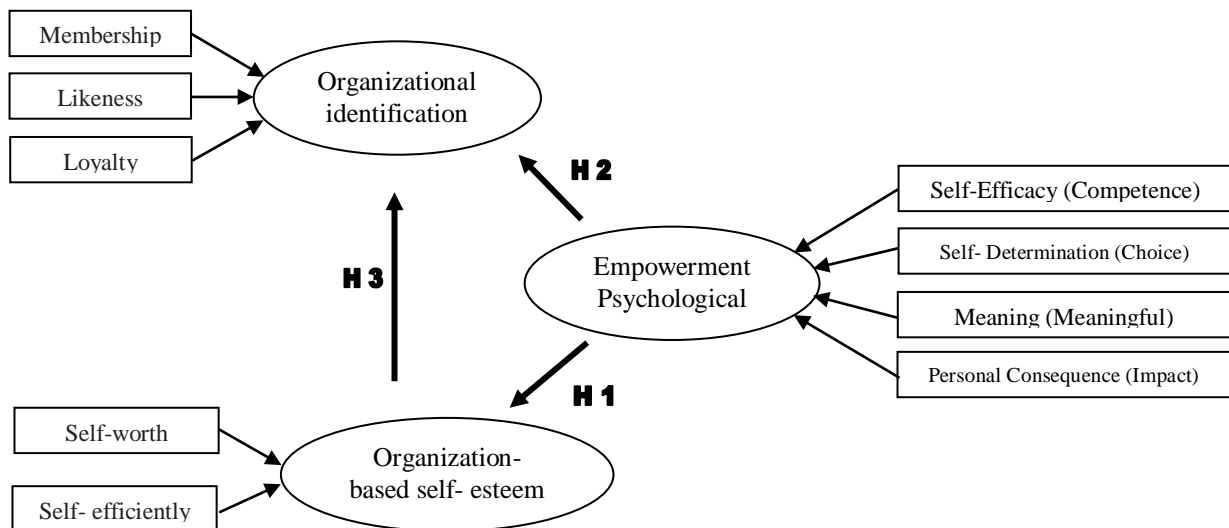


Figure 1: Conceptual model of research variables relationships

Data Collection Instrument, Validity, Reliability

The main data collection instrument for the current study was a questionnaire including 31 questions which were set as follows, after extensive research and using the experts' opinions:

- i. Psychological empowerment questionnaire (Spreitz)
- ii. Organizational identification questionnaire (Cheney)

iii. Organization-based self-esteem (Pierce)

Spreitz has designed a questionnaire for measuring psychological empowerment with four aspects of self-effectiveness feeling, self-organizing feeling, personal acceptance of the result, feeling of being meaningful with each having four questions.

Cheney in his organizational identification questionnaire has considered three aspects of membership, loyalty, and similarity again with 4 questions each.

Pierce et al have designed an organization-based self-esteem questionnaire with 7 questions such as am I valuable? Am I counted on? Am I trusted in this organization? Can I make a difference?

The reliability of the questionnaire was determined by alpha-Cronbach test as 0.84 for psychological empowerment component with 11 questions, 0.85 for organizational identification with 13 questions, and 0.77 for organization-based self-esteem with 7 questions. It was 0.92 for the whole questionnaire with 31 questions. Also, for testing the validity of the questionnaire, both content and factor reliability were used. The experts' ideas have been used for evaluating the questionnaire's content reliability. At this stage, the needed modifications were applied after collecting their opinions. The questionnaire factor reliability test was done through confirmatory factor analysis using LISREL software. The results indicated that the research variables measuring model is appropriate. The Chi2 value, RMSEA value, and ratio of Chi2/DF were also lower than 3 and their AGFA and GFI were higher than 90%, too. All the t-values were significant and higher than 3. All these results are indicative of the high reliability of the questionnaire used for this study.

FINDINGS

For testing the hypotheses, the Pearson Test was used considering the normality of the data. The correlation coefficients are: psychological empowerment and organization-based self-esteem (0.675), organization-based self-esteem and organizational identification (0.654), and psychological empowerment and organizational identification (0.664). Structural equation method using LISREL software was utilized for modeling the relationships between the variables. Several indices are used for determining the model fitting criteria and the results for the most important indices are shown in the below table. According to the mentioned table, the fitting indices confirm the conceptual model of the study.

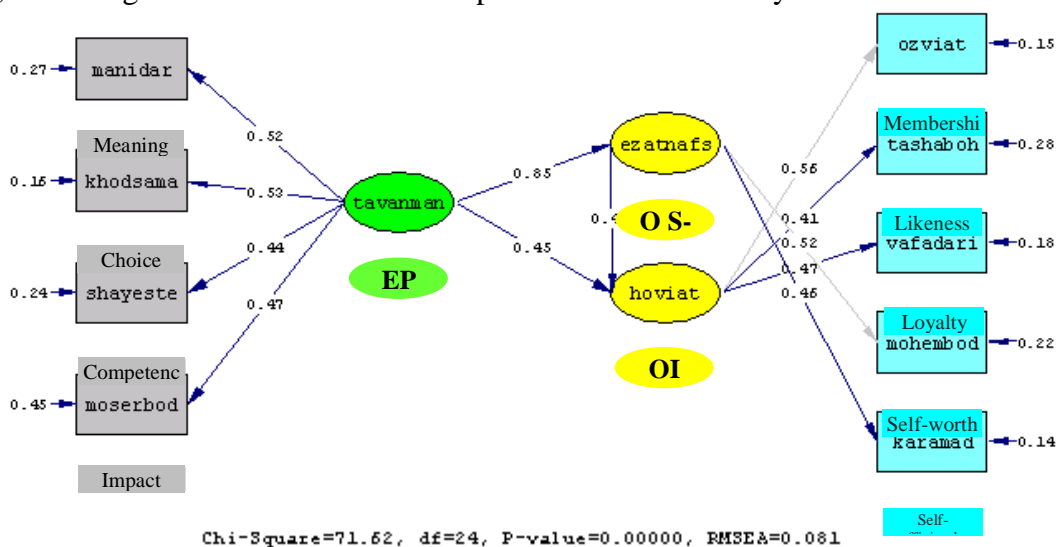


Figure 2: Conceptual model of the study in the standard estimation state

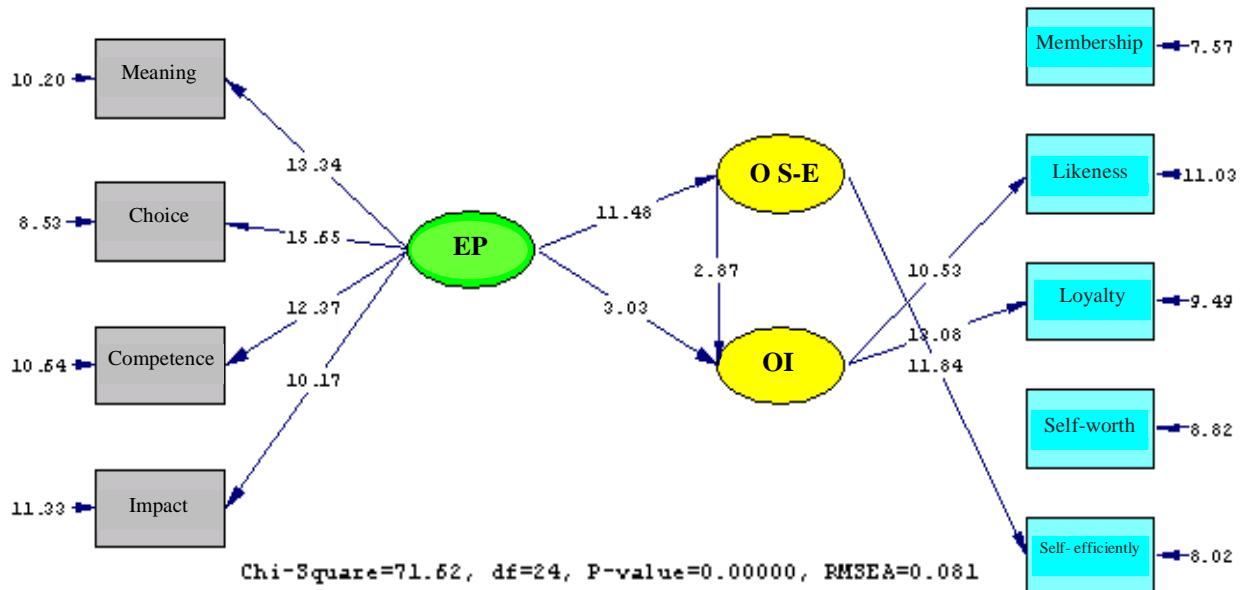


Table 1. Conceptual model fitting indices

Full Title Index	index statistics	Standard rate	observed	Consequently
ChiSquare Divided to Degree of Freedom	χ^2 / df	$\chi^2 / df < 3$	71.62/24=2/98	Perfectfit
Significance Level	P-Value	P-Value > 0.05	0/ 000	Perfectfit
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation	RMSEA	RMSEA < 0.09	0/081	Perfectfit
Goodness of Fit Index	GFI	GFI > 0.9	0/95	Perfectfit
Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index	AGFI	AGFI > 0.9	0/91	Perfectfit
Root Mean Square Residual	RMR	RMR < 0.09	0/021	Perfectfit
Comparative Fit Index	CFI	CFI > 0.9	0/98	Perfectfit
Incremental Fit Index	IFI	IFI > 0.9	0/98	Perfectfit
Normed Fit Index	NFI	NFI > 0.9	0/97	Perfectfit

Since the observed collection of the path and data figure is well fit, it can be inferred that presence and reality of this graph is significant and the main hypothesis of the study (based on the main question) is verified. The results are indicative of its proper evaluation in estimating the relationship between the three variables. Other results of fitting tests are shown in the model. The hypothesis was tested using LISREL software and the results are provided in the following table.

Table 2. Research hypotheses testing results

Main Hypothesis	t- Value	R	Consequently
Empowerment Psychological on Organization-based self- esteem	11/48	0/72	Confirmation
Empowerment Psychological on Organizational identification	12/80	0/70	Confirmation
Organization-based self- esteem on Organizational identification (By Empowerment Psychological)	2/87 3/03	0/75	Confirmation

The above figures show the LISREL parameters estimation in the tested model and indicate that they are significant in causal relationship between the variable and their intensity. In this model, the psychological empowerment including four aspects is taken as independent variable, organization-based self-esteem is taken as intermediary variable, and organizational identification is taken as dependent variable and states that employees' with psychological empowerment have more organization-based self-esteem and as a result, have a stronger organizational identification. The t-parameter values in the above table indicate that all the relationships are significant.

One way ANOVA test was used for comparing the forecasting and criterion variables in terms of years of service and education of the respondents in all the samples and Post Hoc test (Tukey HSD) test was used for determining the real difference between the variables.

$$H_0 : \mu_1 = \mu_2 = \mu_3 = \mu_4 = \mu_5 = \mu_6$$

H1: at least one of the means is not equal

Table 3. ANOVA Test Bases on Demographic Variables

Demographic characteristics	Structures Research	F _{Observed}	sig	Consequently
Education Level	Empowerment Psychological	13/779	0/000	acceptance H ₁
	Organization-based self-esteem	7/652	0/000	acceptance H ₁
	Organizational identification	5/232	0/002	acceptance H ₁
Years of service	Empowerment Psychological	141/10	0/000	acceptance H ₁
	Organization-based self-esteem	3/932	0/009	acceptance H ₁
	Organizational identification	7/207	0/000	acceptance H ₁
Employment Type	Empowerment Psychological	16/958	0/000	acceptance H ₁
	Organization-based self-esteem	4/243	0/006	acceptance H ₁
	Organizational identification	7/921	0/000	acceptance H ₁

Table 4. Tukey Test Results

Demographic characteristics	Structures Research	Group I	Group J	Average Difference	Sig	Consequently
Education Level	Empowerment Psychological	Degree (Diploma)	Associate Degree	-0/10200	0/514	No difference
		Degree (Diploma)	BS	-0/44000	0/000	difference
		Degree (Diploma)	MA	-0/45670	0/000	difference
		Degree (Diploma)	Associate Degree	-0/09448	0/601	No difference
	Organizational identification	Degree (Diploma)	BS	-0/28857	0/002	difference
		Degree (Diploma)	MA	0/28409	0/005	difference
		Degree (Diploma)	Associate Degree	-0/08590	0/698	No difference
		Degree (Diploma)	BS	-0/36063	0/000	difference
Organization-based self-esteem	Degree (Diploma)	MA	-0/33899	0/025	difference	
Years of service	Empowerment Psychological	Less than 5 years	6-12 years	-0/11758	0/392	No difference
		Less than 5 years	13-20 years	-0/41173	0/000	difference
		Less than 5 years	Over 20 years	-0/45920	0/000	difference
		Less than 5 years	6-12 years	-0/07484	0/711	No difference
	Organizational identification	Less than 5 years	13-20 years	-0/28643	0/014	difference
		Less than 5 years	Over 20 years	-0/43559	0/000	difference
		Less than 5 years	6-12 years	-0/22902	0/023	difference
		Less than 5 years	13-20 years	-0/25545	0/057	No difference
Organization-based self-esteem	Less than 5 years	Over 20 years	0/31058	0/040	difference	

The results of the study indicate that the more years the employees are in service and the more they are educated, the more the mean of the respondents' scores on the research variables will be.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results of the current study indicate that two variables have been studied on organizational identification. The psychological empowerment on one hand increases that organizational identification and on the other hand has an impact on the employees' identity

through affecting the organization-based self-esteem. In other words, organization-based self-esteem impacts organizational identification as an intermediary variable.

Since the employees evaluate their self-esteem in an organization based on perceived symptoms and indicators, the organization signals the employees through providing their development growth opportunities that it tends to invest on them. Participation in decision-making indicates that the organization respects people ideas. Performance-based payment is a way to recognize employees' achievements since rewards show the employed persons' value in the viewpoint of the organization. All what have been mentioned make the employees understand they are valuable to the organization (the organization respects me), so it impacts the employees' identification.

As it was revealed by the results, the job's meaningfulness and being valuable which are among the components of psychological empowerment which impact organizational identification. Search for identity comprises the person identifies what is important and valuable for him and there is conformity between job or role necessities with beliefs, values, and personal behaviors which ultimately increases people's identification with the organization. Actions such as adapting capabilities and talents of people with working conditions and creating a balance between the characteristics of individual skills with job profile are effective on the employees' identification.

Self-organizing feeling is effective on employees' identification since it leads to feeling of being valuable to the organization and increases sense of pride and honor in the employees. Therefore, actions such as giving feedback about employees' performance and its relation to organizational rewards, the learning or developing opportunities for them, providing up-to-date occupational conditions for the employees, preparing the conditions for changing the direct controlling of the employees to indirect controlling, and allocating responsibilities to the employees help with their identification.

The management efforts on employees effectiveness and competence feeling is beneficial in their identification with the organization, so it is suggested in this regard that the managers support the employees and strengthen their self-confidence besides providing necessary trainings and skills for them and verbal and non-verbal encouraging and verbal persuasion which is a source of creating and strengthening the employees' self-efficacy in order to make the employees believe they have the ability to fulfill the jobs, successfully.

Since the individual's personal competence expectation is affected by emotional arousal and physiological states, the managers should consider this issue.

Based on the Tukey test results, the people with more years in service feel more intimate with the organization since their interaction with the organization is increased and their needs are more satisfied, so it is suggested for better socialization to put newcomers together with the old-line members, as Crammer (2010) claims that people work at the same categories and groups which totally affect the socialization process and interaction, communication, and higher intimacy with the members with higher years in service strengthens the values and norms of the organization for the people, therefore this increases the newcomers identity in the organization.

The organization management should make its employees feel their needs are respected and they are supported. Also, the managers' support strengthens the employees sense of security and assuring its continuity and enjoying it in the future leads to employees' identity feeling.

Providing the employees with the proper information, opportunity to express ideas, employees' engagement, being heard, and active participation are among the items related to

organization-based self-esteem which lead to increase in organizational identification, though improvement of these areas requires continued and long-lasting commitment, taken by most of the organization's managers.

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