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Work-Family Enrichment: It's Mediating Role in the Relationships between Dispositional Factors and Job Satisfaction

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Abstract

The growing interest in understanding the interface of work and family roles, in particular work-family enrichment, and its antecedents and outcomes, has stimulated the development of a mediation model. The mediation model developed includes dispositional factors (optimism, self-efficacy) as antecedents, job satisfaction as the outcome, and work-family enrichment as the mediator. This present model is developed based on the conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989), the model of work-family enrichment (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006) and the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964). This model presents the mechanism of how dispositional factors could influence job satisfaction among employees through work-family enrichment.

Keywords: Work-family enrichment, optimism, self-efficacy, job satisfaction

Introduction

The labor force participation rate of Malaysian women has risen steadily from 44.7% in 1995 to 46.1% in 2010 (Department of Statistics, Malaysia, 2011). More than half of the total employed women in Malaysia are married. The proportion of married female labor force increased from 57.5% in 2002 to 60.7% in 2010 (Department of Statistics, Malaysia, 2011). Dual-career couples wrestled with the dilemma of supporting each other's career development, while juggling childcare, parent care, housekeeping, and their personal relationships (Grzywacz, 2000). In dual-career households, individuals have shouldered both work and family responsibilities and

at the same time and they have to deal with work-related demands which place limits on the performance of family responsibility and vice versa (Aminah & Zoharah, 2008). Understanding the interface of work and family roles will assist employers in understanding further the mechanism to increase job satisfaction among their employees (Stoddard & Madsen, 2007).

A commonly accepted definition of job satisfaction is offered by Locke (1976) who defines job satisfaction as a pleasant emotional state resulting from a person's appreciation of his or her job and job experience. From the humanitarian perspective job satisfaction is a reflection of good treatment received by employees and from the utilitarian perspective, job satisfaction can lead to employees' behavior that affects organizational functioning (Spector, 1997) and effectiveness (Judge & Klinger, 2008).

Generally in literature, there are many studies which have examined work-family conflict as an antecedent of job satisfaction (e.g., Gordon, Whelan-Berry, & Hamilton, 2007; Wayne Musisca, & Fleeson, 2004; Noryati, Aminah, & Maznah, 2009; Hassan, Dollard, & Winefield, 2010). About a decade ago, Greenhaus and Parasuraman (1999) pointed out that few studies had acknowledged the possibility that work and family could have positive effects on one another as the conflict perspective which relied on scarcity approach has dominated research on work–family interface for the past years. However, more recently there is a growing number of researchers who have begun to recognize the positive aspects of work and family roles including work-family enrichment (Carlson, Kacmar, Wayne, & Grzywacz, 2007; McNall, Nicklin, & Masuda, 2010a). As work-family enrichment is a recent concept, more research is needed to understand its antecedents and consequences (McNall, Masuda, & Nicklin, 2010b; Wayne, Randel, & Stevens, 2006). Researchers have been used several labels to describe the positive side of the interface between work and family roles, including enhancement (Ruderman, Ohlott, Panzer, & King, 2002), enrichment (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Wayne et al., 2006), facilitation (Frone, 2003) and positive spillover (Hanson, Hammer, & Colton, 2006). Some researchers have used these labels interchangeably. Others argued that the constructs are related but distinct constructs (Wayne, 2009). In this study, work-family enrichment is used since this term has been commonly used among researchers in investigating the positive side of work and family interface.

Work-family enrichment has been shown to have an effect on employees' job satisfaction (Aryee, Srinivas, & Tan, 2005; Balmforth & Gardner, 2006; Boyar & Mosley, 2007). However, to date, there has been limited research assessing the influence of personality on enrichment which may be useful in understanding better the work–family interface (Boyar & Mosley, 2007; Michel & Clark, 2009; Summer & Knight, 2001). Only a few researchers have argued that personality or dispositional factors may be related to whether an individual experiences work-family conflict or work-family enrichment (Aminah & Noryati, 2011; Baral & Bhargava, 2011; Grzywacz & Butler, 2005; Grzywacz & Marks, 2000; Sumer & Knight, 2001; Wayne et al., 2004). Several researchers have incorporated personality in models on work and family interface (e.g., Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux, & Brinley, 2005; Friede & Ryan, 2005; Michel & Clark, 2009; Parasuraman & Greenhaus, 2002). The important role of personality variables in perceptions of enrichment has been noted by Friede and Ryan (2005). The mediating role of work-family

enrichment was first reported by McNall et al. (2010b). This paper proposed a mediation model consisting of job satisfaction as the dependent variable, dispositional factors (optimism, self-efficacy) as the independent variables and work-family enrichment as the mediator (Figure 1). The model is developed based on the conservation of resources (COR) theory, the model of work-family enrichment and the social exchange theory.
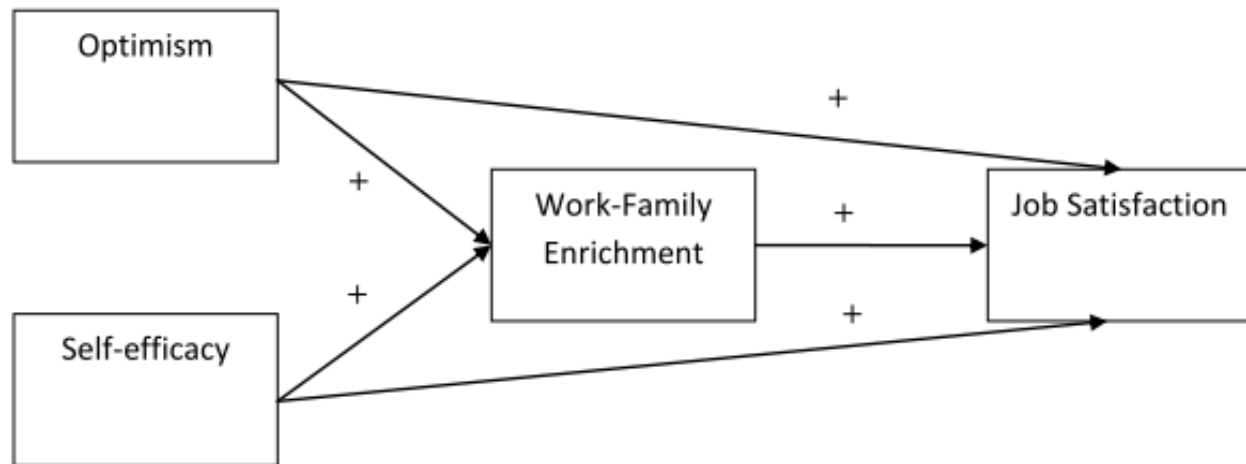

Figure 1. Model of Work-Family Enrichment as a Mediator of the Relationships between Dispositional Factors and Job Satisfaction

The Conservation of Resources Theory

The conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989) focuses on the loss and gain of resources. The resources include objects, conditions, personal characteristics, energies and social support. According to COR theory, people are motivated to preserve, protect and expand their resources to reduce stress. Stress is a reaction to an environment in which there is the threat of a loss of resources, or an actual loss in resources, or a situation whereby resource investment does not result in the desired resource gain. In the process of juggling both work and family roles an individual uses resources which are sometimes not replenished at the same rate as they are drained, leading to work–family conflict. COR theory also predicts that individuals with resources are more likely to gain other resources, which Hobfoll (2002) claims as building ''a solid resource reservoir'', and therefore according to the COR theory, individuals tend to preserve, protect and expand their resources to reduce job dissatisfaction. The COR theory has been used by researchers to understand the attainment and application of resources for positive work-family interaction (Carlson, Kacmar, Wayne, & Grzywacz, 2007; Lu, 2011; McNall et al., 2010a; Odle-Dusseau, Britt, & Greene-Shortridge, 2012).

Model of Work-Family Enrichment

In the past, one major barrier to work–family research has been lack of theoretical support (Eby et al., 2005). Work by Sieber (1974) and Marks (1977) offered some insights into the

enrichment process. In Sieber's (1974) theory of role accumulation, individuals are thought to experience work–family enrichment because various rewards namely role privileges, status security, status enhancement, and personality enrichment are achieved when people participate in multiple roles. Furthermore, Marks's (1977) expansionist approach viewed human energy to be abundant and expandable and argued that participation in multiple roles could generate energy which could be directed to other roles. Greenhaus and Powell (2006) expanded this view and provided a comprehensive theoretical framework of work–family enrichment. They proposed a theoretical framework of work–family enrichment (Figure 2). Work-family enrichment is the extent to which experiences in one role improve the quality of life in the other role. They regard quality of life as including high performance and positive affect. Work–family enrichment is distinct from to work–family conflict (Frone 2003; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). While they may coexist; each dimension has common and distinct determinants and consequences (Grzywacz & Marks, 2000; Voydanoff, 2005).

In the enrichment process, a resource is an asset that may be used to solve a problem or cope with a challenging situation (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006) and resource generation is essential to the enrichment process (Friedman & Greenhaus, 2000; Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1999; Grzywacz, 2002). In Greenhaus and Powell's (2006) model, there are five types of resources that may be acquired in a role. These include skills and perspectives (e.g., interpersonal skills, coping skills, respecting individual differences), psychological and physical resources (e.g., self-efficacy, optimism), social-capital resources (e.g., influence, information), flexibility (e.g., flexible work arrangements), and material resources (e.g., salary, bonus). These resources enable improved performance in the other role either directly which is referred to as the instrumental path or indirectly which is the affective path.

Resource generated in Role A (work or family) may promote high performance and positive affect in Role B (family or work) in two ways as demonstrated by the Greenhaus and Powell's (2006) model. Firstly, a resource may be conveyed directly from Role A to Role B, thus enhancing performance (arrow 1 in Figure 2) and in turn producing positive affect (arrow 6) in Role B. Thus, this is known as the instrumental path of the model. Secondly, a resource generated in Role A may promote positive affect in Role A by either directly (arrow 2) or indirectly through its effect on performance in Role A (arrow 3 and 4). Positive affect in Role A in turn produces high performance (arrow 5) and positive affect (arrow 6) in Role B. This is considered the affective path of the model (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006).
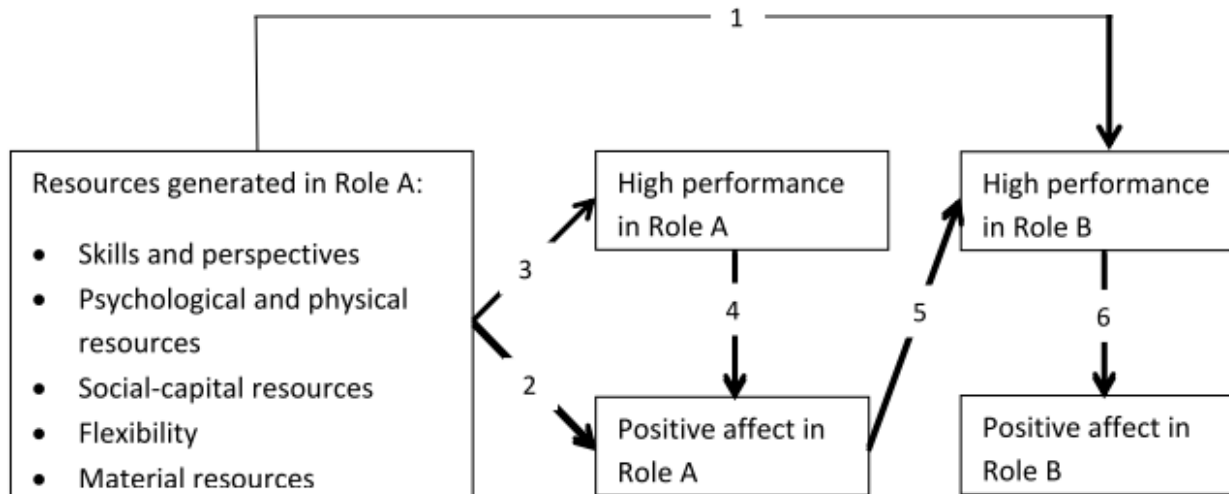
Figure 2. Model of Work-Family Enrichment
(Source: Adapted from Greenhaus and Powell, 2006)

Social Exchange Theory

McNall et al. (2010a) as well as Russo and Buonocore (2012) argued that the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) can be used to better understand the relationships between enrichment and work-related as well as non-work related outcomes. According to the social exchange theory, when one party provides favorable treatment to another, the other party feels obliged to reciprocate (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). The social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) states that when employees perceive favorable treatment from their organizations, the employees tend to reciprocate with more positive attitudes and behaviors (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Applying this to the work-to-family interface, when employees perceive that their organizations are helping them manage work and family roles, the employees would be expected to experience a feeling of gratitude toward the organizations, and reciprocate with more positive attitudes at work, such as a greater feeling of satisfaction with work (McNall et al., 2010a).

Dispositional Factors

Optimism

Optimism is the general tendency to believe that good things will occur in the future and that bad things will not occur even in the face of adversity (Scheier & Carver, 1985). Optimism reflects an overall positive appraisal of the things to happen in the future (Karademas, 2006). Optimistic persons adjust more favorably to important life transitions than persons who are more pessimistic in outlook (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1992). Attention has been given to the potential relationships between dispositions and job satisfaction by showing that specific personality characteristics are related to job satisfaction (e.g., Judge, Heller, & Mount, 2002; Staw & Cohen-Charash, 2005).

Optimism and Work-Family Enrichment

Dispositional factors not only influence how individuals interpret and react to a situation but they also proactively shape the situation (Parasuraman & Greenhaus, 2002). In their theory of integrating personality with work–family outcomes, Friede and Ryan (2005) proposed that individuals with different personalities may interpret the same situation as leading to conflict or enrichment between work and family. There has been limited research assessing the influence of personality on conflict and facilitation which may be useful in better understanding the work–family interface (Boyar & Mosley, 2007; Summer & Knight, 2001; Michel & Clark, 2009). Personality variables may also play an important role in perceptions of enrichment (Friede & Ryan, 2005). Several researchers have urged to incorporate personality in the context of work and family (e.g., Eby et al., 2005; Friede & Ryan, 2005; Michel & Clark, 2009; Parasuraman & Greenhaus, 2002). Only a few researchers have argued that personality characteristics, dispositional factors and individual differences may be related to whether an individual experiences work-family conflict or work-family enrichment (Aminah & Noryati, 2011; Baral & Bhargava, 2011; Grzywacz & Butler, 2005; Grzywacz & Marks, 2000; Sumer & Knight, 2001; Wayne et al., 2004). Optimism may be a relevant predictor that warrants additional research (McNall, Masuda, Shanock, & Nicklin, 2011).

The importance of optimism has been emphasized by Zellars and Perrewé (2001) who noted that there was a natural tendency of extraverted individuals to remain optimistic and they urged researchers to focus on optimism. Wayne et al. (2004) examined personality as a factor contributing to the occurrence of work-family enrichment. The results indicated that extraversion is related to work-to-family enrichment and family-to-work enrichment. In reviewing the literature, research specifically on the association between optimism and work-family enrichment is limited. Aryee et al. (2005) were apparently the first to examine the relationship between optimism and work-family facilitation. They analyzed data from 267 full time working parents in a variety of occupations and organizations in India and revealed that optimism was not significantly related to work-family facilitation ($β$ = .12, *not significant*). Dyson-Washington (2006) reported his study will be among the first to explore the relationship between optimism and work-family enrichment. The results showed that optimism was positively associated with work-family enrichment ($β$ = .405, $ρ$ < .001) on 230 participants comprising students and employees of a university. Although these results differ from the earlier findings (Aryee et al., 2005), we proposed that there is a likelihood that the variables are related since the Conservation of Resources Theory has been used by researchers to understand the application of resources for positive work-family interaction (Carlson et al., 2007; Lu, 2011; McNall et al., 2010a; Odle-Dusseau et al., 2012).

Optimism And Job Satisfaction

Aryee et al. (2005) found that optimism was found significantly related to job satisfaction ($β$ = .16, $ρ$ < .05). Similar results was obtained by Dyson-Washington (2006) who reported a significant positive relationship between optimism and job satisfaction ($β$ = .241, $ρ$ = .01). Two studies (Study 1, N = 1,032 and Study 2, N = 232) tested the hypotheses on the impact of

selected positive psychological resources including optimism on work-related outcomes which include performance, job satisfaction, work happiness, and organizational commitment (Youssef & Luthans, 2007). The significant relationship between optimism and job satisfaction was only supported in Study 1.

Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy refers to people's beliefs about their abilities to perform a given task successfully (Bandura, 1997). Riggs and Knight (1994) define self-efficacy as judgments that individuals make concerning their ability to do successfully whatever is required. Judge, Locke, Durham, and Kluger (1998) define generalized self-efficacy as estimation of one's capabilities to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action needed to exercise control over events in one's life. Therefore, self-efficacy is not about the skills or abilities that one possesses, but rather about the judgment of what one can do with them (Liu, Song, & Wang, 2011). One's sense of self-efficacy can play a major role on how one approaches goals, tasks, and challenges. Self-efficacy affects life choices, level of motivation, quality of functioning, resilience to adversity and vulnerability to stress and depression (Bandura, 1994). People with high assurance in their capabilities approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than as threats to be avoided. High self-efficacy produces personal accomplishments, reduces stress and lowers vulnerability to depression. In contrast, people with low self-efficacy lose faith in their capabilities and fall easy victim to stress and depression (Bandura, 1994).

Self-efficacy and Work-Family Enrichment

Self-efficacy makes a difference in how people think, feel, and act (Schwarzer & Hallum, 2008). People with high self-efficacy choose to perform more challenging tasks, explore their environment, or create new ones (Bandura, 1997). Hobfoll (2002) identifies several key resources that can be viewed as ''management'' resources. As one of the personality-based resources, self-efficacy is a component of core self-evaluations (CSE). For example, Hobfoll (2002) notes that "those who possessed high levels of self-efficacy might be more capable of selecting, altering, and implementing their other resources to meet stressful demands" (p. 308). High self-efficacy individuals may be more equipped to and more successful at utilizing resources gained by participating in one role for the benefit of the other role. Individuals higher in self-efficacy tend to acquire new skills, knowledge, values, perspective, opportunities, positive mood, confidence and economic assets of their work which can contribute towards benefiting their family (Carlson et al., 2007).

Noraani, Aminah, Jegak and Khairuddin (2011) conducted a study in Malaysia on 240 single mothers aged 45 and below and having at least one child. The results showed that as the level of self-efficacy of single mothers increased, their level of work-family facilitation also increased. Similarly, McNall, Masuda, Shanock and Nicklin (2011) found that components of CSEs including self-efficacy have been positively related to work-family enrichment.

Self-efficacy and Job Satisfaction

Caprara, Barbaranelli, Borgogni, and Steca (2003) found that self-efficacy is an important contributor to teachers' job satisfaction. A significant relationship between self-efficacy and job satisfaction in a sample of 1,430 teachers from western Canada was also reported by Klassen and Chiu (2010). A study on the association between self-efficacy and job satisfaction which focused on principals in public and private elementary schools and middle schools (1st to 10th grade) in Norway was conducted by Federici (2012). The results indicated that a principal's self-efficacy was positively related to job satisfaction. Judge et al. (2005) surveyed 251 employees working in three different organizations and CSE concept is indicated by four traits which is self-esteem, locus of control, neuroticism, and general self-efficacy. Structural equation modeling analysis revealed a significant relationship (β = .37, p < .01) between the employees' self-efficacy as part of their core self-evaluations and satisfaction with their jobs.

A study on the association between self-efficacy and job satisfaction which focused on 2,184 teachers in 75 junior high schools in Italy was conducted by Caprara, Barbaranelli, Steca, and Malone (2006). The results indicated a positive relationship (β = .74, p < .05) between teachers' self-efficacy and their job satisfaction. Individuals with high self-efficacy deal effectively with difficulties and persist in the face of failure (Gist & Mitchell, 1992). Judge and Bono (2001) found that generalized self-efficacy was positively related to job satisfaction.

Klassen et al. (2009) in their study using samples of 1,212 teachers from five countries found that teachers with high level of self-efficacy experience greater job satisfaction. In a study using a sample of 484 frontline employees in Northern Cyprus hotels, Karatepe, Uludag, Menevis, Hadzimehmedagic, and Baddar (2006) found that self-efficacy was positively related to frontline employees' job satisfaction. Zellars, Hochwarter, Perrewe, Miles, and Kiewitz (2001) conducted a study in a sample of nurses and found that self-efficacy had a significant positive effect on job satisfaction. Similarly, Bradley and Roberts (2004) demonstrated that self-efficacy increased the job satisfaction of self-employed individuals.

Work-Family Enrichment and Job Satisfaction

Blau's (1964) social exchange theory proposes that individuals will direct reciprocation efforts toward the source from which benefits were received. This theory provides a theoretical framework which explains that when employees' perceptions on work domain are seen as helping them in the family domain, the employees are likely to reciprocate towards the work domain that are providing the benefits (Carlson et al., 2007; Wayne et al., 2006). Wayne et al. (2004) also found that work-family enrichment was positively related to job satisfaction but not to family satisfaction. Carlson, Grzywacz, and Kacmar (2010) found that work-to-family enrichment was more strongly correlated with job satisfaction (β = .614, p < .001) than with family satisfaction (β = .313, p < .001). Furthermore, McNall et al. (2010a) conducted the first meta-analysis on the positive side of the work-family interface and outcomes. They found that both work-family enrichment and family-work enrichment were positively related to job satisfaction. Work-family enrichment was more strongly related to work-related variables (e.g.

job satisfaction) whereas family-work enrichment was more strongly related to non-work related variables (e.g. family satisfaction). Similarly, Russo and Buonocore (2012) also found that work-family enrichment was more strongly related to the role outcomes from which it is originated. Their results indicate that work-family enrichment and not family-work enrichment is related to work-related outcome.

A study by Aryee et al. (2005) found that work-family facilitation was positively related to job satisfaction among full-time working fathers and mothers in India. Lu, Siu, Spector and Shi (2009) examined the relationship between work-family facilitation and job satisfaction among 189 employed parents in China. The results revealed that work-family facilitation was positively related to job satisfaction. Hill (2005) analyzed data from the 1997 National Study of the Changing Workforce (N=1,314) in the United States and reported that work-family facilitation was positively related to job satisfaction. Similar results were reported by Tompson and Werner (1997) who conducted a study on 169 full-time employed MBA students in the United States, as well as Balmforth and Gardner (2006) who examined 58 employees in an organization in New Zealand. A significant relationship between work-family enrichment and job satisfaction in a sample of 220 working adults was also reported by McNall et al. (2010b). Hassan, Dollard, and Winefield (2009) reported that work-family enrichment increased employees' job satisfaction in a study which involved 506 employees from three public and three private sector organizations in Sarawak, Malaysia.

Lu (2011) in her longitudinal study of Taiwanese employees examined the relationship between work-family enrichment and job satisfaction and Jaga and Bagraim (2011) in their study on 336 employees from a national retail organization found a significant positively relationship between work-family enrichment and job satisfaction (β = .547, ρ < .001). Similarly, in a more recent study, Russo and Buonocore (2012) reported that there is a significant positive direct relationship between work-family enrichment and job satisfaction (β = .369, p < .001) among 179 nurses working in public hospitals and private clinics in Italy. These findings were also reported by (Carlson, Kacmar, Zivnuska, Ferguson, & Whitten, 2011b; Carlson, Grzywacz, & Zivnuska, 2009; Masuda, McNall, Allen, & Nicklin, 2012).

Conclusion

Despite the recognition of positive spillover of work-family interface or work-family enrichment and its distinction from work-family conflict, the lack of research on the development of a theoretical framework for examining work-family enrichment has hindered research in work-family enrichment (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). To date, few but growing studies exist in linking family dispositional factors to work-family enrichment. This model proposed that 1) optimism has a direct effect on job satisfaction; 2) work-family enrichment mediates the relationship between optimism and job satisfaction; 3) self-efficacy has a direct effect on job satisfaction; 4) work-family enrichment mediates the relationship between self-efficacy and job satisfaction. According to this model, there is a need to understand the mechanism of how dispositional factors could influence job satisfaction among employees through work-family enrichment.

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