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Organizational Identification and Proactive Work Behaviour as Predictors of Cyber-loafing among Anambra State Civil Servants

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. Author EIS conceptualized the study and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Author EEC designed the study, performed the statistical analysis and wrote the protocol. Authors INC and IAE managed the literature of the study. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

Cyber-loafing is a growing organizational vice with resource and productivity consequences. Given its observed rise in public service in Nigeria; this study examined the organizational identification and proactive work behaviour as predictors of cyber-loafing among public sector employees in Anambra State. The study participants were 403 employees drawn from Anambra State civil service, Nigeria. The participants were 131 males and 272 females with a mean age of 39 years and standard deviation of 4.20. Cluster sampling was used to select participants Ministries whereas accidental sampling was utilized to select the participants from their respective ministries. Organizational identification scale, Proactive work behavior scale and Cyber-loafing questionnaire were instruments of data collection. Anchored on social exchange theory, the study utilized correlation design and hierarchical regression analysis as design and statistical tool for data analysis. The result indicated that positive and significant correlation was recorded between

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organizational identification and proactive work behaviour at r(1, 403) = .43*, p < .05; while negative and significant correlation was recorded between organizational identification and cyber-loafing at r(1, 403) = -.37*, p < .05. Also, negative and significant correlation was recorded between proactive work behaviour and cyber-loafing at r(1, 403) = -.56*, p < .05. Hierarchical regression analysis confirmed that both organizational identification and proactive work behaviour negatively and significantly predicted cyber-loafing at α = -.39*, p < .05 (n = 403) and α = -.48*, p < .05 (n = 403) respectively among civil servants in Anambra State. Organizations are adviced to improve on their social exchange among employees to engender for greater organizational identification and pro-activity to reduce cyber-loafing behaviours.

Keywords: Cyber-loafing; internet surfing; organizational identification; proactive work behavior; members' exchange; organizational climate.

1. INTRODUCTION

The reach of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) especially the Internet has mixed outcomes for both private and public organizations alike. As much as it created redundancy in significant areas such as employment [1], it also affects productivity and sabotage behaviours in organization [2]. The ICT evolution and the availability of the internet have been identified as the leading cause of cyber-loafing in the organization; with the behaviour adjudged to be injurious to the organizational productivity [3]. Critically, as much as internet surfing reduces the productivity of employees in the private sector; the public sector is equally affected by this growing menace [2]. Many studies have explored both the causes and consequences of cyber-loafing: Huma, Hussain, Thurasamy and Malik, [2] as regards the determinants in private and public sector organizations; Çınar and Karcıoğlu, [4] as it relates organizational citizenship behaviour; Ugrin and Pearson [3] as it affects employees morale with sanctions and stigma; and Lim and Chen [5] as it affects productivity in the workplace.

However, despite many scholarship on the cyber-loafing behaviour, there is still gap in extant literature especially regarding worker-variables which influence more cyber-loafing behaviours in the public sector organizations whose climate seem to increase propensity to indulge in cyber-loafing. This instance berths the current search using organizational identification and proactive work behaviour as predictors of cyber-loafing among State civil servants. The aim is to understand the role of subjective behaviours of the employees as precursors to cyber-loafing behaviours in the workplace.

Cyber-loafing or arbitrary surfing of the internet during work hours or within the workplace refers to the unauthorized use of the organizations computer, internet and networks for the purpose of private surfing, browsing and exchange of media files, mails, games and other online transactions not part of organizations tasks or duty during the official organizational working hours as defined and measured by Li and Chung [6]. Cyber-loafing is also known as cyber-slacking is employee's unofficial use of the internet, e-mail services and virtual game devices either self-improvised or provided by their employer during work hours [7]. According to Coker [8], activities which are classified as cyber-loafing include" e-mailing jokes to friends, online shopping or game playing, downloading music, instant messaging (chatting on any of the instant message platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Badoo etc), posting to newsgroups, or surfing non-work-related internet sites.

Organizational stakeholders are worried about the dangers of cyber-loafing because it may expose the employees and the organization to external threats and real dangers. The dangers associated with cyber-loafing may lead to workplace sabotage behaviours to the disadvantage of the organization. Such problems have increased authors' interest in ascertaining likely predictors of cyber-loafing as an important step towards containing the behaviour in the workplace. It is important to underscore that the evolution of organizational members with smart devices such as: cell phones, wi-fi gadgets and personal digital assistants (PDAs) which are becoming more affordable to acquire and use poses the greatest dangers to the organization in relation to loafing behaviours.

As much as the problem is not obliterated, organizational productivity, effectiveness and efficiency remain threatened [1]. Left unchecked cyber-loafing may be as ruinous as inefficiency. There is a belief among stakeholders that cyber-

loafing may become a high-tech method for employees to shirk their job duties while appearing to be busy working [3]. This is because the attitude poses great danger to job, employee and organizational outcomes in most significant ways such as performance lapses and deadline failures as negative job outcomes [5,8]. The danger it poses to productive outcomes creates the need to understand subjective factors which may pre-dispose employees to cyber-loafing in the civil service organizational climate. This may aid the finding of management paradigms to discourage the behaviour. For instance, Young [9] contended that workers who spend a good number of productive man hours avoiding work in order to surf or loaf on the internet without executing officially the duties of their workplace and thereby disrupting normal organizational productivity flow are inimical to organizational anticlimax. Given its ruinous impacts to organizational productivity, there are perhaps, subjective worker-variables which may juxtapose employees to the loafing behaviours in the workplace; among them are: level of organizational identification and proactive work behaviour.

While organizational identification is conceptualized as an alignment of individual and organizational values (Pralt, 1998), as well as the perception of oneness with, and belonging to the organization [10]; proactive behaviour is an anticipatory action involving preventing problems, seizing opportunities, and self-directed efforts that target improving and changing the work context or situation and future of the self [11,12]. There is evidence in literature that when employees are positively connected and aligned with the organizational values and vice-versa, negative antecedents is reduced. Feelings of belongingness to the organization may likely evoke employees' self-efforts to enhance the organizational wellbeing. This assertion is the purpose of the current study.

1.1 Organizational Identification

Organizational identification is a way to explain the relationship between individuals and the organization they work for. Constructively; organizational identification is the perception of oneness with or belongingness to an organization where the individual defines him or herself in terms of which he or she is a member [13]. Organizational identity may significantly influence the pro-activity in an organization leading to many employees attempting to escape their negative feelings to the organization by way of loafing to the detriment of all and sundry. Several positive attitudinal and behavioural outcomes are linked to organizational identification [10], (Ashforth, 1992). Identification in an organization is linked to positive group membership and support of the organizational goals, which enhances the individuals thriving at work. Stronger identification leads to more cooperation with other organizational members' and influences employees' willingness to strive for organizational goals. Also, people who strongly identify with their organization tend to have a positive attitude towards the organization [13] and have less intention to leave [14] are more satisfied with their job (Van Knppenberg & Van Schic, 2000); show more organizational citizenship behaviour [15] and cooperate more intensively with other organizational members [16]. Also, employees who strongly identify with their organization tend to experience its successes and failures as their own (Dutton 1994) and engage in behaviours that help the organization achieve its goals [17].

1.2 Proactive Work Behaviour

Proactive work behaviour is an anticipatory action involving preventing problems, seizing opportunities, and self-directed efforts that target improving and changing the work context or situation and future of the self [17,18]. When a person is proactive, they are acting in advance of a future event. Proactive employees typically don't need to be asked to do something, and will usually require less detailed instructions to achieve a course of an action. To exhibit proactive behaviour, an employee must be convinced that the anticipatory behaviour will offer value, change and improvement to the organization; such as employee will be motivated extrinsically or intrinsically and having the capacity to perform the behaviour. Proactive behaviours are constructive by their nature and target to better the existing status-quo and or to prevent events or situations which may endanger organizational progress or lower her effectiveness, efficiency and relevance.

Employees that exhibit pro-activity are big assets to organizations because they can move their organization to the next level when they take advantage of an opportunity to better their organization based on their anticipatory instincts which can be used to harness their strength

during preparation to tap into abundant opportunities [12]. Proactive employees are focused, organized, and are always ready to take on advantageous opportunity. They are also peace makers in the organization and often make sacrifices for fellow workers and the organization.

Proactive behaviour is also identified as a critical behaviour for employees that contribute to the competitiveness of organizations in modern society [12]. Due to the benefits of proactive work behaviour, previous studies have attempted to recognize possibly crucial antecedents [11], such as a proactive personality [19]; these studies have delineated a number of characteristics that people possess that trigger their proactive actions, however, there are other job variables which may influence the prevalence of proactive behaviour among employees such as abusive supervision, organizational justice dimensions and core self-evaluation.

1.3 Cyber-loafing in the Workplace

Cyber-loafing is employee's voluntary non-work related use of company provided email and Internet while working" [20]. The terms Non-Work Related Computing (NWRC), cyber-loafing, cyber-slacking and Personal Web Use (PWU) may all mean one and same implying unauthorized use of internet or computer services of the organization for personal uses not related to the aspects of performing job tasks of the organization. According to Lim [21], such unauthorized uses of the organization's internet, email, computers and digital resources for personal uses have been classified as workplace deviance. Cyber-loafing is regarded as the private use of the internet during work for non work purposes. Bock and Ho [22] contended that it is an employee's usage of organizational IP resources for personal purposes, not directly related to organizational goals.

There are two types of cyber-loafing: serious and minor. Serious cyber-loafing consists of online gambling and surfing adult-oriented websites. Minor cyber-loafing would be acts like sending personal email at work. A study done in 2008 by Blanchard and Henle [23], as cited by Zoghbi-Manriquw-de-Lara (2012), suggests that minor cyberloafing is innocuous. However, both serious and minor loafing activities have negative impact on employees' job outcomes [24].

1.4 Dimensions of Cyber-loafing Behaviours

Four dimensions of the behaviour are distinct: developmental, recovery, deviant and addictive behaviours.

i. Cyber-loafing can aid *development behaviour* such that it becomes a potentially source for learning. According to Belanger and Van Slyke [25], it may increase in ICT and e-learning skills of the employees which can be assets in the future.
ii. Both Lim and Chen [14] and McLean, Tingley, Scott and Richards [26] consider the behaviour as r*ecovery behaviour* - in respect to the frustration, stress or organizational threats faced by employees and ways they seek out to reduce the impacts of the stressors.
iii. It could also be seen as a *deviant behaviour* considering that it has negative impact to the organization such as loss of man hours leading to decreased productivity in the views of Weatherbee, (2010) and Young [9].
iv. Lastly, cyber-loafing may also be a product of self-maladjustment at the subjective level which is originally learned as a coping behaviour such as respond to dissatisfaction or boredom (LaRose, Kim, & Peng, 2010) but later develops into an *addictive behaviour* because of its problematic nature both the employee and the organization. According to Yellowlees and Marks [27], it may be understood as an impulse control and addictive disorders.

The current study is hinged on the recovery dimension as the leading cause of cyber-loafing which compliments poor level of organizational identification. Workers may not all together bond well with the organization in the presence of stressors and other organizational situations which may frustrate their efforts. The discomfort thus created inhibits workers from identifying with the organizations and may make them vulnerable to seeking alternatives to reduce stressors e.g. engaging in cyber-loafing behaviours. To understand this situation and provide guidance to this study, the following hypotheses were formulated and tested:

i. Organizational identification will significantly and negatively predict cyber-

loafing among civil servants in Anambra state.

ii. Proactive work behaviour will significantly and negatively predict cyber-loafing among civil servants in Anambra state.

iii. Organizational identification will significantly and positively correlate proactive work behaviour among civil servants in Anambra state.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

The underpinning of the relationship of organizational identification and proactive work behaviour as predictors of cyber-loafing may be understood as facilitated by the levels of organizational exchange between owners/management and their employers. This relationship may well be captured by Blau [28] in social exchange theory which proposed that relationship among proximal members evokes a certain response which is dependent on the way the members perceive they have been treated in relation to how they treat the organization. The theory established that organizational events are interpreted by members and they predict responses of members who may be affected by such organizational events. Thus, if a member of the organization feels he or she is accepted and treated well in the organization, he or she will identify with the organization and such identification will promote proactive work behaviour and reduce the prevalence of cyber-loafing among employees whereas the reverse may be the case if the employee feels threatened, frustrated and stressed. Thus, Blau [28] exchange theory aligns with both recovery and deviant dimensions of cyber-loafing as predicated by the subjective dispositions of the employees in the evaluation of the organizational interactions and forms of human exchanges in the workplace.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 Participants

Four hundred and three (403) public sector employees drawn from Anambra State civil service employees served as participants in the study in Nigeria. The participants were 131 males and 272 females. Demographic data revealed that the ages of the participants ranged from 24 to 59 years, with a mean age of 39 years and standard deviation of 4.20. Cluster sampling was used to select Ministries whereas accidental sampling was utilized to select the participants from their respective ministries.

2.2 Instrument

Organizational identification scale developed by Rubin, Palmgreen, and Sypher [29], was used to examine an employee's role, belief and altitude for the organization. The scale comprises of twenty-five (25) items measured on a Likert scale ranging from (1) I agree very strongly to (5) I disagree very strongly some were scored directly, while some items were reversed. Sample items include: "I would probably continue working for my organization even if I didn't need money", "My organization's image in the community represents me well", "I try to make job decisions by considering the consequences of my actions for my organization" and "I have warm feelings towards my organization as a place of work". The original Cronbach's Alpha is .85 and a pilot study conducted to enhance the internal consistency and reliability of the instrument yielded alpha coefficient of .65.

Proactive work behavior scale is 18-item instrument developed by Parker, Williams, and Turner [30] to measure positive organizational behavior by the researchers due to their positive effects both on organizations and employees. It is measured on a 5-point likert format; sample items in the scale include: "I try to institute new work methods that are more effective for the company", "I speak up with my colleagues' ideas or opinions explicitly for changes in this organization" and "I feel a personal sense of responsibility to bring about change my work". The authors originally reported a cronbach's alpha r = .80. The proactive work behaviour scale yielded a correlational coefficient of 0.68 with organizational citizenship behaviour (Onyishi, 2007) to establish a concurrent validity using the pilot data. The Cornbrach's alpha reliability of the proactive work behaviour items was .81, Proactive idea implementation 0.82 and proactive problem solving dimension0.80 respectively. In order to use the scale in the study, Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient analysis was carried out by the recent authors and their analysis revealed an alpha reliability coefficient of .68 on the scale.

Cyber-loafing questionnaire is a 24-item questionnaire developed by Li and Chung [6]. The author reported an internal consistency of .77 for the general cyber-loafing scale and .85 and .68 for activity and behaviour subscales. Sample items include: "I use the Internet during work for private purposes to extend my social

network", "I use the Internet during work for private purposes to search information", "I use the Internet during work for private purposes to play a game online", "I use the Internet during work for private purposes to buy goods". Each of the four activities is represented by three items on a five-point scale ranging from (1) "(Almost) Never" to (5) "(Almost) Always". This scale consisted of three items per behaviour on a five-point scale ranging from (1) "(Almost) Never" to (5) "(Almost) Always". For its use in this study, a pilot study was carried out to ascertain its reliability and the result of the Cronbach's alpha coefficient confirmed that the instrument is reliable at .79.

2.3 Procedure

The study started with a pilot study to ensure the instruments for the study are reliable measures of the constructs. Consequently, responses of 51 participants who are civil servants from Anambra State civil service (but from different ministries other than the ones sampled in the main study) were elicited with the help of research assistants. The choice of using state employees is because the sample has similar characteristics with those of the main study. The researchers visited the secretariat during the official break time (1-2 pm) and gave the questionnaire to participants who were willing to be part of the study having introduced themselves as researchers carrying out an inquiry. The questionnaire was prepared in a booklet and was hand-distributed to the participants. The participants were given both oral and written instructions on how they may fill in the items in the questionnaire. The participants were assured of the confidentiality of their responses as there is no right or wrong answers, since the inquiry is only for an academic purpose. After filling their responses to the item questions which took each of the respondents about 19 minutes, the researchers together with the research assistants collected back the filled questionnaire from the respondents. Fifty-seven (57) questionnaire booklets were distributed but only fifty-three (53) were collected back while 51 was valid. After collecting the filled questionnaire, they were sorted and only the valid ones were coded in excel spread sheet for analysis. Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis was carried out and after analyzing the data obtained, the success of pilot study encouraged the researchers to move on to the main study.

In main study, having ensured the validity and reliability of the instruments during the pilot study, the researchers advanced to the main study with the aid of the instruments as statistical tools. The participants of the main study were employees of from Anambra civil service at the State secretariat Awka. The researchers used cluster sampling to select ministries (ministries used in the pilot study were select in clusteres) whereas accidental sampling technique was deployed to select the participants from the ministries. The researchers after selecting ministries approached those in charge in those ministries, for permission to carry out the study with their staff. The researchers introduced themselves researchers carrying out an inquiry. The researchers visited the Secretariat for data collects on three occasions during the fieldwork. During the visitations, 450 booklets of the questionnaire were distributed whereas only 413 (91.7%) were collected back. The valid questionnaire after field work was 403 (97.6%) which was utilized for data analysis.

2.4 Design/Statistics

This study being a survey study adopted correlation design and hierarchical regression analysis was adopted as the appropriate statistical tool to analyze the data obtained from the field study. All statistical analyses were managed with Statistical Package for Social Sciences SPSS version 20.00.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data in Table 1 indicated a mixed correlation. Whereas positive and significant correlation was recorded between organizational identification and proactive work behaviour at $r(1, 403) = .43^*$, $p < .05$; negative and significant correlation was recorded between organizational identification and cyber-loafing at $r(1, 403) = -.37^*$, $p < .05$. Also, negative and significant correlation was recorded between proactive work behaviour and cyber-loafing at $r(1, 403) = -.56^*$, $p < .05$. The findings imply that while the relationship between organizational identification and proactive work behaviour is linear, that between organizational identification and cyber-loafing is inverse; so, also with proactive work behaviour and cyber-loafing.

The result from the hierarchical regression analysis (Table 2) confirmed that both organizational identification and proactive work behaviour negatively and significantly predicted cyber-loafing at $\alpha = -.39^*$, $p < .05$ ($n = 403$) and $\alpha = -.48^*$, $p < .05$ ($n = 403$) respectively among civil servants in Anambra State. The significant

beta coefficient found is indicative that the more employees identifies with their organizations, the less prevalence of cyber-loafing which is same for proactive work behaviour. When organizational identification and proactive work behaviour is enhanced using the organizational social exchange models, less incidents of cyber-loafing are witnessed in the organization owing to the negative predictive influence recorded on each of the predictor variables.

3.1 Discussion

This study examined organizational identification and proactive work behaviour as predictors of cyber-loafing of employees of Anambra State civil service. Three hypotheses were formulated to guide the study and the analysis of the data obtained from survey of civil servants indicated that positive and significant correlation exists between organizational identification and proactive work behaviour and that both independent factors significantly which significantly and negatively predicted cyber-loafing among employees of Anambra State civil service. The findings buttress that the more employees identifies with their organizations the more likely they are to exhibit proactive behaviour (owing to the positive and signification correlation found between organizational identification and proactive work behaviour) and less likely they will exhibit cyber-loafing behaviour as explained by negative predictive effects found on both predictors of the study.

Pindek, Krajcevska and Spector [31] found that cyber-loafing is exhibited as a coping mechanism in dealing with workplace boredom. In line with its recovery dimension, unauthorized personal use of the internet during working hours has been recognized to ease employees' boredom proneness and frustration at the same time as a form of organizational deviance (counterproductive work behavior) since it harms the organization. The result of their study confirmed direct relationships between under-load and boredom and boredom and cyber-loafing. The boredom could be attributed to poor organization identification and could be the leading cause of cyber-loafing. Also, Sheikh, Atashgah and Adibzadegan's [32] found the antecedents of cyber-loafing largely depend on the behavioral attitudes of employees in relation to the organization (negative antecedents caused by poor organizational identification) or in relation to employee individual deviance as explained by the theory of planned behavior. Such individual idiosyncrasies were also supported by Rajah and Lim's [33] findings on cyber-loafing examining individual neutralization and organizational citizenship behavior insisting that individual behaviour which include how they connect and identify with the organization is the major determinant of cyber-loafing behaviour.

Furthermore, Çınar and Karcıoğlu [4] found in support of the current findings of the study that there is a negative relationship between cyber loafing and organizational citizenship behavior. The authors found that the level of cyber loafing was found as low and the level of OCB was found as high; hence, there were statistically significant differences in the levels of cyber loafing as OCB increased or decreased. This may be likened to the finding of this study

Table 1. Zero order correlation matrix of organizational identification and proactive work behaviour as predictors of cyber-loafing among civil servants in Anambra State, Nigeria

Variables	N	M	SD	1	2	3
1. Organizational identification	403	72.5204	3.5524	1.00		
2. Proactive work behaviour	403	49.0963	1.4205	.429*	1.00	
3. Cyber-loafing	403	87.6420	4.0025	-.372*	-.561*	1.00

**Correlation is significant at p < 0.05; N = Number of participants, M = Mean score, SD = Standard deviation*

Table 2. Summary table of hierarchical regression analysis for predictive of organizational identification and proactive work on cyber-loafing coefficients(a)

		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. error	Beta	B	
1	(Constant)	1.028	1.322	.953	1.00	.000
	Organizational identification	-.394	1.793	-.403	-.549	.012
	Proactive work behaviour	-.476	2.301	-.529	-.634	.006

a Dependent variable: Cyber-loafing

on proactive work behaviour. However, the current findings negate Rajah and Lim's [34] findings which established that cyber-loafing tends to increase organizational citizenship behaviour as compensation to the organization for their loafing behaviour.

4. CONCLUSION

Cyber-loafing has organizational cost which could be in form of productivity challenges, sabotage behaviour and poor member-to-member exchange. The challenges have increased stakeholders' interest on the causes and consequences of cyber-loafing in the workplace. The current study evaluated two intrinsic factors (organizational identification and proactive behaviour) as predictors of cyber-loafing. The finding recorded negative predictive effects on cyber-loafing – an indication that if the organization improves on organizational factors which enhance employees' organizational identification and proactive behaviour, cyber-loafing will be reduced since there is an inverse relationship while both organizational identification and proactive behaviour showed significant relationship. The findings have both academic and pragmatic implications which are are embedded on the prevailing organizational climate which influences the social exchange dynamics in the workplace. The weight of theoretical and empirical support is evidence that employee-factors such as organizational identification and proactive behaviour can predict a number of job and organizational outcomes such as cyber-loafing behaviour.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Cyber loafing behaviour may follow any of the four dimensions in relation to employees' subjective and cognitive predispositions which also can abate it. Generally, the organizational climate especially the human exchange therein is leading determinants of the levels of the cyber-loafing behaviour as workplace deviance. This exchange principally aligns the employee either to identify with the organization or not (setting the antecedence for loafing behaviours). There is also a possibility for employees to use proactivity in the organization as compensatory behaviour against their cyber loafing behaviours in the organization.

6. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study did not distinguish on the employees' sources of internet facilities used in cyber-loafing behaviours whether it is self-improvised through mobile phones and other personal digital devices of the employees or with the organization provided internet service and computer. This could have offered more insights into the dimension of cyber-loafing.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Cyber-loafing is an injurious organizational vice which may be predicated by a number of factors. However, its prevalence may be managed if organizations do the following:

i. Foster good interaction and leader-members exchange among organizational members.
ii. Deepen participation of employees in decision making and management.
iii. Create thriving climate that is challenging and fulfilling.

8. FUTURE STUDIES

The current study didn't extend its inquiry towards socio-economic variances of the employees; there is possibility that cyber loafing may be socio-economically induced than a learned behaviour in the workplace. New studies should hence, compare socio-economic variances of the employees in order to have deeper understanding into its prevalence.

CONSENT

As per international standard or university standard written participant consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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