

Five Factor Personality Traits as Predictor of Trait Anger and Anger Expression

Sürekli Öfke ve Öfke İfade Tarzlarının Yordayıcısı Olarak Beş Faktör Kişilik Özelliği

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Abstract

The purpose of present research study is to determine if five factor personality traits significantly predict trait anger and anger expression styles. A total number of 580 students (313 girls and 267 boys) participated in the study. Adjective Based Personality Test and State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory scales were employed for the study. According to the findings of the study, it was seen that five factor personality traits (neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experiences, agreeableness and conscientiousness) as a whole, significantly predict trait anger and anger expression styles (anger-in, anger-out and anger control).

Keywords: five factor personality traits, trait anger and anger expression

Öz

Bu araştırmanın amacı, beş faktör kişilik özelliklerinin sürekli öfke ve öfke ifade tarzlarını anlamlı düzeyde yordayıp yordamadığının saptanmasıdır. Araştırmaya toplam 580 öğrenci katılmıştır. Öğrencilerin 313'ü kız ve 267'si erkek öğrencidir. Araştırma verileri Sıfatlara Dayalı Kişilik Testi ve Sürekli Öfke-Öfke İfade Tarz Ölçeği kullanılarak toplanmıştır. Araştırma bulgularına göre beş faktör kişilik özellikleri (nevrotizm, dışadönüklük, deneyime açıklık, yumuşak başlılık ve sorumluluk) bütün olarak sürekli öfke ve öfke ifade tarzlarını (öfke-içte, öfke-dışa ve öfke kontrol) anlamlı düzeyde yordadığı anlaşılmıştır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Beş faktör kişilik özelliği, sürekli öfke, ifade tarzları.

Introductions

Emotions can be defined as processes with identifiable periods including personal experiences and capabilities of the individuals regarding the issues mattering to the person so as to guide them in getting set for an action, identifying his/her priorities and making plans (Çeçen, 2002). In addition to happiness, sadness, fear and hatred, anger is one of the five basic emotions of any individual and it is also a feeling that most people experience in their daily life. Contrary to the common perception, anger is not a negative emotion like aggressiveness and hostility but rather a normal and universal feeling (Cenkseven, 2003; Kısaç, 1999). Furthermore, anger is likely to function as a personality shield at certain times (Köknel, 1982). Feeling of anger which can be evaluated as healthy performance once expressed in a positive way, may also be harmful for both individual and his/her social environment (Cenkseven, 2003).

Anger which manifests itself as affection and passion in adolescence period may have negative effects on personality which is likely to turn into emotions like hatred, grudge, jealousy and hostility. Any individual trapped by such feelings has potential to get angry more frequently and violently (Köknel, 1982). Madness and anger behavior may occur particularly in situations perceived as restrictive (Kulaksızoğlu, 2001). Anger management is not suppressing or hiding the

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feeling but identifying it. Anger identification means being aware of biological and physiological structure causing and affecting anger expression, logical and illogical beliefs, environmental effects like family, culture and social environment. Individuals should identify their anger in order to protect themselves from the negative effects of anger and to be able to express their anger in a more positive way.

Anger is described as an emotion that emerges when an unplanned situation exists or if there is a perceive of threat and varies according to the type of threat and manifests itself as a range of feelings like displeasure or anger to violence as a response to anxiety caused by helplessness, weakness, inadequacy (Boyd, 2002; Doğan, Güler & Kelleci, 2001; Kısaç, 1999; Törestad, 1990). Anger is one of the basic feelings experienced when an individual's plans, demands and needs are constrained and injustice, inequality and threat-to-self are perceived. Anger is the form of emotion a person demonstrates for self defense and out-warning and besides anger is a strong feeling aiming to save the person from the disturbing stimulus (Biaggio, 1989; Kısaç, 1999).

There are three dimensions namely physiological, social, cognitive and behavioral in describing anger experience and expression. Physiological dimension of anger is related to the psychological and physical changes emerging in body when the person confronts a situation perceived as restrictive or annoying. Social and cognitive dimensions of anger explain self interpretation of the perceived anger. In another words, it is correlated with social and cognitive elements in anger perception. Anger is influenced by knowledge process of the person as much as social relations. Upon physiological perception of anger, the kind of personal reaction is determined by this person's logical and illogical beliefs, past experiences and associations of the event. According to behavioral dimension of anger, individuals manifest various responses based on the type of stimulus and cognitive structures as a result of perceived and experienced anger. Some individuals tend to suppress, endure or control their anger while some attempt to display it in a variety of ways to express it out and the society and social environment that they belong to can have an effect on these anger expression styles (Kısaç, 1999).

Anger expression styles of people are analyzed under three sub dimensions namely anger-out, anger-in and anger-control (Özer, 1994). As stated by Starner and Peters (2004) expressing anger out is exposing the created feeling of anger through words or behavior and it is an adaptive reaction in coping with anger-caused stress. Anger-in is an alternative adaptive mechanism a person uses against present anger elements by concealing or keeping anger in self. Anger control is the situation that defines the way a person controls his/her anger in association with others or to what extend s/he tries to calm down; they are control experiences expressing anger through personal reactions (Albayrak & Kutlu, 2009). It is important to support individuals in controlling their anger. They should be taught to control their anger, since anger emotions can be harmful for their environment as well as themselves (Bulut Serin & Genç, 2011).

A good number of causes may be effective in the emergence of anger. On the whole, causes such as biological, cultural, environmental factors, interpersonal relations, academic hardships, work conditions and personality traits may bring about feeling of anger. Personality concept may be defined as a person's lifestyle. Just as culture mirrors a society's way of life, personality also stands for a person's life style. However within this lifestyle there are many features, a good number of dimensions known, unknown, primary or secondary. Amongst them skill, intelligence, education, emotion, joy, sadness, anger, friendship, culture, aggressiveness, jealousy are certain samples. Personality is everything that matters to an individual (Metz, 2006).

Personality concept is one of the most comprehensive concepts and it lacks a common definition. Different theories describe it in different ways. Personality traits have been defined as a dynamic organization inside the person and his/her characteristic pattern of thought, emotion and behavior which makes a person different or similar to others (Carver & Scheiner, 2000; Funder, 1997; Chamorro-Premuzic, 2008). Burger (2006) defines personality as consistent behavior patterns of the person and intra-personal processes. What is implied by consistent behavioral pattern is performing the same acts in any time for any situation while intra-personal

processes mean all the emotional, cognitive and motivational processes developing inside us that have an influence over our acts and feelings.

According to the views of Atkinson, Atkinson, Smith, Bem, and Nolen-Hoeksema, (1996) personality is the distinguishing and specific patterns of thoughts, feelings and behaviors that identify the way of interaction with physical and social environment.

An extensive number of ideas have been put forth regarding personality and by making use of different personality data, different researchers attained findings related to the five dimensions of personality. Each dimension contains in itself inter-associated and restricted characteristics and personal differences within these dimensions remain constant for long years. Individuals may be defined generally under these five basic dimensions as neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experiences/culture, agreeableness and conscientiousness, but they can also be described under more restricted meanings as well (Burger, 2006; Costa, McCrae & Dye, 1991; Digman, 1990; Goldberg, 1990; McCrae and John, 1992). Five factor personality theory seems to have united all these dissimilar views under one title and the results of five factor model are universal (Bacanlı, İlhan, & Aslan, 2009; Burger, 2006; Chamorro-Premuzic, 2008).

Neuroticism stands for anxiety, worry, anger, trouble, uneasiness, acting uncontrolled, insecurity and depression. People with neurotic inclinations complain about chronic one of several of the psychosomatic indications like chronic fatigue, headache, insomnia, sight disability, anorexia. For that reason neurotics can be described as inclined towards negative feelings, particularly anxiety, depression and anger. *Extrovert* people on the other hand tend to be engaged in frequent activities, positive emotions, entrepreneurship and social behaviors. They are venturesome, active, talkative, joyful, optimistic and energetic and enjoy fun and action. *Openness to experiences* is a feature in people characterizing creativity, imagination, liberalism in thoughts and acts and embracing new perspectives as well as multi-dimensional way of thinking and mental curiosity. *Agreeableness* aspect stands for friendly, respectful and modest behaviors that mean agreeableness includes basic features like honesty, sacrifice, harmony, modesty, over emotionalism, trust and friendship. It is associated with physical and emotional care and support inclination. Hence agreeable people can be described as sincere, intimate, friendly and tolerant. *Conscientiousness* dimension covers efficiency, conscientiousness and self-discipline. This factor includes management, achievement attempt, self-discipline, debate and competency basic features (dimensions) (Bacanlı et al. 2009; Chamorro-Premuzic, 2008; McCrae & John, 1992; Mete, 2006; Shaver & Brennan, 1992; Somer, Korkmaz, & Tatar, 2002).

Personality traits may affect behaviors and may be associated with many aspects. Considering the literature related with the current study, there have been significant correlations between psychological signs and anger (Bozkurt & Çam, 2010), a positive significant relationship exists between type A behavior pattern and trait anger and anger-out and a negative significant relationship with anger control (Sosyal, Can & Kılıç, 2009). As a result of their study Albayrak and Kutlu (2009) have found that students identifying themselves as aggressive have higher levels of trait anger, anger –in and anger-out and assertive students with low level of anger control have lower levels of anger-in. Gençoğlu (2006) in his research stated that students with high optimism have significantly lower levels of neurotic inclinations compared to students with low levels of optimism.

Previous researches relevant to the current study shows that personality traits have significant relations with work stress (İstengel, 2006), locus of control (Yaşar, 2006), attachment styles, locus of control and job satisfaction (Demirkan, 2006). On the other hand, related literature show that there are positive correlations between personality traits and trait anger with anger expression styles. Current study aims to determine the effect of personality traits on trait anger and anger expression styles and the relationship between them. Determining this relationship has a great importance as it reflects the individuals' personality development in their future lives. Stable and optimistic individuals with self-discipline and multi-dimensional way of thinking may have the ability of expressing their anger in an appropriate way. So that especially at the

scope of preventive guidance, school counselors should give special attention to the activities which have contributions on students' personality development. In this context especially consultancy services conducted in order to enhance parents' and teachers' perspective and awareness, becoming important.

Once people get angry, they can express this anger directly or perform behaviors like rethinking before reacting, physical or verbal attack, yelling, anger suppression or control (Deffenbacher, Oetting, Lynch & Morris, 1996). The kind of behaviors individuals choose may differ with respect to the personality traits. The findings of Arslan's (2010) research indicate that stress management and solving inter-personal conflicts significantly explain trait anger and anger expression. Similarly, the purpose of present research is to determine the correlation between trait anger and anger expression style with respect to five factor personality traits and to determine if five factor personality traits significantly predict trait anger and anger expression styles.

Method

Participants

The sample set of the research was taken from several faculties of Selcuk University, Konya, Turkey by the random set sampling method. The participants were 580 students (313 female, 267 male) participated in the study voluntarily. The mean age of the participants was 21.83 years with a standard deviation of 1.61 years. The sample set of the research was composed of the students studying at Faculty of Technical Education (n=113, %19.5), Faculty of Education (n=161, %27.8), Faculty of Science and Literature (n=48, %8.3), Faculty of Fine Arts (n=42, %7.2), Faculty of Economics (n=57, %9.8), Faculty of Agriculture (n=56, %9.7), Faculty of Engineering and Architecture (n=44, %7.6), Faculty of Communication (n=59, %10.2).

Instruments

Adjective Based Personality Test (ABPT)

Adjective Based Personality Test (ABPT) was developed by Bacanlı et al. (2009). ABPT is composed of five sub dimensions (extroversion, emotional stability/neuroticism, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness to experiences). Principle Component Analysis has been conducted on the data collected from 285 participants in order to determine the construct validity of ABPT. Analyses have showed that five factor model explains 52.63% of the variance in ABPT. Sociotrophy Scale, Reaction to Conflicts Scale, Negative-Positive Emotion Scale, and Trait Anxiety Inventory has been used to determine the concurrent validity of ABPT. Test-retest was conducted with a two week interval and the Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency coefficients were calculated internal consistency coefficients of the dimensions of ABPT have changed in the range of .89 to .73. As a result of test-retest analysis, Agreeableness was found to have the highest relationship ($r=.86, p<.01$) and Openness to Experiences was found to have the lowest relationship ($r=.68, p<.01$).

State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory (STAXI)

Trait anger and anger expression style scale developed by Spielberger was adapted into Turkish by Özer (1994). It is a self-assessment scale composed of thirty four items. 10 items of this 34-item scale determine trait anger and 24 items determine anger expression style (Anger-in, Anger-out and Anger control). High scores received from trait anger indicate high levels of anger; high scores from anger-in scale indicate suppressed anger; high scores from anger-out scale indicate easy expression of anger and high scores from anger-control scale indicate controllability of anger (Savaşır & Şahin, 1997). Internal consistency coefficients measured for the scale in its Turkish adaptation are .79 for trait anger dimension, .84 for control anger, .78 for anger out and .62 for anger suppression (Özer, 1994).

Procedure

In statistical analysis of data, in detecting correlation between five factor personality traits and trait anger and anger expression, Pearson product moment correlation coefficient has been employed. In order to determine if five factor personality traits predict trait anger and anger expression styles, multiple regression analysis technique has been used.

Results

In this part the findings associated with research objectives have been presented.

Table 1.

Personality Traits, Trait anger and Anger Expression styles Sub dimensions Means and Standard Deviation

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Emotional Instability/ Neuroticism	24.66	6.97
Extraversion	44.89	9.62
Openness to experiences	41.75	7.88
Agreeableness	47.66	9.59
Conscientiousness	35.93	7.81
Trait Anger	21.92	5.69
Anger-in	16.59	3.63
Anger-out	16.27	4.13
Anger-control	21.22	4.28

n=580

The analysis of the correlation between five factor personality traits of students and trait anger and anger expression styles have been indicated in Table 2.

Table 2.

The Correlation between Personality traits and Trait anger and Anger Expression styles Sub Dimensions

		Trait Anger	Anger-in	Anger-out	Anger-control
Emotional Instability/ Neuroticism	r	.31***	.11**	.24***	-.29***
Extraversion	r	-.02	-.28***	-.09*	.02
Openness to Experiences	r	-.13**	-.22***	-.19***	.16***
Agreeableness	r	-.37***	-.26***	-.41***	.35***
Conscientiousness	r	-.20***	-.16***	-.30***	.23***

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Findings indicating if Five Factor Personality Traits predict Trait anger and Anger Expression styles.

Table 3.
Results of Regression Analysis of Trait Anger

Five Factor Personality Traits	R	R ²	F	η ²	β	t
Emotional Instability/ Neuroticism				.076	.256	6.885***
Extraversion				.016	.158	3.007**
Openness to Experiences	.475	.225	33.410***	.000	-.003	-.047
Agreeableness				.093	-.385	-7.680***
Conscientiousness				.000	-.024	-.478

p<.05, *p<.001

As it is shown in Table 3, there is a significant correlation between five factor personality traits and trait anger scores ($R=.475$, $R^2=.225$, $F_{(5-574)}=33.410$, $p<.001$). Amongst five factor personality traits emotional instability/neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experiences, agreeableness and conscientiousness sub dimensions explain 22.5% of total variance in trait anger.

As results of t Test regarding significance of regression coefficients emotional Instability/neuroticism ($\beta=.256$), extraversion ($\beta=.158$) and agreeableness ($\beta=-.385$) sub dimensions are significant predictors of trait anger while openness to experiences and conscientiousness sub dimensions do not have significant effect on predicting trait anger.

Table 4.
Results of Regression Analysis for Anger-in Sub Dimension that is one of the Anger Expression Styles

Five Factor Personality Traits	R	R ²	F	η ²	β	t
Emotional Instability/ Neuroticism				.008	.088	2.203*
Extraversion				.031	-.243	-4.305***
Openness to Experiences	.334	.112	14.430***	.000	.022	.353
Agreeableness				.025	-.205	-3.817***
Conscientiousness				.004	.081	1.529

*p<.05 ***p<.001

As it is shown in Table 4, there is a significant correlation between five factor personality traits and scores of anger-in ($R=.334$, $R^2=.112$, $F_{(5-574)}=14.430$, $p<.001$). emotional instability/neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experiences, agreeableness and conscientiousness sub dimensions explain 11.2% of total variance in anger-in sub dimension.

As the results of t Test regarding regression coefficients, emotional instability/neuroticism ($\beta=.088$), extraversion ($\beta=-.243$) and agreeableness ($\beta=-.205$) sub dimensions are significant predictors of anger-in sub dimension. However openness to experiences and conscientiousness sub dimensions do not have significant effects on predicting anger-in sub-dimension.

Table 5.

Results of Regression Analysis for Anger-out Sub Dimension that is one of the Anger Expression Styles

Five Factor Personality Traits	R	R ²	F	η^2	β	t
Emotional Instability/ Neuroticism				.037	.175	4.682***
Extraversion				.010	.124	2.350*
Openness to Experiences	.467	.218	32.072***	.000	.002	.040
Agreeableness				.087	-.371	-7.380***
Conscientiousness				.009	-.116	-2.334*

*p<.05 ***p<.001

As it is shown in Table 5, there is a significant correlation between five factor personality traits and scores of anger-out ($R=.467$, $R^2=.218$, $F_{(5-574)}=32.072$, $p<.001$). Amongst five-factor personality traits, emotional instability/neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experiences, agreeableness and conscientiousness sub dimensions explain 21.8% of total variance in anger-out.

As a result of t Test regarding significance of regression coefficients, emotional instability/neuroticism ($\beta=.175$), extraversion ($\beta=.124$) and agreeableness ($\beta=-.371$) sub dimensions are significant predictors of anger-out. However openness to experiences and conscientiousness sub dimensions do not have significant effect on predicting anger-out sub-dimension.

Table 6.

Results of Regression Analysis for Anger-Control Sub Dimension that is one of the Anger Expression Styles

Five Factor Personality Traits	R	R ²	F	η^2	β	t
Emotional Instability/ Neuroticism				.065	-.238	-6.296***
Extraversion				.025	-.206	-3.853***
Openness to Experiences	.450	.203	29.163***	.003	.078	1.346
Agreeableness				.061	.311	6.126***
Conscientiousness				.004	.073	1.455

***p<.001

As it is shown in Table 6, there is a significant correlation between five factor personality traits and scores of anger-control sub dimension ($R=.450$, $R^2=.203$, $F_{(5-574)}=29.163$, $p<.001$). Amongst five-factor personality traits, emotional instability/neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experiences, agreeableness and conscientiousness sub dimensions explain 20.3% of total variance in anger-control sub dimension.

As a results of t Test emotional instability/neuroticism ($\beta=-.238$), extraversion ($\beta=-.206$) and agreeableness ($\beta=.311$) sub dimensions are significant predictors of anger-control. However openness to experiences and conscientiousness sub dimensions do not have significant effect on predicting anger-control sub-dimension.

Discussion

As demonstrated by research findings five factor personality traits (neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experiences/culture, agreeableness and conscientiousness) as a whole, significantly predict trait anger and anger expression styles (anger-in, anger-out and anger control). Furthermore a positive correlation has been found between a personality trait –neuroticism- and trait anger, anger-in and anger out while a negative correlation has been found with anger control. There is a significant negative correlation between extraversion personality trait and anger-in and anger-out. A negative correlation has been found between openness to experiences personality trait and trait anger, anger-in, anger-out and a positive correlation with anger control. A negative correlation between agreeableness personality trait and trait anger, anger-in, anger-out and a positive correlation has been found with anger control. In personality traits a negative correlation has been determined between conscientiousness sub dimension and trait anger, anger-in, anger-out sub dimensions and a positive correlation with anger control. Once the results are evaluated as a whole, it can be concluded that five factor personality traits have a significant influence on people's trait anger and anger expression styles.

According to the research, neuroticism significantly predicts trait anger, anger-in, anger-out and anger scores. Based on the personal traits of neurotic people, these findings seem to be consistent with theoretical foundation. People with high neurosis are aggressive, sensitive and anxious while lowly neurotic individuals are relaxed, calm and agreeable (Cooper, 2002). Neuroticism can be defined as tendency to experience negative feelings; such as anxiety, depression and anger and neurotics are also pessimistic. As a consequence of their tendency to experience anger, worry and anxiety, they can have conflicts in their interpersonal relations (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2008). This way, neurotic people easily get angry and they reflect their anger in or out which results in failing to control anger.

Bozkurt and Çam (2010) in their researches identified significant relations with psychological signs and anger. Additionally they have found a positive correlation between type A behavior pattern and trait anger and anger –out and a negative correlation with anger control (Sosyal, Can & Kılıç, 2009). Albayrak and Kutlu (2009) in their research concluded that students identifying themselves as aggressive have higher levels of trait anger, anger in and anger out; students identifying themselves with little anger control level and more assertive have lower levels of anger-in. Gençoğlu (2006) in his research stated that students with high optimism had significantly lower neurotic tendency than the others. On the other hand students who experience stronger trait anger feeling display greater psychological signs (Deffenbacher, et al. 1996). The results of the studies all support findings of present research.

As demonstrated by present research amongst five factor personality traits, extraversion significantly predicts trait anger, anger-in, anger-out and anger control. Negative association of extravert people with trait anger and anger-in, anger-out dimensions of anger expression styles and their capacity to control anger can be explained with the features of this trait since extravert people can easily express their feelings and thoughts liberally and establish stabile connections with others and they are energetic, optimistic, sympathetic and reliable. On the other hand they may be highly self-disclosure (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2008, McCrae & Costa, 1985). Besides sociability and enjoying the company of others and fun, leadership, power, willingness and friendly behavior are also representative characteristics of extravert people (Somer, et al. 2002). Extravert personality trait may create a positive effect in anger management.

At the end of research it has been found out amongst five factor personality traits, openness to experiences does not significantly predict trait anger, anger-in, anger-out and anger scores, but still there are significant correlations among them. In the research it has been seen that openness to experiences dimension would be a significant predictor of trait anger and anger expression styles. Openness to new experiences sub-dimension characterized by imaginative, artistic and romantic traits of people (Cooper, 2002) has been found to have no effect on anger feeling which

may be related to the fact that people who are open to experiences rarely go through feeling of anger as they are open to creativity and change and easily adapt the situation they are in.

According to another research finding, amongst five factor personality traits, agreeableness sub dimension significantly predicts trait anger, anger-in, anger-out and anger control. Taking into account the personal characteristics of agreeable people it is a common expectation that such people have control over their anger, since agreeableness represents friendly, respectful and modest behaviors. Therefore agreeableness bears in itself honesty, sacrifice, harmony, modesty, over emotionalism, trust and friendship characteristics. Agreeable people can be defined as sincere, intimate, friendly and tolerant. Furthermore people with high agreeableness factor are open hearted people with high social interests (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2008; McCrae & John, 1992; Shaver & Brennan, 1992; Somer, et al. 2002). It is a common expectation that such people have control over their trait anger feelings and they are tolerant. Hence the finding obtained from present research is parallel to theoretical foundation as well.

According to the last finding of research, amongst five factor personality traits conscientiousness sub dimension has significant correlations with trait anger, anger-in, anger-out, however conscientiousness sub dimension predicts only anger-out sub dimension on a significant level. That points to the fact that conscientiousness personality trait causes significant effects on anger-out feelings of individuals. Conscientiousness dimension is associated with efficiency and self-discipline. This factor bears in itself with management, achievement attempt, self-discipline, debate and competency characteristics (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2008). Hence people have such traits can manage their conflicts without verbally or behaviorally out-expressing the feeling of anger.

As the research findings are evaluated as a whole, it can be concluded that five factor personality traits are strongly effective on trait anger and anger expression styles. There may be different reasons having influence on anger feeling which is one of five basic human emotions. It is reasonable to state that personality traits are leading in the expression of these feelings. However the number of researches analyzing the effect of personality traits on anger is not sufficient. Prospective researches including a wider scope from different sampling groups may render contribution to the generalizations on relevant field. On the other hand, keeping in mind the fact that personality development takes place during early childhood it can be stated that healthy personality development of individuals may reasonably be effective in their identifying anger feeling and managing anger. For that matter, it is of great importance that parents and instructors should pay more attention to this fact and offer child raising trainings in the light of these theoretical knowledge.

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