



Bridging the Gap: Critical Thinking Practices for History Educators in Private Secondary Schools of Marawi City, Philippines

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Abstract

The study examines the teaching strategies used by history educators in private secondary schools in Marawi City, Lanao del Sur, Philippines, focusing on fostering critical thinking among students. History education often encounters the challenge of being perceived as monotonous, primarily due to traditional teaching methods emphasizing rote memorization. This research aims to explore innovative and inclusive approaches to teaching history, encouraging curiosity, critical analysis, and active participation. Utilizing a descriptive research design, data were gathered through surveys and interviews with history teachers to analyze their methods and assess their effectiveness in enhancing student learning. The findings reveal that interactive teaching strategies, technological integration, and diverse historical resources positively influence students' engagement and critical thinking abilities. Despite these advances, challenges persist, particularly in the accessibility of resources and the availability of professional training for educators. The study highlights the necessity of equipping history educators with adequate tools and training to deliver engaging and impactful lessons. Key recommendations include organizing professional development programs, updating curricula to include collaborative and inquiry-based learning models, and ensuring access to comprehensive teaching resources. This research contributes to the ongoing efforts to improve history education and provides valuable insights for future studies aimed at refining pedagogical practices in this field.

Keywords: History Education, Teaching Strategies, Critical Thinking, Marawi City, Private Secondary Schools

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Introduction

History is often seen by students as a dull subject, mainly due to traditional teaching methods that focus on memorization of dates, names, and events. (Popa, 2022); (Al Shloul et al., 2024)“History becomes boring not because of its content but because of the way it is taught, turning rich narratives into monotonous recitations.” This conventional approach leads to disengagement, as students struggle to find meaning or relevance in the material. However, innovative teaching strategies can transform history into a dynamic and thought-provoking subject. By incorporating interactive discussions, collaborative projects, and the integration of technology, educators can breathe new life into the discipline. Tools such as multimedia presentations, virtual reality, and gamified learning can capture students’ imaginations and make history both relevant and exciting. If educators had adopted such strategies in the past, students might have developed a vastly different attitude toward the subject, recognizing that history is not just a list of events but a lens through which to understand humanity’s journey and societal evolution.

The significance of history extends beyond academic knowledge. As a core component of Social Studies, history prepares students for active and informed citizenship. The *Social Studies in Secondary Education* framework(Waghid, 2024); (Sasaki & Baba, 2024a). emphasizes that this discipline is crucial in fostering a critical awareness of cultural, political, and social systems. Teaching history in ways that captivate students and encourage critical thinking is a challenge, but one that educators must embrace. To meet this challenge, teachers should move beyond traditional lectures, adopting strategies that inspire curiosity and enable students to draw connections between historical events and contemporary issues. This study focuses on the teaching strategies employed by history educators in private secondary schools in Marawi City, Lanao del Sur, and evaluates their effectiveness in engaging students and promoting critical thinking. The aim is to identify innovative approaches that can make history education more engaging and intellectually enriching.

Historically, Social Studies has been a subject of debate, particularly regarding its scope and purpose. While “Social Studies” emerged in the early 20th century, History and Geography have long been essential components of school curricula. Social Studies aims to prepare young people for active participation in a democratic society, a mission formalized in the *Social Studies in Secondary Education* framework (Sasaki & Baba, 2024b). This underscores the need for unique teaching approaches that make history accessible and engaging for learners. The effective teaching of history depends on the methods used to convey knowledge. These strategies must not only capture students' interest but also ensure that learning is coherent and inclusive of diverse learning styles. There is no one-size-fits-all approach; educators must select and adapt instructional methods based on their students’ needs.

In Marawi City, where the historical and cultural context is unique, teachers have the opportunity to connect students with both local and global narratives. This study explores the teaching strategies used in this context, with a focus on enhancing student engagement and fostering critical thinking. By evaluating these strategies, the study aims to provide insights and recommendations that could transform history education in the region. Effective teaching strategies are critical in promoting student learning, particularly in developing critical thinking. (Larsson, 2017), describe teaching strategies as approaches that support both student and teacher learning, while (O’Reilly et al., 2022), define them as methods, techniques, and procedures used during instruction. Strategies that engage students and encourage understanding have been identified by various scholars, such as Tanner, Bottoms, and (Almulla, 2020), who emphasize the importance of techniques like fragmentation and simplification in fostering critical thinking. However, challenges such as the difficulty of implementing these strategies in large classes or with unprepared teachers remain (Ananda et al., 2023). Solutions such as short activities and student-driven discussions can help overcome these

challenges.

Local history plays a crucial role in history education, providing students with a more accessible and relatable approach to the subject. (Stamataki & Ampartzaki, 2023), local history serves as the foundation for active learning methodologies, allowing students to connect with their community's past. Teachers are encouraged to use various methods, such as collaborative learning and case studies, to help students develop problem-solving skills and critically analyze broader historical contexts. By incorporating these approaches, history education can encourage critical thinking and meaningful learning experiences.

This study is grounded in Bruner's constructivism theory, which emphasizes active learning where students construct meaning based on their experiences. According to Bruner, learners build new knowledge by organizing existing concepts using cognitive structures. The teacher's role is to facilitate discovery and problem-solving, encouraging independent learning. Additionally, Arreze's motivation theory, connected to constructivism, suggests that fulfilling basic needs enables individuals to pursue higher goals, as described in Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Cognitive Behavioral Theory by Beck and Erikson's Psychoanalytic Theory further explore how experiences and developmental stages shape behavior, emotions, and identity. Through these frameworks, the study explores how teaching strategies can foster a deeper understanding of history and promote critical thinking among students.

The following research questions were posed to guide the study

1. What are the socio- demographic profiles of the selected respondents in terms of:
 - 1.1. Age
 - 1.2. Gender
 - 1.3. Socio-Economic status
 - 1.4. Highest Educational Attainment
 - 1.5. Monthly Income
 - 1.6. Years in service
 - 1.7. Eligibility?
2. What are the extent strategies in developing critical thinking of high school students?
3. What is the critical thinking of high school learners in learning history?
4. What are the implications that can be drawn in the study?

Methodology

Design of the Study

This study utilized a descriptive survey design to explore the strategies employed by private secondary school teachers in Marawi City, Lanao del Sur, for fostering critical thinking. Following Orodho's (2003) definition, descriptive research collects data through interviews or questionnaires to reflect the conditions under study. Socio-demographic factors such as age, gender, socio-economic status, educational attainment, monthly income, years of service, and eligibility were analyzed alongside teaching strategies. This systematic approach aims to identify patterns and relationships, offering insights into effective practices that promote critical thinking in education.

Area of the Study

This study conducted in Marawi City. The locale chooses due to its accessibility and ease of securing classifying respondents for the study.

Population of the Study

This study employed a questionnaire survey to gather data from secondary school teachers in Marawi City, identified and recommended by their respective principals. A total of twenty-seven (27) respondents were randomly selected from private high school teachers residing in Marawi City, Lanao del Sur. The sampling process combined convenience sampling, chosen for its practicality and accessibility, with simple random sampling to ensure fairness and minimize bias in the final selection. Ethical considerations guided the process, emphasizing voluntary participation to obtain accurate and objective information. The willingness and cooperation of the selected respondents were crucial in shaping the study's findings, ensuring that the data collected reflected truthful insights relevant to the study's objectives.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The respondents of the proposed survey were selected residents of a private school in Marawi City. The sampling method used was convenience sampling. The sample members were selected for the convenience of the researcher. In most cases, the researchers select those close to them that were ready or willing to participate. Convenience sampling method was used to select the samples, but the actual selection of respondents was simple random. The importance of the said sample was due to ethical considerations and the type of respondents used in this particular study. This process shaped the essence of this study and helped to obtain objective and truthful information about the study through the willingness of the selected respondents.

Instrumentation

A survey questionnaire was used to collect data from private school teachers in Marawi City. It had two parts: personal information (age, gender, socio-economic status, etc.) and questions on addressing critical thinking strategies in history education. Statistical tools, including Frequency and Percentage Distribution and Mean and Standard Deviation, were used to analyze the data. Questionnaires were distributed during respondents' free time, with assistance provided as needed. Primary data came from the surveys, while secondary data were sourced from books, journals, and online materials to ensure comprehensive analysis.

Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the survey questionnaire was ensured through a pilot test to clarify questions, internal consistency measured by Cronbach's Alpha, and test-retest reliability for stability over time. Clear instructions and assistance were provided to respondents, while statistical analysis (frequency distribution, mean, and standard deviation) was used to assess consistency in the data. These steps ensured the instrument reliably measured critical thinking strategies in history education.

Method of Data Collection

This research aimed to explore the importance of history education and the strategies for fostering critical thinking among junior high school teachers in Marawi City, Lanao del Sur. The respondents were selected from various private secondary schools, including Jamiatu Muslim Mindanao, Ibn Shiena Integrated School, Lanao Islamic Paramedical College Foundation, Philippine Islamic Teachers College, Bubong Marzok Memorial College, Al Khwarizmi International College,

Saphiyyah Integrated School, Dhayfullah Integrated School, Senator Nenoy Aquino Integrated School, Philippine Integrated School, and Dansalan Integrated School.

A checklist questionnaire was distributed to qualified teachers after obtaining permission from the school principals. The questionnaire was divided into three sections: demographic information (age, gender, socio-economic status, educational attainment, etc.), strategies for history education and critical thinking, and the implications of the study's findings. The researchers secured permission from the college dean and school principals, after which they introduced the study to the respondents, who voluntarily participated. The surveys were administered during the respondents' free time, with support provided for any questions they had. Primary data was gathered through the questionnaires, while secondary data was collected from books, online resources, journals, and other relevant materials.

Method of Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study involved the use of frequency and percentage distribution to describe the respondents' demographic profiles, such as age, gender, socio-economic status, and educational attainment. Additionally, mean and standard deviation were used to analyze responses regarding the importance of history education and strategies for critical thinking. These statistical tools helped measure the relevance of various factors influencing history education in junior high schools in Marawi City.

Ethical Approval notification

The researchers sought ethical approval for the study by obtaining a formal consent letter from the College Dean of Jamiatu Muslim Mindanao, which was subsequently used to request permission from the principals of selected private schools in Marawi City, Lanao del Sur. Upon receiving approval from the school administrators, the researchers provided the respondents with detailed information about the study, ensuring their voluntary participation and the confidentiality of their responses.

Results and Discussion

Part I. Demographic Profile of the Respondents

The demographic profile of the respondents in this study encompasses key factors such as age, gender, socio-economic status, highest educational attainment, monthly income, years in service, and professional eligibility. These characteristics provide valuable insights into the backgrounds of the participants and serve as a foundation for understanding how these variables might influence their perspectives and responses regarding the importance of history education and the strategies used for promoting critical thinking in junior high school classrooms in Marawi City.

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Respondents According to Ages

Ages	Frequency	Percentage
20 – 22	2	7.4
23 – 26	13	48.1
27 – 30	8	29.6
31 and above	4	14.8

Total	27	100.0
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Table 1 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of respondents according to age. Among the 27 respondents, 2 were aged 20-22 years, making up 7.4% of the total sample. The largest group, consisting of 13 respondents (48.1%), fell within the 23-26 age range. Eight respondents (29.6%) were aged 27-30 years, while 4 respondents (14.8%) were aged 31 and above. These findings indicate that the majority of respondents, 13 out of 27, were between 23 and 26 years old.

Table 2. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Respondents According to Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	4	14.8
Female	23	85.2
Total	27	100.0

Table 2 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents according to gender. The data shows that, out of the 27 respondents, 4 were male, making up 14.8% of the total respondents. Meanwhile, 23 respondents were female, which represents 85.2% of the total respondents. This indicates that a significant majority of the respondents, 23 out of 27, were female.

Table 3. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Respondents According to Socio-Economic Status

Socio-Economic Status	Frequency	Percentage
Middle class	21	77.8
Lower class	6	22.2
Total	27	100.0

Table 3 displays the socio-economic status of the teacher respondents from selected private schools in Marawi City, Lanao del Sur. The data reveals that 21 teachers, or 77.8% of the respondents, belong to the middle class. In contrast, 6 respondents, or 22.2%, belong to the lower class. These findings indicate that the majority of the respondents, 77.8%, are from the middle class.

Table 4. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Respondents According to Educational Attainment

Educational Attainment	Frequency	Percentage
Degree Holder	20	74.1
Master's Degree	7	25.9
Total	27	100.0

Table 4 shows the educational attainment of the selected respondents in the private school in Marawi City in line with history teachers were twenty (20) history teachers were degree holder with an average percent of the seventy-four-point one percent (74.1%) were the total percent in the degree holder. Then seven (7) history teachers were in the master's degree with an average percent of the twenty-five-point nine percent (25.9%) were the total percent of the master's degree. The result shows that a great majority 20 or 74.1% were degree holder.

Table 5. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Respondents According to Monthly Income

Monthly Income	Frequency	Percentage
5,000php to 10,000php	17	63.0
11,000php to 20,000php	10	37.0
Total	27	100.0

Table 5 shows the frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents' monthly income. The data reveals that 17 history teachers, or 63.0% of the total respondents, earn between 5,000 and 10,000 PHP. Meanwhile, 10 history teachers, or 37.0%, fall within the 11,000 to 20,000 PHP income range. These results indicate that the majority of respondents (63.0%) earn between 5,000 and 10,000 PHP monthly.

Table 6. Frequency and Percentage Distribution According to Years in Service

Years in Service	Frequency	Percentage
1 to 2 Years	15	55.6
3 to 4 Years	5	18.5
5 and above	7	25.9
Total	27	100.0

Table 6 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of respondents according to their years of service. The data reveals that 15 history teachers, or 55.6% of the respondents, have been in service for 1 to 2 years. Meanwhile, 5 teachers (18.5%) have 3 to 4 years of service, and 7 teachers (25.9%) have been in service for 5 years or more. The results show that the majority, 15 teachers or 55.6%, have 1 to 2 years of service.

Table 7. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Respondents Accordingly, to Eligibility

Eligibility	Frequency	Percentage
Eligible	19	70.4
Non-Eligible	8	29.6
Total	27	100.0

Table 7 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of respondents based on their eligibility. The data reveals that 70.4% (19 history teachers) are licensed professional teachers, while 29.6% (8 history teachers) are non-eligible. The results indicate that the majority, 19 teachers or 70.4%, are eligible.

Part II. Respondents Perception on the Strategies in Developing Critical Thinking of High School Learners

Table 8. Mean Standard Deviation of Respondents Perception on the Strategies in Developing Critical Thinking of High School Learners

Strategies in Developing Critical Thinking	Mean	Std. Deviation	Descriptive Statement
1. Historical teaching can be viewed differently depending on the cultural and social context.	1.6667	0.87706	Always
2. Historical teaching can have different interpretations depending on the interest of the learners.	2.0000	1.03775	Often

3. Historical teaching can have both short term and long term systematically ways relying on the impact of the individual learners' interests.	1.9259	0.78082	Often
4. Teaching of history help us develop simply ways of improving critical thinking skills and abilities of the learners.	1.4074	0.69389	Always
5. It develop critically and simplicity on the teacher based on their teachable credibility and reliability on the learners.	1.5556	0.57735	Always
6. Historical analysis involves considering the influence of the socio-economic factors on the teachers and the learners.	1.7407	0.85901	Always
7. History Teaching can have both intended and unintended consequences.	2.1111	0.84732	Often
8. It requires questioning assumption and challenging conventional wisdom of both teacher and the learners.	1.5556	0.80064	Always
9. Bias is avoidable in history teaching, and it is important to critically fear in giving fear punishment to the learners on their action and activities.	1.8148	0.92141	Often
10. Primary level of teaching history are more reliable than hardest level of teaching.	2.1852	0.73574	Often
11. Historical teaching in a simplest way is more essential for the learners to understand the lessons.	1.8148	0.78628	Often
12. Using integration on the teaching history is more than complex or simply on the learners to understand the lessons.	1.6296	0.68770	Always

Table 8 presents the mean and standard deviation of respondents' perceptions on strategies for developing critical thinking in high school learners. The first statement, with a mean of 1.6667 and a standard deviation of 0.87706, shows that respondents "always" believe history teaching varies based on cultural and social contexts, highlighting the influence of teachers' backgrounds. The second statement, with a mean of 2.0000 and a standard deviation of 1.03775, indicates that respondents "often" agree history teaching depends on students' interests, suggesting that engagement is key to effective teaching. The third statement, with a mean of 1.9259 and a standard deviation of 0.78082, reflects that respondents "often" agree history should be taught systematically, considering its impact on students' interests. The fourth statement, with a mean of 1.4074 and a standard deviation of 0.69389, shows that respondents "always" believe teaching history enhances learners' critical thinking skills, underscoring the subject's role in cognitive development (Yu, 2024); (Khalid et al., 2021).

The fifth statement, with a mean of 1.5556 and a standard deviation of 0.57735, indicates that respondents "always" believe effective teaching in history depends on the teacher's credibility and reliability. The sixth statement, with a mean of 1.7407 and a standard deviation of 0.85901, shows that respondents "always" acknowledge the importance of considering socio-economic factors in historical analysis. The seventh statement, with a mean of 2.1111 and a standard deviation of 0.84732, suggests that respondents "often" believe history teaching has both intended and unintended consequences, influencing students' knowledge and perception of history. The eighth statement, with a mean of 1.5556 and a standard deviation of 0.80064, indicates that respondents "always" support questioning assumptions and challenging conventional wisdom in history education.

The ninth statement, with a mean of 1.8148 and a standard deviation of 0.92141, shows that

respondents "often" believe bias can be avoided in teaching history, emphasizing the importance of fairness in assessing students' actions. The tenth statement, with a mean of 2.1852 and a standard deviation of 0.73574, reveals that respondents "often" consider primary-level history teaching more reliable and engaging than advanced levels. The eleventh statement, with a mean of 1.8148 and a standard deviation of 0.78628, suggests that respondents "often" believe simpler methods in history teaching are more effective for student understanding. Lastly, the twelfth statement, with a mean of 1.6296 and a standard deviation of 0.68770, shows that respondents "often" believe integrating various approaches in teaching history makes the subject easier for students to comprehend.

Table 9. Mean and Standard Deviation of Respondents Perception on the Critical Thinking of High School Learners

Critical Thinking	Mean	Std. Deviation	Descriptive Statement
1. The teaching of history can be transforms essentially for understanding contemporary issues.	1.5556	0.50637	Strongly Agree
2. History teaching is changeable through transferring information and widen through imparting on the learners.	1.8519	0.94883	Agree
3. It allows teachers and learner's construct and analyze and consider the different interpretations.	1.6296	0.62929	Strongly Agree
4. Teachers can construct new knowledge and empathy about developing the critical thinking abilities of the learners.	1.4074	0.63605	Strongly Agree
5. Technology has fundamental changed the in the way of teaching history.	1.5556	0.69798	Strongly Agree
6. Teachers and learners are able to make decisions on how they evaluate credibility and reliability inclined on the historical teaching.	1.5556	0.57735	Strongly Agree
7. Historical teaching and study can be view differently by the teacher and learner's depending on the cultural and social context related on their own understanding.	1.6296	0.62929	Strongly Agree
8. Historical empathy's is essential for the understanding both teacher and the learners.	1.4444	0.50637	Strongly Agree

Table 9 presents the mean and standard deviation of respondents' perceptions on critical thinking in learners. The first statement, with a mean of 1.5556 and a standard deviation of 0.50637, shows that respondents "strongly agree" that teaching history is essential for understanding contemporary issues, indicating that history education helps students comprehend current affairs. The second statement, with a mean of 1.8519 and a standard deviation of 0.94883, reflects that respondents "agree" that history teaching is adaptable through the transfer and broadening of knowledge, emphasizing the importance of thorough historical understanding. The third statement, with a mean of 1.6296 and a standard deviation of 0.62929, shows that respondents "strongly agree" that both teachers and learners construct, analyze, and

consider different interpretations of history, highlighting its subjectivity and diverse perspectives (Kropman et al., 2023); (Bleeze, 2024); (Hadiani et al., 2023).

The fourth statement, with a mean of 1.4074 and a standard deviation of 0.63605, indicates that respondents "strongly agree" that teachers can develop critical thinking abilities in learners by constructing new knowledge and empathy, suggesting the importance of fostering students' cognitive development (Pedroso et al., 2024); (Ahmed, 2024). The fifth statement, with a mean of 1.5556 and a standard deviation of 0.69798, shows that respondents "strongly agree" that technology has fundamentally changed the way history is taught, underlining the significance of innovative tools in education. The sixth statement, with a mean of 1.5556 and a standard deviation of 0.57735, indicates that respondents "strongly agree" that both teachers and learners are capable of evaluating the credibility and reliability of historical information, reflecting the importance of critical assessment skills. The seventh statement, with a mean of 1.6296 and a standard deviation of 0.62929, shows that respondents "strongly agree" that historical teaching and study are interpreted differently by teachers and learners based on their cultural and social contexts, emphasizing the role of personal knowledge in understanding history. Lastly, the eighth statement, with a mean of 1.4444 and a standard deviation of 0.50637, shows that respondents "strongly agree" that empathy is essential for both teachers and learners in understanding history, highlighting the value of emotional and cognitive engagement in the learning process (Gates & Curwood, 2023); (Thao et al., 2023); (Iqbal et al., 2021).

Conclusion

Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that history teaching plays a pivotal role in fostering critical thinking skills among learners. The study highlights the essential role of history education in helping students understand contemporary issues, fostering empathy, and constructing new knowledge. Respondents emphasized the adaptability of history teaching, noting that both teachers' and learners' cultural and social contexts influence their perspectives and interpretations. The study also underlined the importance of technology in transforming history education, making it more engaging and facilitating critical analysis. Additionally, respondents acknowledged the significance of developing students' ability to evaluate the credibility and reliability of historical information, a key aspect of critical thinking.

This study, conducted in Marawi City during the 2023-2024 school year, explored strategies for history teachers in junior high private schools to develop critical thinking among learners. Utilizing a descriptive research design, the study focused on various strategies such as fragmentation, which promotes the accumulation of information and enhances both learning and thinking skills. A purposive sampling method was employed, and data were collected through self-constructed questionnaires distributed to 27 history teachers. The statistical tools used for data analysis included frequency and percentage distribution, mean, and standard deviation.

The findings revealed that most respondents were between 23 and 26 years old, female, middle class, and degree holders, with a majority earning between 5,000 PHP and 10,000 PHP per month and being licensed professionals. The study further indicated that history teaching varies based on teachers' cultural and social contexts, and that it should be tailored to the interests and knowledge of learners to be effective. Respondents emphasized the importance of teaching history in a systematic way, highlighting its impact on individual learners and its role in developing critical thinking skills.

The results also showed that history education significantly contributes to understanding contemporary issues and that technology plays a crucial role in transforming the teaching methods. Furthermore, the study affirmed that the ability to critically analyze historical content and evaluate its credibility is essential for students' academic development. Ultimately, the study concluded that when history education is approached strategically and thoughtfully, it not only deepens students' understanding of history but also enhances their critical thinking abilities, contributing to their overall academic and personal growth.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, it is recommended that history teaching be adapted to the cultural and social contexts of both teachers and students to enhance relevance and engagement. The integration of technology should be prioritized to foster interactive learning and improve critical thinking. Teachers should focus on developing students' abilities to analyze historical content critically and assess its credibility.

Professional development opportunities should be provided to help educators refine their teaching methods, especially in incorporating technology and strategies that promote critical thinking. Teaching should be systematic and tailored to students' interests and backgrounds to deepen their understanding. Diverse teaching methods, such as fragmentation and problem-based learning, should be used to further develop students' thinking skills.

Additionally, regular assessments and feedback should be employed to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching strategies. Supervisors are encouraged to offer workshops to teachers on effective history teaching strategies. Teachers should also focus on handling student diversity in traditions and cultures. Finally, history educators are urged to adopt the strategies identified in this study to improve their teaching effectiveness and foster critical thinking skills among students.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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