

The Effect of the Campaigns of GSM Operators on University Students' Operator Choice

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Abstract

The most important factor that affects the buying situation of the customer is the cost of the services or goods. In case that the other factors are stable, that good is bought more when the prices of goods and service decrease. Today when we feel global competition in all sectors, other factors different than price affect the buying situation of the customers. The aim of this study is to detect how university students decide to buy when the other factors are taken into consideration. The study is carried out with the university students living in Gaziantep. For this study, 384 individual are selected. This selection is done randomly. A questionnaire is carried out with the students who are selected without looking at age, sex, department, hometown, budget or class. In this questionnaire scope, variables like SMS, Internet, calls to everywhere, calls in groups, social responsibility projects and device campaigns are chosen. At the end of the study, that the university students pay attention to free minutes, free minutes for every operator and internet quota that are granted while preferring operator is detected. It depends on the factors of age, sex and budget.

Keywords: Operator preferences, GSM Companies, Buying Behaviour

1. Introduction

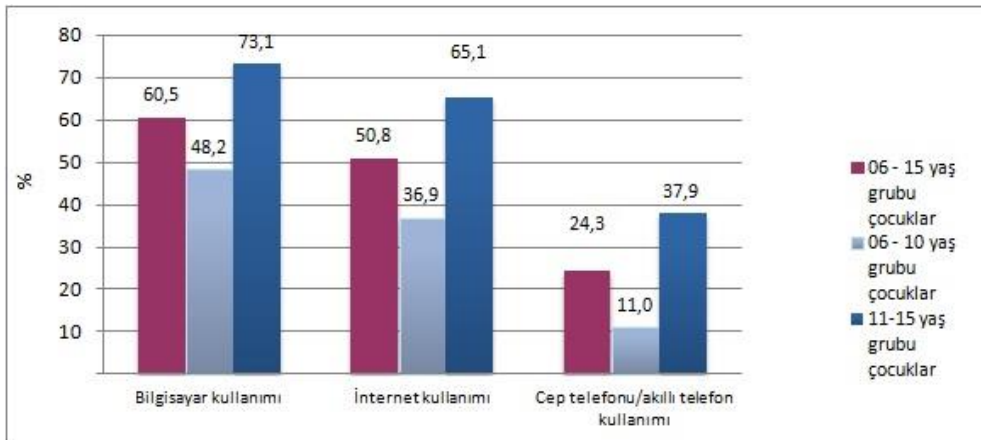
The factors that affect the buying situation of customers are the variables like the price of service or goods, the price of the complementary, level of income, the quality and accessibility of the goods or services and the brand of the product. Price is important for the reason that goods are requested. However, in some situations, price comes second while buying goods or services. The services like support services after buying or quality of goods become the issue of choice. The individual factors that affect the buying situation of customers is sex, occupation, level of education, level of income and marital status (Muter, 2002: 23). Age changes the physical and psychological features of the individuals. For this reason, age categorization for buying situation of customers is important. The other factor that affects the buying situation of customers is sex. The fact that the buying situations of men and women are different from each other is suggested in empirical studies. On the other hand, occupation is an important factor that affects the scope of the needs while the customers buy goods or services. In this context, consumers are categorized as employee, jobless and housewife (Çakmak, 2004: 5). Occupation causes the differences in the behaviours of customers. Analysis of the valid data is important to get sound results in the study. In this context, some data are seen below according to years: When we look at the Table1, it is seen that the number of telephone users in 1994 in Turkey is 81.276. This number reaches to 14.970.745 in 2000. 14 million members increase in just 6 years. This number reaches to 71.888.416 in 2014. While 93,2 % of houses has telephones in 2012, in urban and rural areas respectively: 95,1 % and 88,5%. The rate of increase mean is 3, 1% in the last 3 years. If the mean goes with this rate, it is expected that the number of telephone users will be 82 million (Tuik, 2015).

Table1: The Number of Mobile Phone and Internet Users in Turkey According to Years

Yıl	Cep telefonu abone sayısı	Toplam İnternet Kullanıcısı
1994	81 276	-
1995	332 716	-
1996	692 779	-
1997	1 483 149	-
1998	3 382 137	229 885
1999	7 562 972	436 610
2000	14 970 745	1 629 156
2001	19 502 897	1 619 270
2002	23 323 118	1 309 770
2003	27 887 535	906 650
2004	34 707 549	1 474 590
2005	43 608 965	2 248 105
2006	52 662 709	3 180 580
2007	61 975 807	4 842 798
2008	65 824 110	5 804 923
2009	62 779 554	8 849 779
2010	61 769 635	14 443 644
2011	65 321 745	22 371 441
2012	67 680 547	27 649 055
2013	69 661 108	32 613 930
2014	71 888 416	41 272 940

Reference: www.tuik.gov.tr/PreIstatistikTablo.do?istab_id=1580

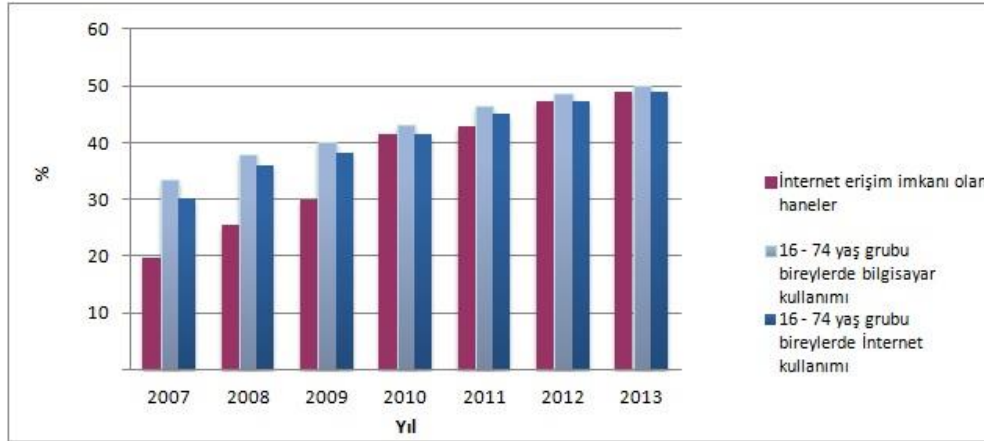
When we consider that Turkey's population is 72 million people, it is expected that each individual has a telephone. While the number of members who use internet on their phones is 229.885 in 1998, this number reaches to 1.474.590 in 2004. It is seen that the number is 41.272.940 in 2014. The number is about 40 million. When we consider that it is about half of the number of telephone subscribers, it is seen that one of each two mobile phone users has the Access of internet on their phones in Turkey. While the mean beginning age of using telephone is 10 among 06-15 age groups, it is 7 among 06-10 and 11 among 11-15. The first aim is to have conversation with 92,8 %, and playing game follows it with %66,8, messaging with 65,4 % and accessing to Internet with 30,7 % among the usage aims of mobile phone. While 80 % of the age group of 06-10 and 62,9 % of 11-15 age group play game on their mobile phones, 29,4 % of 06-10 age group and 76,2 % of 11-15 age group message on their mobile phones(Tuik,2015). This situation is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: The Usage of Mobile Phone among 06-15 Age Groups

Reference: <http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=15866>

The usage of internet and computer of the individuals among 16-74 age groups during 2007-2013 is shown. While 41, 1 % of the Internet users in the first three months of 2013 used mobile phone or smart phone, 17, 1% of those used laptop computers to connect to Internet via wireless except from houses and offices.

Table 3: The usage of Internet and Computer among the age of 16-74



Source: <http://tuik.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=13569>

According to the Communication Services Statistics of Information Technologies and Communications Authority 1st Semester of 2015, there is 72.040.764 subscriber in total for mobile phone that means 92, 72 % penetrations mean in Turkey since 2015 March. The ratio of mobile penetration rises 100 % except from 0-9 age group. While the number of 3G subscriber which is 51 million in 2014 reaches to 59.422.663 in 2015, the number of subscriber for the internet for mobile computer and mobile phone with 3G service reaches to 33.934.862. The use of mobile internet in the first quarter of 2015 is 107.970 T Byte. The number of subscriber for M2M reaches to 2, 7 million with the first quarter of 2015. The number of prepaid broad band subscriber is 16.152.591 and the number of post-paid broad band subscriber is 17.782.271. When we look at the first quarter of 2015, it is seen that about 54.5 % of mobile subscribers is prepaid ones and the rate of postponed subscribers increased from 41, 2% to 45, 5% during the last one year. The number of carrying number increases in the rate of 4, 4 % during the first quarter of 2015 since the last quarter period and it becomes 3.268.086. With the first quarter period of 2015, Turkcell has 47,6 %; Vodafone has 29,3 % and Avea has 23,1 % share depending on the number of subscriber. With the first quarter period of 2015, it is seen that 48,9 % of Avea subscribers, %45,3 of Turkcell subscribers and 43,1 % of Vodafone subscribers consist of post-paid subscribers. About 90, 3% of total mobile subscribers is individual 9,7 % is institutional(BTK,2015).

2. Literature Review

When we look at the studies that are carried for detecting the factors specifying the GSM operator choices of university students, general literature can be summarized like below: In their studies that they carried out by using both quantity and quality approaches, Aoki and Downes(2003) stated that university students use mobile phone for the reasons like feeling safe, financial benefits, using time efficiently and keeping in contact with their family and friends (Aoki ve Downes,2003). There are meaningful differences among the groups (Sivas-Tokat) in Gülmez's(2005) quotation "Family, friends and famous people do not have any effect on buying mobile phone." (Gülmez, 2005). Özer and etc.(2006) has suggested that post-paid services are preferred when the monthly expense for mobile phone increases. It is seen that as the number of students in a family increases, the usage of prepaid services increases (Özer, vd., 2006). Barutçu(2007) has suggested that the quality and cost of communication, the cost of changing and the variety of services have an important role on the loyalty of customers to the GSM operator. (Barutçu, 2007). Haddon has suggested that mobile phone is an important device for storing images and music. However, he suggested that it is not necessary for children (Haddon, 2008). Dündar and Ecer have categorized Vodafone-Avea-Turkcell depending on the speaking criterion; Turkcell-Vodafone-Avea depending on the scope area; Turkcell-Vodafone-Avea depending on the criterion of family's subscriber for GSM operator; Turkcell-Vodafone-Avea depending on the quality criterion and Vodafone-Avea-Turkcell depending on the price criterion. It is Turkcell-Vodafone-Avea depending on the all criteria. (Dündar ve Ecer, 2008).

Baron and Ling (2009) have suggested that use of mobile phone in ABD gain a big groundwork against the big harmony in the other areas of the world as a device for talking and messaging. Chen and Katz (2009) have suggested that mobile phone is a must for university students to keep in contact with their families. Other data have shown that university students use mobile phones to share their emotional, psychological and social experiences with using it for their families (Chen ve Katz, 2009). Barkhuus and Polichar (2010) have tried to depict the use of mobile phone with many aspects. They researched how users get different phones depending on their needs and life styles. Çemrek and Filiz (2011) suggested that there are differences between girls' and boys' phones in terms of being small, being expensive, taking photos, having access to internet and playing game (Çemrek ve Filiz, 2011). Türkay(2011) has suggested that the most used one is Avea among the students. He stated that most of the operators that students use are student or youth tariffs. Bal (2013) has stated that women talk and message on mobile phones more than men. On the other hand, men give importance more than women to 3-G feature and technical features like playing game on the mobile phone.

3. Materials and Methodology

It is possible to summarize the findings, analysis and the method used in this research as shown below.

3.1. Topic and Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study is to determine the effect of the campaigns implemented by GSM operators on the line preferences on the university students. Accordingly, this study investigates the factors affecting university students' GSM operator preference.

3.2. Scope and Limitations

The number of university students studying in Gaziantep in the 2014-2015 academic period is about 40 thousands. The research was conducted only with the students at associate and undergraduate levels of formal education. Master's and PhD students were kept out of range.

3.3. Methodology

The study was conducted through face to face surveys with 384 students by selecting samples from the main mass of university students living in Gaziantep. The sample size was determined in accordance with the basic econometric models. Before starting the surveys, the students signed the informed consent form, and we did not make a survey with the students who do not want to participate. The questionnaire used in this study consisted of two parts. In the first part, there were demographic and socio-economic questions as well as the questions aiming at obtaining data for the products and level of use of GSM subscriptions. Then, as the second part of the questionnaire, a five-point Likert scale (1: Strongly Disagree, 2: Disagree, 3: Partially Agree, 4: Agree, 5: Strongly Agree) was used in order to find out the GSM operators that university students prefer to use according to the standards that are thought to have an effect on the GSM operator choice.

3.4. Data Analysis

In the data analysing part, SPSS 22.0 was used. Frequency distribution and percentage values were detected in order to determine the priority order of the factors that rule the choice of line.

3.5. Findings and Discussion

When Table 1 is examined, 94.5% of students participating in the study seem to be between the ages of 18-25. GSM companies in Turkey offer people aged between 18-25 such tariffs as Genç Turkcell or Vodafone Freezone. It can be seen that university students aged between 18-15 make their operator preferences by taking into account these campaigns by 53.2 %.

Table 1: Age Distribution of the Students Participating in the Survey

	Frequency	Percent	ValidPercent	CumulativePercent
Valid 18-20	137	35,7	35,7	35,7
21-25	226	58,9	58,9	94,5
26-30	21	5,5	5,5	100,0
Total	384	100,0	100,0	

As for the Table 2, 32 % of the participants taking part in the survey were female, and 68 % were male. It is concluded that female students take into account environmental factors, their friends and family while deciding their GSM operator.

Table 2: Gender Distribution of the Students Participating in the Survey

	Frequency	Percent	ValidPercent	CumulativePercent
Bayan	123	32,0	32,0	32,0
Bay	261	68,0	68,0	100,0
Total	384	100,0	100,0	

According to Table 3, the distribution of the GSM operators that the participants use is like: 40.9 % Avea, 39.8 % Vodafone and 19.3 % Turkcell. It can be understood from the answers that the university students gave to the survey questions that they most consider about the minutes and the internet quota. When examined within this context, Avea tariffs applied for younger users seem to be preferred more

Table 3: The Operator Used by the Students Participating in the Survey

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Avea	157	40,9	40,9	40,9
Vodafone	153	39,8	39,8	80,7
Turkcell	74	19,3	19,3	100,0
Total	384	100,0	100,0	

When Table 4 is examined, 96.1 % of the students participated in the survey are seen as the middle class in terms of household income levels described by TSI. It can be seen that as the income level increases, the students take into account the internet quota by 66.7 % ratio while choosing a GSM operator.

Table 4: Family Income Levels of Students Participating in the Survey

	Frequency	Percent	ValidPercent	CumulativePercent
Valid 0-1000	137	35,7	35,7	35,7
1001-2000	232	60,4	60,4	96,1
2001-3000	15	3,9	3,9	100,0
Total	384	100,0	100,0	

As for the Table 5, 60.9 % of the students participated in the survey made line transfer in the last one year. This ratio indicates that the students have low loyalty to their own operators. Therefore, they can easily give up the tariffs used without commitment.

Table 5: Line Transfer Profiles of the Students Participating in the Survey

	Frequency	Percent	ValidPercent	CumulativePercent
Valid Yes	234	60,9	60,9	60,9
No	150	39,1	39,1	100,0
Total	384	100,0	100,0	

The participants were asked whether they take into account the minutes while choosing their GSM operator. According to Table 6, 83.1 % of them take into account the minutes. We tried to determine in which ways the students use the minutes with 3rd and 4th questions. It is understood that the participant prefer the minutes for every operator to free call minutes within the group. 47.3 % of the participants answering the question of “ I pay attention to the free call minutes within the group provided by the operator while deciding my GSM operator.” stated that they pay attention to it. 80.2 % of the respondents to the question of “ I consider free call minutes for each operator while choosing a GSM operator.” seems to pay attention to this factor. It is observed that fee calls for every operator has importance for GSM operator choice.

Table 6 : Minutes of the Conscious in Operator Profiles

		Frequency	Percent	ValidPercent	CumulativePercent
Valid	Abs. Disagree	15	3,9	3,9	3,9
	Disagre	17	4,4	4,4	8,3
	Undecided	33	8,6	8,6	16,9
	Agree	177	46,1	46,1	63,0
	Abs. Agree	142	37,0	37,0	100,0
	Total	384	100,0	100,0	

The students participating in the survey were asked whether they pay attention to free SMS while choosing an operator. When Table 7 is analysed, it is obvious that 33% of the participators do not pay attention to the amount of free SMS while choosing a GSM operator. 45 % of the students pay attention to the amount of free SMS. Accordingly, the percentages are close to each other, and it seems that the amount of SMS does not have much importance in the choice of GSM operator.

Table 7: In the preferred SMS Operator 'S Consideration Areas

		Frequency	Percent	ValidPercent	CumulativePercent
Valid	Abs. Disagree	31	8,1	8,1	8,1
	Disagre	98	25,5	25,5	33,6
	Undecided	79	20,6	20,6	54,2
	Agree	109	28,4	28,4	82,6
	Abs. Agree	67	17,4	17,4	100,0
	Total	384	100,0	100,0	

The participants were asked whether they pay attention to the internet quota while choosing a GSM operator or not. As for the Table 8.77 % of them take into account it. When compared with the level of income, the higher the income is the more the students prefer the internet quota.

Table 8: Internet Operators in Kota Conscious Preferences

		Frequency	Percent	ValidPercent	CumulativePercent
Valid	Abs. Disagree	15	3,9	3,9	3,9
	Disagre	18	4,7	4,7	8,6
	Undecided	55	14,3	14,3	22,9
	Agree	138	35,9	35,9	58,9
	Abs. Agree	158	41,1	41,1	100,0
	Total	384	100,0	100,0	

The participants of the survey were asked whether free in-group minutes under a tariff are important while deciding on a GSM operator or not. According to Table 9, 47.3 % of the participants take into account these minutes. When compared with free minutes for each direction, it is understood that students prefer free minutes for each direction more.

Table 9: Minutes of Conscious Group within the operator Preferences

		Frequency	Percent	ValidPercent	CumulativePercent
Valid	Abs. Disagree	47	12,2	12,2	12,2
	Disagre	70	18,2	18,2	30,5
	Undecided	85	22,1	22,1	52,6
	Agree	104	27,1	27,1	79,7
	Abs. Agree	78	20,3	20,3	100,0
	Total	384	100,0	100,0	

The students participating in the survey were asked whether free minutes that they use under a tariff for each direction are important while choosing a GSM operator or not. When Table 10 is examined, 80.2 % of the students participating in the survey consider about these minutes. Correspondingly, it is seen that the students participating in the survey largely take into account minutes for each direction while choosing an operator.

Table 10: Minutes of the Conscious in all directions in the operator Preferences

		Frequency	Percent	ValidPercent	CumulativePercent
Valid	Abs. Disagree	10	2,6	2,6	2,6
	Disagree	22	5,7	5,7	8,3
	Undecided	44	11,5	11,5	19,8
	Agree	137	35,7	35,7	55,5
	Abs. Agree	171	44,5	44,5	100,0
	Total	384	100,0	100,0	

The participants were asked whether such practices as movie and shopping discounts applied by GSM operators are important for deciding o an operator. As for Table 11, it is seen that almost 60 % of the participants pay attention to these offers.

Table 11: Preferred Applications Considered as the operator Discount Shopping Areas

		Frequency	Percent	ValidPercent	CumulativePercent
Valid	Abs. Disagree	50	13,0	13,0	13,0
	Disagre	38	9,9	9,9	22,9
	Undecided	70	18,2	18,2	41,1
	Agree	122	31,8	31,8	72,9
	Abs. Agree	104	27,1	27,1	100,0
	Total	384	100,0	100,0	

The students participating in the study were asked whether device campaigns applied by GSM companies are important while choosing an operator. According to Table 12, 47.2 % of the students participating in the survey take into account these campaigns. By considering this rate and the income of university students, 60 % of the ones with higher income answered this question as ‘‘I Agree’’.

Table 12: Conscious Preferred Operator Tariffs on Additional Devices Campaign

		Frequency	Percent	ValidPercent	CumulativePercent
Valid	Abs. Disagree	46	12,0	12,0	12,0
	Disagre	79	20,6	20,6	32,6
	Undecided	78	20,3	20,3	52,9
	Agree	99	25,8	25,8	78,6
	Abs. Agree	82	21,4	21,4	100,0
	Total	384	100,0	100,0	

The participants were asked whether the youth fares offered by the GSM companies have importance in choosing an operator. When Table 13 is analysed, 52.3 % of the participants take into account these fares. By considering this percentage and the ages of university students, 53 % of the ones aged between 18-25 answered this question as ‘‘I Agree’’.

Table 13: Advertise or Festivals Such as Conscious Activities in Operator Profiles

		Frequency	Percent	ValidPercent	CumulativePercent
Valid	Abs. Disagree	65	16,9	16,9	16,9
	Disagre	59	15,4	15,4	32,3
	Undecided	59	15,4	15,4	47,7
	Agree	124	32,3	32,3	79,9
	Abs. Agree	77	20,1	20,1	100,0
	Total	384	100,0	100,0	

The students participating in the survey were asked whether the social responsibility projects practiced by the GSM companies are important or not while choosing an operator. As for the Table 14, it is understood that 50.6 % of the participants pay attention to these projects. By considering this rate and the ages of university students, 71.43 % of the ones aged between 26- 30 responded this question as ‘‘I Agree’’.

Table 14: Conscious Social Responsibility of Business in the Projects Carried out by Operators Preferences

		Frequency	Percent	ValidPercent	CumulativePercent
Valid	Abs. Disagree	45	11,7	11,7	11,7
	Disagre	54	14,1	14,1	25,8
	Undecided	91	23,7	23,7	49,5
	Agree	125	32,6	32,6	82,0
	Abs. Agree	69	18,0	18,0	100,0
	Total	384	100,0	100,0	

The students taking part in the study were asked whether such factors as family, environment or friend are important while deciding on a GSM operator. According the Table 15, 63.3 % of the students participating in the survey pay attention to these factors. By considering this percentage and the gender of university students, it can be inferred that 87.80 % of the females responded this question as ‘I Agree’.

Table 15: Operator Preferences in Family Environment as Factors Considered Areas

		Frequency	Percent	ValidPercent	CumulativePercent
Valid	Abs. Disagree	39	10,2	10,2	10,2
	Disagre	41	10,7	10,7	20,8
	Undecided	61	15,9	15,9	36,7
	Agree	96	25,0	25,0	61,7
	Abs. Agree	147	38,3	38,3	100,0
	Total	384	100,0	100,0	

Conclusion

When the participants' answers given to the questions related to their operator preference are examined, it is determined that the most important factor while choosing a GSM operator is free minutes with 83.1 %. The second most important factor is free minutes for every operator (80.2 %), and the third one is family and environment factors. This rates change according to age, gender and income level. When we make a distinction in terms of the age variable, the most important factor in the choice of an operator for the ones aged between 18- 25 is free minute with 84.30 %. It is also found that the second most important factor is free minutes for each direction (79.34 %), and the third one is the internet quota. It is found that the most important factor in operator preference for the ones aged between 26- 30 is the internet quota with 95.24 %, the second most important factor is the social responsibility projects that GSM companies carry out (71.43 %), and the third important factor is minute, internet quota and some special offers such as movie ticket or shopping discount. When analysed according to gender, it is seen that the most important factor in the operator choice for females is free minutes with 92.68 %, the second factor is the elements such as family, environment and friends with (87.80 %), and the third one is the internet quota (80.49 %). It is understood that females largely consider about the family, environment and friend factors. On the other hand, it is found that the most important factor in the operator preference for males is free minutes for each direction with 80.08 %, the second factor is free minutes (78.54 %), and the third one is free internet quota within the tariff (76.63 %). When analysed in terms of level of incomes, it is found that the most important factor in operator choice for those with 0-1000 TL income is free minutes with 83.21 %, the second factor is free minutes for every operator (77.37 %), and the third one is free internet quota within the tariff (68.61 %). As the income rises above 2000 TL, the most important factor in operator preference is found as the internet quota with 66.67 %. It is obvious that as the income increases, internet quota becomes more important. Consequently, it is expected that if GSM companies arrange their campaigns for young people by taking into account the factors stated above, it will affect the amount of their product sales. It is asserted with this study that university students make their GSM operator choice in terms of free minutes, free minutes for every operator, and the internet quota. However, this order changes according to age, gender and level of income. The income taken into account in this study refers to the student's family income. It is understood that as the level of income increases, internet quota becomes more and more important. It is also seen that females take into consideration such factors as family, friends and environment while choosing a GSM operator.

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