

The Quality of Life of Muslim Traders in Iloilo City, Philippines

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Abstract - This study attempted to evaluate the quality of life of Muslim traders in Iloilo City. They have traded in this city and resided in its vicinity for several years after migrating from Lanao del Sur when martial law was declared by the then President of the Republic of the Philippines, Ferdinand Marcos in 1972. Most of these Muslim traders were Maranaos who fled and found their way to the peaceful city of Iloilo. The respondents in the study were the 63 Muslim traders in Iloilo City who were selected through convenience sampling method. In addition, data were gathered for the year 2013-2014. The data gathering instrument was adopted from the Quality of Life Index (QLI) generic version III subjected to computer-process and graphically displayed the weighted mean scores of the total quality of life and subdomains using the boxplot presentation. The results revealed that the weighted mean scores for the overall quality of life with all subdomains of the respondents were above 15. This means that Muslim traders perceived the quality of their life as extremely good while they establish their business in the city. Further, they have accepted and established their current condition in Iloilo City especially on health and functioning, economic status, psychological and spiritual and family domains.

Keywords: degree of satisfaction, migrants, Muslim traders, quality of life

INTRODUCTION

One of the urbanized cities in the Philippines is Iloilo City. It is known as the center of Region VI – Western Visayas and of Iloilo-Guimaras Metropolitan area. Iloilo had a population of 418,710 with an annual growth rate of 1.8%. The town of Oton serves as the border in the West and Pavia in the North. In its northeast is the town of Leganes and in its eastern and southern coastline is Iloilo straight. The geographical districts that include Jaro, Molo, La Paz, Manduarriao, Villa Arevalo and Iloilo City proper were ones towns that firmly comprised the City of Iloilo. However, in 2008, district of Lapus, which once part of La Paz was declared a separate district [1].

Iloilo had a flourishing economy way back the time before the Spaniards came. The development of the large-scale weaving industry in the late 18th century made the movement of Iloilo's surge in trade and economy in the Visayas dynamic and spontaneous. It was once referred as the "Textile Capital of the Philippines" and the products were exported to some places such as Manila and other foreign places. The rise of the textile industry caused the rise of the upper middle class. Nevertheless, the industry waned in the mid-19th century because cheap

textiles from United Kingdom were introduced and there was an emergence of sugar economy [1].

There was an emergence of turmoil in Mindanao in 1970. This was a bloody encounter between Muslims and military. During the Martial Law in 1972, Muslims sought for a peaceful place to live in. Among them were 12 Muslims from Lanao del Sur who fled to Iloilo City to start anew with their lives. November 5, 1977, makes the establishment of Iloilo Islamic Association. The forerunner of war is currently known as Iloilo Muslim Community (IMC) which is then considered as umbrella organization of Muslims in the city [2].

The number of Muslims in the city has increased between 2000-3000. This increase occurred four decades after the establishment of the Iloilo Islamic Association[2]. This information was taken from Hadjimanan who was the IMC spokesperson and Public Information Officer of Muslim Federation in Region VI.

Moreover, Muslims feel the welcoming atmosphere of the city according to Hadjimanan. These Muslims did not feel any discrimination from Ilonggos. The first mosque was established in Quezon Street, City Proper. It was the place where Muslims worshipped and prayed. After several years, they

transferred the location of the mosque, and formally found a permanent place in Barangay Magdalo, La Paz district. At present several communities of Muslims are thriving in Iloilo City. These places were Barangay Magdalo, La Paz, Barangay San Isidro, La Paz, and San Pedro, Molo district [2].

The earliest Muslim migration that the members could attest to is in the 1950's. Reasons for migration are mostly economic. Majority are traders from Lanao Del Sur (Maranaos), though there are Tausugs and Magindanaos but they comprise less than 5% of the approximately 3,000 Muslim population in Iloilo City [1].

In the 1970's more migrants came most were single young males. The main reason for the migration was to avoid the then conflict between the Muslim rebels and the government troops during the Martial Law. Though there are several studies on the quality of life of some ethnic groups in the Philippines, only few were recorded that presents on the rate of quality of life of Muslim minority groups and their level of satisfaction in different aspects of their lives. Hence, the researchers considered Muslim groups who are traders in Iloilo City as an ideal group for this type of study. If needs and desires of the Muslim traders are considered, there is a greater chance for them to be motivated to achieve their goals in life and be contented with it. Since, there was no exact data as to the actual number of Muslim traders in Iloilo City, but their spokesperson admitted that there was an increase in terms of migrant Muslim traders within the four decades. Moreover, this study was conducted to evaluate the total quality of life index and subdomains of life of Muslim group who establish their business and how this influence to their life as migrants in the Christian community – the Iloilo City. An increase in population among Muslims has paved the way for expanding their community and business establishments in the city every year. They have been observed to have established their business not only in the city downtown area but in the different malls in the city as well. Thus, the researchers have thought to investigate this phenomenon of the gradual increase in population and business establishment of Muslim traders in Iloilo City. It is worthwhile to consider this investigation because the researchers wanted to find out the factors that direct their ways or lead them in achieving their recent life statuses.

Further, this study is significant to the local government unit to formulate and establish policies

that can strengthen the growth and development of the local economy through trade. It will further establish measures to generate moral revenues from the Muslim traders in Iloilo City which can also a source of information for policy planning of the city.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study sought to find out the total quality of life of Muslim traders in Iloilo City based on health and functioning, social and economic, psychological and spiritual, and family domains. In terms of health and functioning domain, Muslims in the city have all the freedom in practicing their culture and traditions based on Islamic beliefs. In their social and economic aspect, they were observed to have expanded their business establishment and are active in patronizing not only their own product but also the products that include modern technology and inventions. They also learned to mingle to non-Muslim community, and some of their children are sent in different schools in the city. Then, for their psychological and spiritual domain, Muslims have preserved culture as manifested in the attendance through holding a regular Friday worship and religious services which promotes welfare of the individual Muslim trader. Finally, in terms of family domain, they were found to support each other in all aspects within the members of the family, and their neighbor within the community they established.

METHODS

This study was conducted to determine the quality of life of Muslim traders in the City of Iloilo. The survey research method was employed in the study. The descriptive method of research [3], it involves data collection about the present condition of the individual of the subject under study.

The respondents of the study were recruited through the help of their spokesman of the Iloilo City Muslim community, Sammy Hagimanan. The objectives and course of action was fully explained to the respondents of the study to ask their permission for the conduct of the study.

The respondents involved in the study were the 63 Muslim traders in Iloilo City, who were selected through convenience sampling with the inclusion criteria as follows: (a) individuals who are Muslim traders in the city of Iloilo; (b) aged 18 years or over; and (c) willing to participate in the conduct of the study. The rights and inscrutability of individual was

respected. The purpose of the study and the right to participate and/or to refuse of the respondents to take part in the study were fully explained for them to understand. Further, informed consent was established with the respondents and the confidentiality of the results was fully assured and was taken with consideration.

The community referred to in this study is the place where they can establish their own business. They sell various products like ready to wear, jewelry, cellphone accessories, gadgets and appliances. It is located at the heart of the city together with other business establishments.

The data gathering instrument used in the study was adopted from the Quality of Life Index (QLI) generic version III [4] and was subjected to computer-process statistical test to calculate the total scores of quality of life and its specific subdomains [5] of the Muslim traders in Iloilo City. These were all downloadable from the official website of the QLI [5]. Further, the weighted mean scores of the total and subdomains of the quality of life of the respondents grouped according to certain variables were

graphically displayed using the boxplot presentation (also known as a box and whisker plot) [6].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Quality of Life of Muslim Traders in Iloilo City

Since the Muslim traders established their business in the heart of the City of Iloilo and reside within its vicinity, a comparison was based on the variables included in the study to assess the overall quality other subdomains of the life of Muslim traders in Iloilo City.

Each Muslim cultural community displays unique and peculiar traits, features, and qualities. These distinctions distinguish one Muslim cultural community from another. All these communities are unified by their Islamic faith, which has already pervaded many aspects of their lives since Islam is a way of life. Regardless of cultural community, all Filipino Muslims belong to one *UmmahMuslimah* [5].

Table 1 presents results of Muslim traders in Iloilo City. Findings revealed that Muslim traders have very good quality of life as indicated by almost average scores which are above 20.

Table 1. Weighted mean scores of the quality of life of Muslim traders in Iloilo City grouped according to variables (Overall Quality of Life Muslim Traders in Iloilo City)

	Tribe		Gender		Type of Business	
	Maranao	Maguindanao	Male	Female	RTW/Jewelry	Cellphone Accessories/ Gadgets/ Appliances
High	26.06	27.82	27.82	25.83	24.85	27.82
Low	17.88	18.52	17.74	18.58	18.17	17.74
Mean	21.4	20.03	21.18	21.295	21.635	21.18
Health and Functioning Domain						
High	25.73	24.92	25.73	24.42	24.96	25.73
Low	18.77	18.77	15.69	18.77	17.46	15.69
Mean	21	21.23	21	21.52	21.195	21
Psychological/Spiritual Domain						
High	30	30	30	30	28.57	30
Low	17.36	15.64	15.64	16.07	15.64	16
Mean	22.2	21.44	22	21.715	21.575	22.29
Socio-Economic Domain						
High	27.5	30	30	25.63	25.75	30
Low	16.25	16.63	15.69	16.33	17.19	15.69
Mean	21	19.81	21	21	20.81	21.13
Family Domain						
High	28.5	28.8	28.8	25.8	28.5	28.8
Low	15.8	18.7	15.8	18.7	18.1	15.8
Mean	21.1	22.2	20.9	23.1	22.95	20.7

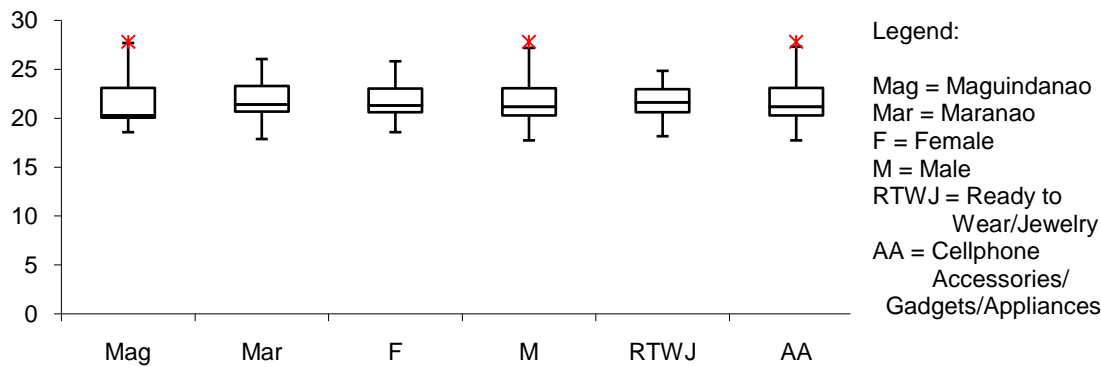


Figure 1. Presentation of the mean weighted scores for overall quality of life of Muslim Traders in Iloilo City

However, since there is a variation of values between and among variables, it was suitable to describe the quality of life of Muslim traders in Iloilo City based on the different variables included in the study. A variation among the scores was recorded with scores low as 15 and as high as 30. Thus, a poor quality of life was indicated for the scores below 15, but scores above 15 indicated a good quality of life index [5].

Overall Quality of Life (QOL)

Weighted mean scores for the overall Quality of Life of Muslim Traders in Iloilo City.

Figure 1 presents the results on the overall quality of life of Muslim traders in Iloilo City. The results revealed that a mean score of 15 was recorded in the specific subdomains and overall quality of life index. Thus, it can be generalized that almost all individuals of the Muslim traders in Iloilo City have elevated overall quality of life. Specifically, upper outlier are noted in Maguindanao tribe, male group of Muslim traders and as to type of business, upper outlier is noted in the cell phone accessories/ gadgets and appliances. These groups indicate that they were highly fulfilled and comfortable with their life situation. They become optimistic towards circumstances in life, particularly, in terms of their health status as well as economic and social status and family, and psychological and spiritual conditions.

Health and Functioning Domain

Observation on the boxplots shows that the range of the weighted scores in the health and functioning domain of the quality of life index (QLI) were observed to vary between variables included in the study as shown in Figure 2. Most of the individuals remain contented with their health conditions and functions as important aspect of their lives. Further,

lower outliers were noted in male group and those engaged in the type of business in Cell phone accessories/gadgets and appliances indicating that few individual are satisfied and contented with their health and functioning aspect of their lives. Indeed, health awareness programs and other healthcare services offered by the city government have contributed to illness reduction and prevention in the city where Muslim traders mostly dwell.

Further, the results also revealed that there is a high satisfaction among Muslim traders in terms of healthcare, energy condition and capacity in doing family responsibilities. Same result was recorded in terms of emotional management, socializations, sex life and recreation. Generally, high satisfaction and contentment were observed in health and functioning domain of the lives Muslim traders in Iloilo City.

The reasons behind having a very good quality of life could be anchored on traditional practices and beliefs as Muslims [5]. Most of their practices are rooted on Islamic principles stating that the life they live on earth must be in accordance with good conduct so as not to violate Allah's displeasures. These are the reasons that have prevented misfortunes and illnesses to flourish n earth. In addition, rituals are practiced to appease the spirits of their ancestors for they are believed to influence one's course of life. These practices may also protect them from epidemics and pestilence.

The result of this study was also supported by the results of similar studies especially on the study about sexuality of the older adult [7]. It was found out that quality of life and health status including intimacy and sexual activity correlates positively. There was 0.465 increase in the predicted quality of life scores when one is healthy.

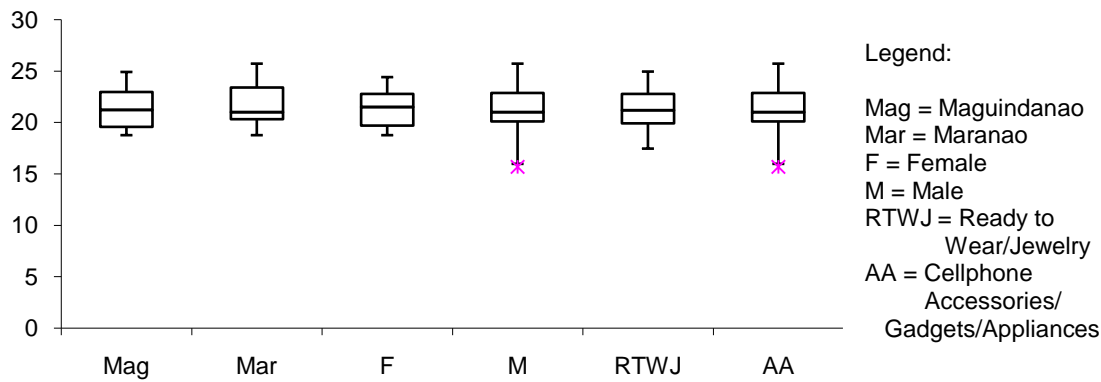


Figure 2. Presentation of the mean weighted scores of Muslim traders in Iloilo City in the Health and Functioning domain.

Also, a predicted quality of life scores increase of 0.003 was recorded when the increase in several activity aspect is one unit. The author of that study also presented a similar study in 2003 by Bowling et al, when the results revealed that in order to have a very good quality of life, health must be considered according to the participants in the study [5].

Moreover, the result reflects the efficiency in the implementation of policies and guidelines by the city government to look into the health status of the Muslim traders in Iloilo City. This is reflected on the fund allocation for healthcare. This implies good governance on the part of the government and achievement of mission of Iloilo City which is to be the leader for participatory governance that would eventually speed up the growth and development of the city. This would then open opportunities for all to help them improve their status and significantly expand and improve infrastructures [1].

Observation on the boxplots shows that the range of the weighted scores in the health and functioning domain of the quality of life index (QLI) were observed to vary between variables included in the study.

Social and Economic Domain

Figure 3 showed that results of the weighted mean scores of Muslim traders with respect to their social and economic domain. Results revealed that there is none of the individual has a mean score below 15 in this subdomain of the quality of life indicating high level of satisfaction was noted between variables included in the study. Further, outliers were noted in the group of Maranao, male, and those engaged in business in cellphone accessories/gadgets and appliances. Within these groups, some individual have too high level of satisfaction in social and economic domain of the quality of life index of the Muslim traders in Iloilo City.

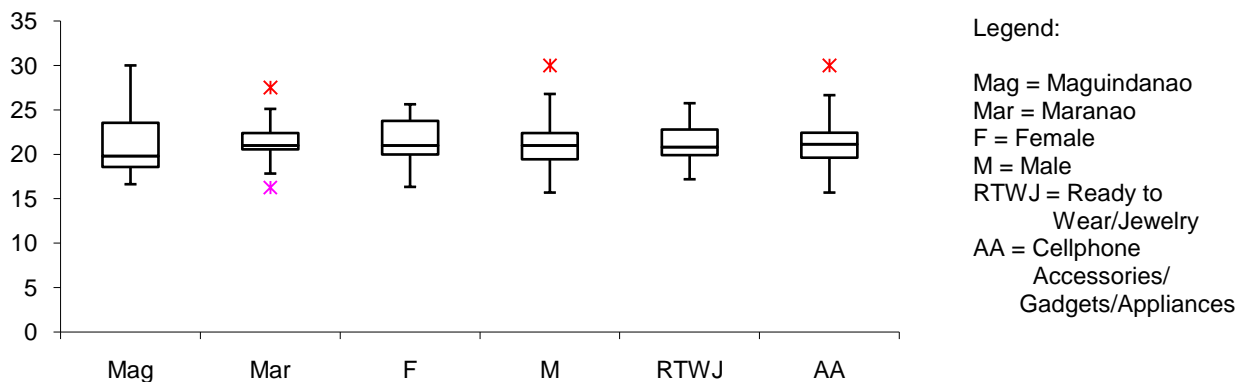


Figure 3. Presentation of the weighted mean scores of Muslim traders in Iloilo City in the Social and Economic domain

The results showed high satisfaction and contentment in terms of social and economic aspects of their life. This satisfaction is associated to the emotional support they get from people around them except from members of their family. Others may also include people from their neighborhood. Further, this satisfaction is also associated to home environment, job, education and financial needs [4].

Generally, high satisfaction and contentment were noted in social and economic domain of the lives Muslim traders in Iloilo City.

Psychological and Spiritual Domain

Figure 4 showed the results on psychological and spiritual domain of quality of life of Muslim traders in Iloilo City between variables. The results revealed that a high satisfaction and contentment in the aspects of psychological and spiritual life domain. This only means that these Muslim traders have peace of mind and are happy with their current status and life situations. Personal goals are also achieved and satisfaction on their appearance [4].

Overall, a high level of satisfaction was noted in terms of psychological and spiritual domains of their

quality of life. A number of upper outliers were noted in all variables except the female group of Muslim traders indicating that some of the individuals have to have too high level of satisfaction. On the other hand, number lower outliers were also noted in all variables except the Maranao and female group of Muslim traders indicating average level of satisfaction and contentment with their psychological and spiritual domain of the quality of life index.

The results of the study are in concurrence with one of the findings on the study about Religion and the Quality of Life, [8] wherein it was found out that happiness is associated with the number of attendance in the religious services, with denominational and doctrinal preferences. The results further conclude that religion provides explanation as to purpose in life which promotes welfare of the individual.

Further, the result reflects strict observance of the core values of Iloilo City which has accountability to family and community as God as the center. The core values have something to do with commitment to efficiency and effectiveness in fostering the spirit of good governance to its citizens [8].

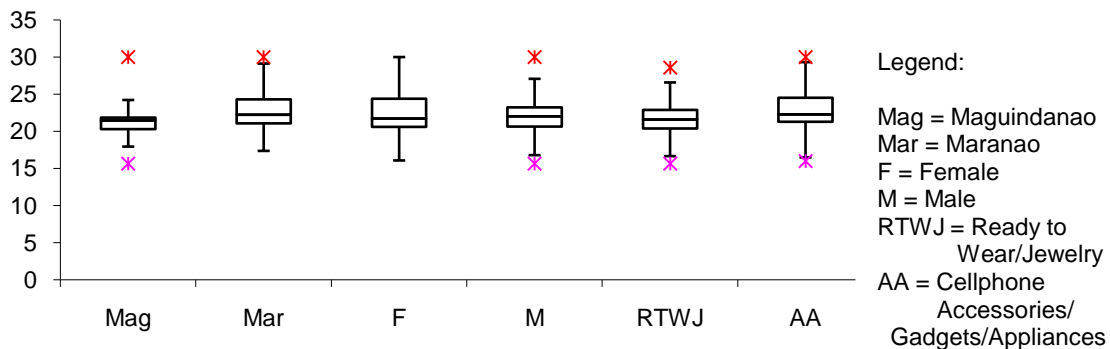


Figure 4. Presentation of the weighted mean scores of Muslim traders in Iloilo City in the psychological and spiritual domain.

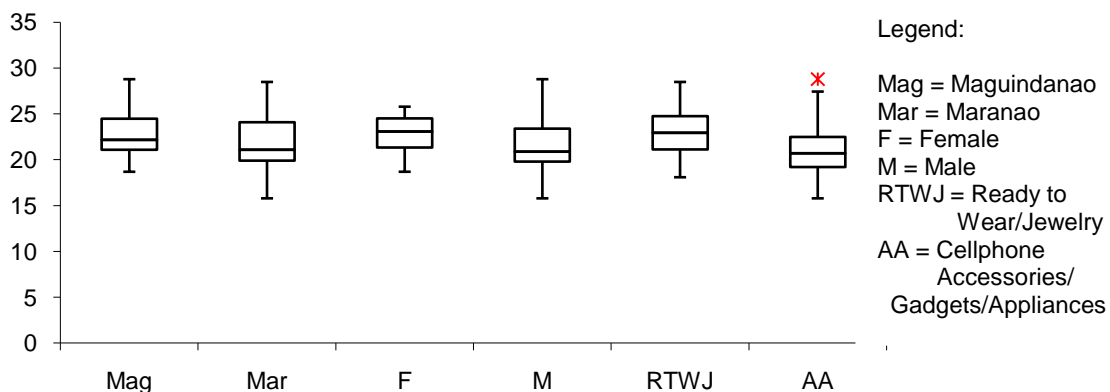


Figure 5. Presentation of the weighted mean scores of Muslim Traders in Iloilo City in the family domain

Family Domain

The weighted scores of the Muslim traders in the family domain across variables are presented in Figure 5. Results revealed that high satisfaction was noted. This satisfaction is associated in terms of health, children, family happiness, love from spouse/lovers, and emotional support from family members [4]. An outlier was observed in the group of type of business (Cellphone accessories/gadgets and appliances) indicating too high level of satisfaction and contentment in their family domain.

Family is the primary foundation that plays a significant role in the society, therefore, it only means there are things that are operational despite difficult and challenging family situations [9]. Understanding and support between and among members of the family brought significant factors in family relationship. Thus, these social processes are believed to have affected the health status and levels of happiness in a family.

Generally, the results imply that Iloilo City community and the Muslim traders live harmonious relationship and promote peace despite of differences in culture and religious views.

CONCLUSIONS

The Muslim traders have a high degree of satisfaction and contentment of their quality of life living in urbanized city of Iloilo. They accepted their present conditions in the following domains such as health and functioning, social and economic, psychological and spiritual, and family domain of quality of life index. With this, the implementation of policies by the city government has been efficient and effective to its citizens especially to the Muslim migrants from Mindanao area. This also reflects appropriate fund allotted for education, health care, socio-cultural, and religious aspects. This is then an indication of good governance in the city local government unit and achieved the mission of Iloilo City. The Muslim traders prefer to live permanently or temporarily and establish business in the City for peace and security as long as business opportunities and livelihood are concerned. Further, they can easily adapt to the environment with good reputation and to have their own place of worship despite of living in a purely Christian community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City government should create/establish a Muslim Affairs Office to document the permanent and even temporary residents of Iloilo City. This will

serve as a link between the Muslim community and the local government unit. In addition, the City government should establish business center for identification of a Muslim Economic activities for revenue purposes. Likewise, participation and involvement of Muslim brethren to various programs and activities and projects of local government unit in the City of Iloilo should be encouraged to strengthen camaraderie and promote unity between Christians and Muslims community. These will lead to universal peace and order, security and protection as well as to preserve the culture, traditions and practices and beliefs of both parties.

Further, the data should encourage policy makers in Iloilo City because it acknowledges the importance of improvement in giving public service. Same thing with access to markets, and ability to consume and invest. The one-size fits all policies are challenged if there are difference in priorities it identifies.

Furthermore, it is recommended that the City government should invite Muslim community leaders to encourage and assist them through trainings, conferences and seminars to inspire their followers from time to time.

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