

# *Investigation Of The Effect Of Parents' Gender Perceptions On Children's Attitudes*

Semanur KODAN ÇETİNKAYA<sup>1</sup> and Prof. Dr. Ercümend ERSANLI<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ondokuz Mayıs University, Institute for Graduate Education, Marriage and Family Counseling, Non-Thesis Master's Program  
semanurkodan@gmail.com

<sup>2</sup>Ondokuz Mayıs University, Health Sciences Faculty, Social Work Department  
Samsun, Turkey  
eersanli@gmail.com



**Abstract** – In this study, it was aimed to investigate the effect of parents' gender perceptions on parental attitudes. In addition, it was aimed to examine the gender perceptions and parental attitudes of parents in terms of various variables. This research is a descriptive study in which parents' gender perceptions and parental attitudes were examined according to various variables. The universe of the research consists of mothers or fathers who have children between the ages of 2-6. The criterion sampling method was used to determine the sample of the study. Participants were not necessarily both parents, but a mother or a father could participate to the study independently. Taking into account voluntary participation, 200 people, 100 mothers and 100 fathers, were reached. "Parental Attitude Scale" and "Gender Perception Scale" were used as data collection tools. Frequency, percentage, Pearson correlation, t test for independent groups, one-way analysis of variance, LSD Post Hoc analysis were used in order to obtain the data. The study found a significant relationship between the gender perception scores of the parents and some sub-dimension scores of the parental attitude scale. Moreover, a significant difference was found between the gender perception scores of the parents according to gender and types of marriage, and a significant difference was found between the sub-dimensions of the parent attitude scale according to the variables of gender and the place where they spent most of their life.

**Keywords** – : *Gender Perceptions, Parental Attitude, Parents*

## **I. INTRODUCTION AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

All cultures around the world have gender expectations of how men and women should behave. It can be stated that expectations for gender roles differ from culture to culture and even within the same culture. In this context, culture and society are effective in interpreting differences in gender roles and establishing relations with the outside world with unique methods. Therefore, the concept of gender is used to express roles of individuals shaped by culture or society (Haviland, 2002). In this context, the concept of gender can be defined as the behaviors expected from men and women by society, taking into account psychological, social, cultural and behavioral characteristics. The teaching of gender roles begins with the birth of the child, along with the socialization process (Wienclaw, 2011). At birth, children learn to adopt unfair gender roles for both sexes in a society full of gender stereotypes. Attitudes towards gender roles are first taught at home and then reinforced through peers, school experience, and social media (Witt, 1997). In this context, it can be stated that the belief that parents are important in shaping children's gender-based behaviors is compatible with social learning theory and the concepts of modeling and reinforcement (Condrade & Ho, 2007). In other words, it can be stated that the one of the most significant effects on the development of gender roles is the parents who convey their beliefs about gender both explicitly and implicitly (Witt, 1997). In this context, it is

important to increase the number of studies on parents in terms of child development and socialization (Conrade & Ho, 2007). In the study conducted by Antil, Cunningham and Cotton (2006), it was concluded that there is a relationship between the gender attitudes of women and men and the attitudes of their children. In other words, it can be stated that parents' attitudes towards their children directly or indirectly affect them. The study conducted by Johnnton, Schurer, and Shields (2014) showed that the gender role attitudes of mothers and their children are equally strongly related for sons and daughters.

The influence of parents is very important in learning gender roles in early childhood. During this period, the fact that children communicate more with their families increases the level of influence by the parents (Özel & Zelyurt, 2016). In this context, it is significant for parents to learn behaviors that can be considered appropriate in terms of raising children who are sensitive to gender equality and to be appropriate role models, especially during their preschool period (Erzeybek, 2015). When all these are evaluated, the relationship between parents' gender perceptions and the child-rearing attitudes will be well articulated. The current study, which was carried out to increase the awareness of parents about the effects of gender perceptions on their child-rearing attitudes and the importance in raising kids with egalitarian gender roles, is aimed to guide various teachings and studies in the field.

## II. METHOD

### 2.1. Research Method

In this study, the relationship between parents' gender perceptions and parental attitudes was examined. In addition, it is a descriptive study in which parents' gender perceptions and parental attitudes were examined according to the variables of gender, marriage type, socio-economic level, and place of residence.

### 2.2. Research Sample

The universe of the research consists of mothers or fathers with children between the ages of 2-6 living in Bayburt province of Turkey. Participants were not necessarily both parents, but a mother or a father could participate to the study independently. Based on voluntary participation, 200 people, including 100 mothers and 100 fathers, were participated to the research. The criterion sampling method was used to determine the sample of the study. Demographic information about the mothers and fathers forming the sample is given in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1. *Demographic Information about the Sample Group*

Distribution of Personal Information		N	%
Gender	Woman	one hundred	50.0
	Man	one hundred	50.0
Educational Status	Not a University Graduate	39	19.5
	Graduated from a University	161	80.5
Marriage Format	Flirting	116	58.0
	Arranged	33	16.5
	Flirting and Arranging	51	25.5
Socio-Economic Level	Middle-class	132	66.0
	High	68	34.0
Number of children	1-2 children	166	83.0
	3 children and more	34	17.0
Where did you spent most of your life?	Countryside/Town	32	16.0
	City/Metropolitan	168	84.0

### 2.3. Data Collection Tools

In this study, the scales used to collect data were applied on the basis of voluntariness, according to the criterion sampling method, one of the purposeful sampling methods. The "Parental Attitude Scale" developed by Karabulut Demir and Şendil (2008) and the "Gender Perception Scale" developed by Altınova and Duyan (2013) were used. The Personal Information Form developed by the researchers was used to collect information about gender, type of marriage, perceived socio-economic level, and the place where most of life was spent, which were considered as independent variables in the research.

#### 2.3.1. Parental Attitude Scale

Parental Attitude Scale was developed by Karabulut Demir and Şendil (2008) in order to measure the child-rearing behaviors of parents who have children between the ages of 2-6. Scores for each dimension are calculated, and getting a high score indicates that one adopts the behavior style represented by that dimension. There are 4 sub-dimensions in the scale: democratic, authoritarian, permissive and overprotective. Except for democratic attitude and recognition of equality, high scores from other dimensions indicate negative parental attitudes (Karabulut Demir & Şendil, 2008).

The internal consistency coefficients calculated for the reliability of the dimensions of the PAS were .83 for the democratic dimension, .76 for the authoritarian dimension, .75 for the overprotective dimension, and .75 for the permissive dimension. 74 (Karabulut Demir and Şendil, 2008).

#### 2.3.2. Gender Perception Scale

The Gender Perception Scale, developed by Altınova and Duyan (2013), is a 5-point Likert-type scale consisting of 25 items that can be marked as "I strongly agree", "I agree", "I am undecided", "I disagree" and "I strongly disagree". The internal consistency coefficient of the Gender Perception Scale was found to be at the desired level as .87. 10 of the items were expressed positively and 15 of them were expressed negatively. The high score obtained from the scale indicates that the perception of gender is positive.

## III. RESULTS

In this section, the findings of the research are presented with sub-problems.

### 3.1. Findings Related to the Relationship Between Parents' Perceptions of Gender and Parental Attitudes

Correlation analysis was applied to determine whether there is a relationship between parents' gender perceptions and parental attitudes (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1. *Findings Related to the Relationship Between Parents' Perceptions of Gender and Parental Attitudes*

Attitudes		Democratic	Authoritarian	Overprotective	Unconcerned
	r	.241 **	-.264 **	-.257 **	-.046
Gender Perception	p	.001	.001	.001	.515
	n	200	200	200	200

\*\*p<.01

When Table 4.1 is examined, a positive and significant relationship was found between the total score of the parents' "Gender Perception Scale" and the "Democratic" ( $r = .241$ ,  $p = .001$ ) sub-dimension of the Parental Attitude Scale. There was a negative significant correlation was found between the sub-dimensions of the "Gender Perception Scale" of the parents and the "Authoritarian" ( $r = -.264$ ,  $p = .001$ ) and "Overprotective" ( $r = -.257$ ,  $p = .001$ ) sub-dimensions of the Parental Attitude Scale. On the other hand, no significant relationship was found between the sub-dimension according to the total score of the "Gender Perception Scale" of the parents and the Parental Attitude Scale "Unconcerned" ( $r = -.046$ ,  $p = .515$ ).

### 3.2. Findings Related to the Difference Between Parents' Gender Perceptions and Parental Attitudes According to the Variable of Gender

A t-test was used to determine whether there was a difference between parents' gender perceptions and parental attitudes according to gender (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2. *Findings Related to the Difference Between Parents' Gender Perceptions and Parental Attitudes According to the Variable of Gender*

Gender		N	$\bar{x}$	ss	t	p
Democratic Dimension	Female	one hundred	73.99	5.61	2,210	.028
	Male	one hundred	71.77	8.33		
Authoritarian Dimension	Female	one hundred	22.89	7.07	-1.325	.187
	Male	one hundred	24.23	7.23		
Overprotective Dimension	Female	one hundred	30.59	6.43	-2,130	.034
	Male	one hundred	32.45	5.90		
Unconcerned Dimension	Female	one hundred	23.79	5.59	.680	.513
	Male	one hundred	23.28	5.41		
Gender Perception	Female	one hundred	100.26	14.75	7.512	.001
	Male	one hundred	81.01	20.95		

p<.05

Table 4.2 shows that there is a significant difference was found between the parent attitude scale sub-dimensions of "Democratic" ( $t_{(198)} = 2.210$ ,  $p = .028$ ) and "Overprotective" ( $t_{(198)} = -2.130$ ,  $p = .034$ ) according to the variable of gender. Considering the average scores of the parents from the democratic dimension according to the variable of gender, it was showed that the society score averages of the mothers were higher than those of the fathers. In addition, the average score of the parents from the overprotective dimension articulated that according to the gender variable, the total score averages of the fathers were higher than the mothers. On the other hand, a significant difference was found between the parents' "Gender Perception" ( $t_{(198)} = 7.512$ ,  $p = .001$ ) scores according to the variable of gender. Considering the total mean score of the gender perception scale according to the gender variable of the parents, it was found that the total mean score of the mothers was higher than that of the fathers. In this context, it can be stated that mothers' perceptions of gender were more positive than fathers.

### 3.3. Findings Related to the Difference Between Parents' Gender Perceptions and Parental Attitudes According to the Variable of Types of Marriage

One-Way Analysis of Variance was applied to determine whether there was a difference between parents' gender perceptions and parental attitudes according to the variable of types of marriage (Table 4.3).

Table 4.3. *Findings Related to the Difference Between Parents' Gender Perceptions and Parental Attitudes According to the Variable of Types of Marriage*

Types of Marriage		N	$\bar{x}$	ss	F	p	Significant Difference
Democratic	1. Flirting	116	73.83	6.99	2,665	.072	-

## Investigation Of The Effect Of Parents' Gender Perceptions On Children's Attitudes

Dimension	2. Arranged	33	71.00	7.95			
	3. Arranged and Dating	51	71.92	6.80			
	1. Flirting	116	23.63	7.45			
Authoritarian Dimension	2. Arranged	33	23.96	6.89	.157	.855	-
	3. Arranged and Dating	51	23.11	6.76			
	1. Flirting	116	30.99	6.40			
Overprotective Dimension	2. Arranged	33	32.75	6.57	1.117	.310	-
	3. Arranged and Flirting	51	31.92	5.53			
	1. Flirting	116	23.84	5.23			
Unconcerned Dimension	2. Arranged	33	22.48	5.84	.785	.457	-
	3. Arranged and Flirting	51	23.5	5.86			
	1. Flirting	116	95.42	20.12			
Gender Perception	2. Arranged	33	82.03	21.55	8,374	.001	1-2,3
	3. Arranged and Flirting	51	85.31	17.65			
	1. Flirting	116	95.42	20.12			

p<.01

Table 4.3 shows that there is no statistical difference between the parental attitude scale of the parental attitude scale according to the types of marriage of the parents is “*democratic*” ( $F= 2.665$ ,  $p= .072$ ), “*authoritarian*” ( $F= .855$ ,  $p= .157$ ), “*overprotective*” ( $F= 1.117$ ,  $p= .310$ ) and “*unconcerned*” ( $F= .785$ ,  $p= .457$ ) sub-dimensions. However, a statistical difference was found between the types of marriage and the “gender perception scale” ( $F= 8.374$ ,  $p= .001$ ). As a result of the LSD Post Hoc test performed in order to determine between which groups this difference occurs, it was found that the difference was significant in favor of “flirting”. In other words, it can be stated that the gender perceptions of the parents whose type of marriage was “flirting” were positive compared to the parents whose marriage types were “arranged” and “arranged and flirting”.

### 3.4. Findings Related to the Difference Between Parents' Gender Perceptions and Parental Attitudes According to the Variable of Perceived Socio-Economic Level

The variable of perceived socio-economic level, the t-test was applied to determine whether there was a difference between parents' gender perceptions and parental attitudes (Table 4.4).

Table 4.4. Findings Related to the Difference Between Parents' Gender Perceptions and Parental Attitudes According to the Variable of Perceived Socio-Economic Level

Perceived Socio-Economic Level		N	$\bar{X}$	ss	t	p
Democratic Dimension	Middle	132	72.94	7.20	.184	.855
	High	68	72.75	7.15		
Authoritarian Dimension	Middle	132	23.81	7.44	.688	.492
	High	68	23.07	6.60		
Overprotective Dimension	Middle	132	31.86	6.48	1,087	.278
	High	68	30.85	5.68		

## Investigation Of The Effect Of Parents' Gender Perceptions On Children's Attitudes

Unconcerned Dimension	Middle	132	23.15	5.67	-1,350	.179
	High	68	24.26	5.09		
Gender Perception	Middle	132	90.93	20.77	.285	.776
	High	68	90.05	20.06		

$p > .05$

Table 4.4 shows that according to the perceived socio-economic level variable, there was no significant difference as found between the gender perception of the parents ( $t_{(198)} = .285$ ,  $p = .776$ ) and the parental attitude scale are “democratic” ( $t_{(198)} = .184$ ,  $p = .855$ ), “authoritarian” ( $t_{(198)} = .688$ ,  $p = .492$ ), “overprotective” ( $t_{(198)} = 1.087$ ,  $p = .278$ ) and “unconcerned” ( $t_{(198)} = -1.350$ ,  $p = .179$ ) sub-dimension scores.

### 3.5. Findings Related to the Difference Between Parents' Perceptions of Gender and Parental Attitudes According to the Variable of Where They Spent Most of Their Life

The t-test was applied to determine whether there was a difference between parents in terms of gender perceptions and parental attitudes according to the variable of where they spent most of their life (Table 4.5).

Table 4.5. Findings Related to the Difference Between Parents' Perceptions of Gender and Parental Attitudes According to the Variable of The Place Where They Spent Most of Their Life

The Place Where They Spent Most of Their Life		N	$\bar{X}$	ss	t	p
Democratic Dimension	Village/Town	32	71.62	.33	-1.081	.281
	City/Metropolitan	168	73.11	.13		
Authoritarian Dimension	Village/Town	32	26.28	7.53	2.371	.019
	City/Metropolitan	168	23.04	6.99		
Overprotective Dimension	Village/Town	32	33.15	6.74	1.628	.105
	City/Metropolitan	168	31.20	6.09		
Unconcerned Dimension	Village/Town	32	22.90	6.24	-.705	.482
	City/Metropolitan	168	23.65	5.35		
Gender Perception	Village/Town	32	92.50	15.78	.561	.576
	City/Metropolitan	168	90.27	21.28		

$p < .05$

When Table 4.5 is examined, according to the variable of the place where they spent most of their life, no significant difference was found between the gender perception of the parents ( $t_{(198)} = .561$ ,  $p = .576$ ) and the parental attitude scale are “democratic” ( $t_{(198)} = -1.081$ ,  $p = .281$ ), “overprotective”. ” ( $t_{(198)} = 1.628$ ,  $p = .105$ ), and “unconcerned” ( $t_{(198)} = -.705$ ,  $p = .482$ ) sub-dimension scores. However, a statistically significant difference was found between the “authoritarian” ( $t_{(198)} = 2.371$ ,  $p = .019$ ) sub-dimension of the parental attitude scale, according to the variable of the place where they spent most of their life.

## IV. CONCLUSION

### 4.1. The Relationship Between Parents' Gender Perception Scores and Parental Attitudes Scores

As a result of the research, it was found that there is a significant relationship between parents' democratic, authoritarian and overprotective attitudes and gender perception scores. In other words, there was a positive relationship between parents' democratic attitudes and gender perceptions, and a negative relationship between authoritarian attitudes and overprotective

attitudes and gender perceptions. In the study conducted by Jan and Janssens (1998), it was found that the mother's child-rearing style and their gender role attitudes have an effect on the gender role attitudes developed by daughter. Similarly, the study conducted by Booth & Amato (1994) articulated that the children of parents who do not have a traditional gender role also tend not to have a traditional gender role. In this context, it can be stated that the attitudes of parents are important in the transfer of gender roles. The study made by Erzeybek (2015) on parents revealed that there is a positive and significant relationship between child-rearing attitudes and gender roles. In this context, it shows parallel conclusion with the research result.

### 4.2. Gender Perception Scores of Parents by Variable of Gender

As a result of the research, it can be stated that mothers have a more positive perception than fathers in terms of gender perception. However, the longitudinal study conducted by Fan and Marrini (2000), concludes that young women had more egalitarian attitudes than young men between the years of 1979 and 1987. The research made by Sani and Quranta (2017) articulated that young women in all countries have more egalitarian attitudes than young men. In the study conducted on adolescents by Tuck, Rolfe, and Adairv (1994), it was found that adolescent girls have more egalitarian attitudes than boys. Similarly, the study conducted by Kulik (2002) on parents and adolescent children found that mothers have more liberal attitudes and fathers have more conservative attitudes. As a result of the study conducted by Sagara and Kang (1998), it was concluded that fathers are more traditionalist than mothers.

The study made by Montesino, Parra, Estrada, and Cino (2020) concludes that mothers have more egalitarian attitudes than fathers. As a result of the research, the result that mothers have a more democratic attitude and higher egalitarian attitude score averages can be explained by the fact that mothers are more aware of this issue than fathers and their desire for these roles is stronger, since women are the most gender discriminated part in the traditional structure (Öcal Yüceol). , 2016).

### 4.3. Parental Attitude Scores by Gender Variable of Parents

The present study shows that, according to the gender variable, the total score averages of the mothers in the democratic dimension and the fathers in the overprotective dimension were higher. The finding that mothers have a more democratic attitude is in line with the results of the study conducted by Sak, Atli and Şahin (2015), Aydoğdu and Dilekmen (2016), Şahin and Özyürek (2005). Russell et al (1998) concluded that fathers are more authoritarian than mothers. Rosen and Rothbaum found that mothers are more accepting than fathers. As a result of the study conducted by Çelik, Harmatov and Sarıçam (2000), mothers were found to be more protective and democratic than fathers. In this context, the fact that mothers or women are more democratic can be explained by the society's adoption of the male gender role attitude and the strong desire of women to have an equal position with men in business and family life and to change this ongoing fact (Kulik, 1999).

### 4.4. Gender Perception Scores According to Parents' Types of Marriage Variable

As a result of the research, it can be stated that the gender perceptions of the parents whose marriage style is "flirting" according to the variable of types of marriage are positive compared to the parents whose marriage style is "arranged" and "arranged and flirting". The study conducted by Yılmaz (2014) on women found that gender role scores showed a significant difference according to the types of marriage. As a result of the research, the conclusion that the women who marry by flirting and arranged and flirting are less traditional than the women who marry by arranged marriage is in parallel with the result of present research. In parallel with the literature, the current study reveals that those whose marriage style is flirting have a more egalitarian attitude in terms of gender perceptions. This finding can be explained by the fact that individuals with traditionalist attitudes prefer arranged marriages. Particularly in Turkey, which is a developing country, it is observed that arranged marriage is traditional and flirting is modern (Polat, 2006). In line with the studies, it can be stated that egalitarian people mostly prefer "flirting" or "flirting and arranged" in their marriage selection (Yılmaz, 2014). In this context, as a result of the present study, it can be stated that parents with positive gender prefer to marry in the form of flirting.

### 4.5. Parental Attitude Scores According to the Variable of Parents' Marriage

As a result of the research, there was no statistically significant difference found between the "democratic", "authoritarian", "overprotective" and "unconcerned" sub-dimension scores of the parent attitude scale according to the "flirting", "arranged" and "arranged and flirting" marriage styles of the parents. The study conducted by Kendir and Demirli (2016) on married women and men, concluded that there was no statistically significant difference between the types of marriage in terms of democratic, protective and authoritarian attitude scores. In this context, it seems to support the research result.

#### 4.6. Gender Perception Scores of Parents by Perceived Socio-Economic Level Variable

As a result of the research, there was no statistically significant difference between the gender perceptions of the parents according to the perceived socio-economic level. As a result of the study conducted by Pinar, Taşkın, and Eroğlu (2008) and Güzel (2016) on university students, no significant difference was found between students' perceptions of income level and gender role patterns. In addition, a similar finding was reached in the study conducted by Akkaya (2021) on family health workers. Similarly, the study made by Onurluer (2019), revealed that there was no significant difference between the mean scores of the gender perception scale and the family monthly income level. In this context, it can be stated that the gender perceptions of middle-income and high-income participants are similar. In line with these findings, it can be stated that the results of the current research are similar to the others.

#### 4.7. Parental Attitude Scores by Perceived Socio-Economic Level Variable of Parents

The current study found that there was no statistically significant difference between the "democratic", "authoritarian", "overprotective" and "unconcerned" sub-dimension scores of the individuals' parental attitude scale according to the perceived socio-economic level. This situation can be explained by the fact that the parents forming the research sample consist of two groups as middle-income and high-income levels and the living conditions of these two groups are close to each other. As a result of the study conducted by Belli (2018) on adolescents, it was concluded that perceived parental attitudes according to income status were not statistically different. The research conducted by Akyol (2021) concluded that there was no significant difference in the scores of democratic attitude, authoritarian attitude, protective attitude and permissive attitude according to family income status. In this context, it can be stated that it shows parallelism with the results of the present study. In addition, as a result of the research conducted by Alabay (2017) on parents, it was found that there was no significant difference between the democratic attitude, authoritarian attitude, permissive attitude average score and the income variable. Only a significant difference was found between the overprotective attitude and the income variable. However, there are various studies in the literature that concluded that there was a significant difference between income level and parental attitude (Aydoğdu & Dilekmen, 2016; Ayyıldız, 2005; Ömeroğlu, 1996; Şanlı, 2007; Uygun & Kozikoğlu, 2020).

#### 4.8. Gender Perception Scores by Variable of Where Parents Live Mostly

The current research found no statistically significant difference between the gender perception scores of the parents according to the variable of the place where most of their lives were spent. In study conducted by Akkaya (2021) on family health workers, the relationship between the place they live in and their perceptions of gender was examined, and no statistically significant difference was found between the mean scores of the gender roles attitude scale in terms of place of residence between the ages of 0-6. In the research conducted on teachers by Önsan (2021), it was concluded that the place of education of teachers does not have a significant effect on the perception of gender. In this context, it can be stated that it shows parallelism with the research result.

The study made by Kulik (2002) concluded that the place of birth of the mother affects parental attitudes.

#### 4.9. Parental Attitude Scores According to the Variable of Where Parents Live Mostly

As a result of the present research, no significant difference was found between the "democratic", "overprotective" and "unconcerned" sub-dimension scores of the parent attitude scale according to the variable of where the parents' spent most of their life. However, a significant difference was found between the scores of the "authoritarian" sub-dimension of the parental attitude scale according to the variable of the place where the spent most of their life. It was concluded that parents living in villages or towns have more authoritarian attitudes than those living in cities or big cities. As a result of the study conducted by Özyürek (2004), a significant difference was found between the settlement area and the strict/hard discipline dimension and overprotection scores of the mothers and fathers. In other words, it was revealed that mothers and fathers living in rural areas were more strict/hard-disciplined and more protective. Similarly, in the study made by Ömeroğlu (1996), the attitudes of the mothers living in the village and the city were compared and it was concluded that the mothers in a village had a more oppressive attitude than the mothers in a city. In this context, it can be stated that the findings show parallelism with the results of the study.

### V. SUGGESTIONS

According to the results of the present study, the factors that affect the perception of gender are marriage types of parents and the gender. In addition, the factors affecting parental attitudes were found to be gender and the place where they spent most of



their life. Considering the result of this study, various informative studies can be conducted on parental attitudes towards mothers and fathers and their effects on children. As a result of this research, it is important to ensure that fathers are more involved in various training programs, since the gender perceptions of fathers are found to be more negative. A study similar to this research can be investigated more comprehensively by including mothers, fathers and children.

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