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Is Human Capital among Key Factors That Promote Performance of Government Aided Primary Schools in Isingiro District, Uganda? Using a Correlational and Hierarchical Regression Analysis Paradigm

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this research was to establish the relationship between human capital as one of the key factors and performance of government aided primary schools in Isingiro district, Uganda.

Methodology: A cross sectional research design and post-positivist paradigm were used to collect data from 118 government aided primary schools in Isingiro district, Uganda where 475 respondents participated in the study. The study used closed-ended questionnaires, interview guide and checklists. The schools to be included were selected using simple random sampling and were considered as unit of analysis while the respondents who included District officials, head teachers, teachers and school management committee members formed the unit of enquiry, these were selected purposively based on the knowledge they had on the subject matter. Each school selected, provided the information from the respondents who in this case were the head teacher, two (2) teachers and a chairperson of school management committee.

Findings: The findings of the study revealed a positive significant relationship between human capital issues and performance of government aided primary school at 99% level of confidence ($r=.385$, $p<.01$), thus rejecting the null hypothesis (H_0). The results signified that improved human capital is highly associated with good performance of government aided primary schools in Isingiro district, Uganda.

Unique Contribution to Theory and Practice: The Unique contribution of this study was, to suggest to planners and managers of government aided primary schools that, since human capital is important for the improvement of primary school performance, the government should impose the human capital law for government aided primary school teachers which possibly caters for teachers' productivity when given some due care and attention. In addition, the Ministry of Education & Sports should create social benefits for government aided primary school teachers as a means to enhance their wellbeing and motivate them. Moreover, it is also recommended that government aided primary schools' teachers be given some training and professional workshops to increase their experience and productivity which could probably motivate them and hence perform better at schools.

Keywords: *Human capital, performance, government aided primary schools, Isingiro district, Uganda.*

Introduction

The Ugandan primary education system experienced major changes in 1997 when the government of Republic of Uganda adopted Universal Primary Education (UPE) which abolished all tuition fees and all parents and teacher association charges for primary education. The changes led to increased enrollment in primary schools pupils from 2.9 million in 1997 to more than 8 million in 2010 (Oonyu, 2012). The government responded to the increased demand in education by undertaking several reforms and policies which included; building and renovation of schools, procurement of instructional materials, and training, hiring and retaining teachers, fighting against pupil absenteeism, curriculum reform and decentralization of primary education (Ministry of education and sports, 2013). The national pupil teacher ratio and pupil classroom ratio was also revised downwards. In Isingiro district, by 2010; pupil teacher ratio was about 53%. Government funding for primary education sector since 1997 has stood at between 65% and 68% per year of the total education budget (Oonyu, 2012).

Primary School education in Uganda was introduced by missionaries in 1877 and was modeled along the British system of education because Uganda was a British protectorate from 1894 until 1962 when it attained her independence. During that time, teachers were held in high esteem and their human capital issues, welfare that included; housing, medical care, meals, basic allowances, and the school facilities or environment were largely conducive for teachers to perform their duties as educators. The period of President Idi Amin regime (1971-1979), however, human capital and teacher's welfare among other sectors in the country were affected. This period was characterized by insecurity, breakdown of economic activities, brain drain, and a decline of social services leading to poor schools performance. The real value of salaries and wages collapsed by 90% in less than a decade. Parents had to step in and this led to the formation of Parents and Teacher Associations (PTA) which introduced charges that helped to reduce the financial burden of the school's budget (Aguti, 1996; Okuda, 2014).

When the government of Republic of Uganda introduced of Universal Primary Education in 1997, the PTA charges were abolished in public primary schools in rural areas and the issues of teacher welfare were undertaken by government (Oonyu, 2012). Abolishing PTA charges was politically popular and it helped attract enrollment but it did not emphasize teachers' human capital and welfare yet teachers are a key determinant in quality education. Teachers were not happy with their welfare status and are always threatening by taking industrial action over low pay and poor working conditions (Kagolo, 2013; Kaaya, mulidwa & Kimbowa, 2013; Kagolo, 2015). Yahiaoui, Anser and Lahouel, (2015) posit that employee welfare contributes towards organizational performance. Teacher motivation is very important since it improves the skills and Knowledge of teachers seeing as it directly influences the student's achievement (Mustafa & Othman, 2010).

Organization performance was being undertaken a long time before the world wide movement of New Public Management. However, with the emergency of New Public Management, performance became more pronounced. The reason being that there was demand for transparency, appropriate managerial methods of controlling and managing administrations in order to have efficiency and effectiveness (value for money) in the public sector. Performance appraisal systems have kept changing over the last 50 years from emphasis on the employee through focus on the job and a recent return to the employee. Earlier, employee performance was concerned with simply ranking and comparing individual employees but due to continuous weakness of such a system,

researchers made a transition to job related performance assessment leading to development of sophisticated models for understanding employee and organization performance appraisal (Prasad, 2010; Damaris, Elegwa & Kwasira, 2016).

Performance is the degree to which an employee and organizational goals are met (Feng, 2010). It comprises both behavior and outcomes (Armstrong, 2003; Feng, 2010). Behavior comes from the worker who transforms performance from abstraction into action leading to a product or an outcome (Kalyani, 2006). Feng (2010) opines that performance can be viewed from three different angles, that is, results oriented performance, conduct oriented performance and the integration of conduct and result oriented performance.

Katarasibwa (2005) echoes Ekatan, Isingoma, Nanziri and Nabwiso (1995) by looking at teachers and general school performance as the extent to which teachers in a school achieve the requirements of their job in an effort to fulfill school objectives. This general performance must be geared towards promoting the process of teaching and learning for the benefit of the pupils. In this study school performance is conceptualized as the extent to which the school objectives are achieved through lesson preparations which involve making schemes of work, lesson plans, record of work done, preparing and using learners registers, actual classroom teaching, assessment and evaluation of the learners, attending staff meetings, management of learners discipline, involvement in co-curricular activities, counseling and guidance.

"Human capital" is defined as knowledge, skills, attitudes, aptitudes, and other acquired traits contributing to production (Goode (1959). In Economics, the term human capital is used to define increase in productivity levels and human capacities due to education and health. In economists' view, human capital in industries and business organizations is mostly defined as input measured in terms of economic returns or profits they earned. On the other hand, human capital in education can be taken as both input and outcome defined against cumulative knowledge, skills and abilities overall education systems have generated through abundant education and training provisions. Human capital theory rests on the assumption that formal education is highly instrumental and necessary to improve the productive capacity of a population. In short, human capital theorists argue that an educated population is a productive population. Human capital theory emphasizes how education increases the productivity and efficiency of workers by increasing the level of cognitive stock of economically productive human capability, which is a product of innate abilities and investment in human beings.

A critical examination of the training policy indicates that it contains all the essential elements of training and development. According to Mohamud, (2014) training policy shows that training and development falls under Human Resource Development (HRD) function which has been argued to be an important function of Human Resources Manual (HRM). Employees, managers and Human Resources (HR) should all collaborate to build a Continuous Professional Development (CPD) culture. It's an employee's responsibility to seek new learning opportunities. It's a manager's responsibility to coach their teams and identify employee development needs. And it's Human Resource (HR) responsibility to facilitate any staff development activities and processes (Antoniou, 2010). According to Quality Educators' Project- Uganda (2011), it is through the training programme to head teachers and the teachers in the schools that will develop the skills they need to create more holistic and meaningful performance planning, monitoring and evaluation at the school level.

Therefore, teachers' welfare and human capital in this study focused on the wellbeing of teachers by providing accommodation, meals, medical care, basic allowances and the school facilities or environment, and making the teacher more productive. It can be noted that from a theoretical perspective, the theories greatly contributes to understanding and shaping of the linkage between teachers' welfare, human capital and performance of government aided primary schools, Isingiro district in Uganda.

Literature Review

Teachers are the key in achieving all of the Education 2030 agenda .As teachers are a fundamental condition for guaranteeing quality education, teachers and educators should be empowered, adequately recruited and remunerated, motivated, professionally qualified, and supported within well-resourced, efficient and effectively governed systems. (UNESCO et al., 2015). Moreover, Education (2030) articulates that 'teachers and educators, and their organizations, are crucial partners in their own right and should be engaged at all stages of policy-making, planning, implementation and monitoring' (UNESCO et al., 2015).

The international task force on teachers for education for all (EFA, 2015) suggests that one of the main reasons that teachers and teaching should be at the top of policy-makers' concerns is because teachers are one of the largest components of a nation's labour force. The principal human resource in any education system, and the largest single financial component of any education authority's budget. Indeed, based on my analysis of World Bank education sector strategy documents (World Bank, 1995, 1999, and 2011), found a strong emphasis on teachers as human capital (i.e., "the belief that the role of workers in production is similar to the role of machinery and other forces of production" Johnson, 2000, p. 46; & Becker, 1993) or as a human resource input that is required for the process of producing student learning outcomes (Ginsburg, 2012).

In addition to teachers as a human resource input, is the idea of teachers as employees. That is, to insert this human resource into the education system, teachers have to be hired (and perhaps fired), generally be paid some salary, receive some fringe benefits, be provided with conditions of work. The employee category also includes attention to the possibility of a career structure, standards of practice, as well as supervision and assessment of their work. In addition to base pay or basic salary, which may include retirement pension and social security provisions, other financial incentives forming part of teachers' reward packages, include allowances for particular responsibilities, family benefits, housing provision or subsidies, transport subsidies and financial contributions towards further training.

Despite this necessity of human capital measurement, traditional method of the human capital measurement includes a few limitations. To begin with, Wolf (2002) suggests that some of indicators can be actually considered as incomplete ones. To support his assertion, he exemplifies that a worker's wage, one of human capital indicators as proxies-hardly measures 'authentic human capital'. By the drawback of traditional human capital measurement, it is acceptable to measure the authentic human capital instead of utilizing proxies such as income and productivity. The provision of formal education is seen as an investment in human capital, which proponents of the theory have considered as equally or even more worthwhile than that of physical capital (Woodhall, 1997)

In addition, it is difficult that human capital itself independently contributes to individual development and organization growth. According to Ashton and Green (1996), it is necessary that the link between human capital, welfare and organization performance should be considered within a social and political context to precisely measure the human capital. Furthermore, many empirical literatures present that financial, human and social capital positively influence ‘something like individual health and work input’ (Blakey, Lochner, & Kawachi, 2002; Veenstra, 2001; Veenstra et al., 2005; Wilson et al., 2004).

Consequently, the purpose of this objective was to find out how the combined factors human capital and teachers’ welfare have a significant influence on the performance of government aided primary schools in Isingiro district, Uganda. The researchers therefore carried out this study to establish the relationship between teachers’ welfare, human capital and the performance of government aided primary school in Isingiro district, Uganda.

Research Methodology

The study employed cross-sectional research design. Isingiro district has a total number of 173 government aided primary schools according District Education Officer. A sample of 118 schools was selected basing on Krejcie & Morgan (1970) table for determining sample size and 475 respondents participated in the study. The selected schools were categorized according to the zones in the district by stratification. In this study, the schools to be included were selected using simple random sampling and were considered as unit of analysis while the respondents who included district officials, head teachers, teachers and school management committee members formed the unit of enquiry, these were selected purposively based on the knowledge they had on the subject matter. Each school selected, provided the information from the respondents who in this case were the head teacher, two (2) teachers and a chairperson of school management committee member.

In this study, the main data collection instruments in this study were structured questionnaires that were closed ended in design, structured interview guide and observation checklists. Secondary data were collected from journals, government reports, published and unpublished theses and internet. The researcher employed both quantitative and qualitative research paradigms in data analysis for purposes of methodological triangulation in order to enhance the validity and reliability of the study findings (Amin, 2005). Data collected from the field were examined for its accuracy and completeness of information given. It was cleaned, sorted out and entered into excel computer software and exported to SPSS version 26, explored and analyzed (Field, (2009). The analysis relied on both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, mean, and standard deviation were used to generate reports for discussion. Pearson correlation was used to determine the direction and magnitude of variables relationships using correlation coefficients and significance levels.

Qualitative data analysis was done through thematic (content) analysis as was recorded during face to face interview and through observation. The researcher used a quick impressionist summary in analyzing qualitative data; he summarized key findings by noting down the frequent responses of the respondents during the interview on various themes concerning the relationship between human capital issues and other variables that affected performance like housing, meals, medical care, basic allowances, school environment and performance of government aided primary school in Isingiro district, Uganda were noted in form of notes.

Measurement of Study Variables

Human capital issues and the dependent variable were measured using a five point Likert scale with assigned values in the following format; 5 - Strongly Agree; 4 - Agree; 3 -Not Sure/Neutral; 2- Disagree and 1 - Strongly Disagree. According to Bill (2011), the Likert scale was able to measure perception, attitudes, values and behaviors of individuals towards a given phenomenon. The data was then aggregated; mean values and standard deviations were computed for interpretation.

Results

Demographic Characteristics

Table 1: Demographic results

Characteristics	Number (%)	
Gender	Male	282(59.4)
	Female	193(40.6)
Age Bracket (Years)	20- 29	76(16.0)
	30- 39	203(42.7)
	40- 49	111(23.4)
	50 and above	85(17.9)
	Experience (years)	< 1
	1 – 4	110(23.2)
	5 – 9	135 (28.4)
	10 -14	120(25.3)
	15 and above	83(17.5)
Marital status	Married	425(89.5)
	Single	29(6.1)
	Divorced	08(1.7)
	Widowed	12(2.5)
	Others	01(0.2)
Level of Education	Primary	22(4.6)
	Secondary	42(8.8)
	Grade III/ Equivalent	307(64.6)
	Diploma in Education	10(2.1)
	Bachelors	85(17.9)
	Post-graduate	9(1.9)

Work status	Teachers	236(49.7)
	Head teacher	118(24.8)
	SMC members	118(24.8)
	DEO	1(0.2)
	DIS	1(0.2)
	DES	1(0.2)

Source: Field data (2022)

The findings in table 1 revealed that majority of the respondents were male 282(59.4%). The female respondents stood at 193(40.6%) implying that both gender were fairly represented. The work status of the respondents was also ascertained and results indicated in table 1. The head teachers represented 118(24.8%), teacher constituted 236(49.7 %) while members of the school management committees were 118(24.8%). The findings revealed that head teachers, teachers and school management committee members were well represented in the study. The age groups of the respondents were analyzed and findings presented in table 1. The majority of the respondents 203(42.7%) were aged 30 -39 years, followed by 111(23.4%) and 85 (17.9 %) who were between 40-49 years and 50 years and above respectively. 27(5.7%) of the respondents had their ages in 20 -29 years bracket. This implied that, majority of the respondents (66.1%) were aged 40 years and below. These were believed to be more productive labour force that would work hard to bring good performance in government aided primary schools in Isingiro district, Uganda.

The marital status of the respondents was analyzed and findings presented in table 1. In this study, majority of the respondents were married 425(89.5%) followed by those who were single 29 (6.1%). The number of those who were divorced stood at 08(1.7%) while the widowed were 12(2.5%) and unspecified marriage status was at 1 (0.2 %). The number of years that the respondents had spent in their current schools was also analyzed. The findings are presented in table 1. The majority of the respondents 135(28.4%) had been in their current schools for 5-9 years, followed by 120(25.3%) and 110 (23.2 %) who had been in their current schools for between 10 - 14 years and 1- 4 years respectively. 83(17.5%) of the respondents had been in their current schools for 15 and more years while only 27(5.7%) had been there for less than a year. This implied that 94.3% of the respondents had been in their current schools for more than a year; a period the researcher believes was long enough for the respondents to tell whether the various teachers' welfare constructs under study were being offered in the schools and how such schools were performing.

The education status of the respondents was analyzed and findings presented in table 1. The majority of the respondents 307(64.6%) had grade III/ equivalent certificates, followed by 85(17.9%) and 42(8.8 %) who had bachelor's degrees and secondary education respectively. 22(4.6%) of the respondents had primary education, 10(2.1%) had diploma in primary education while only 9(1.9%) had post graduate in education. In addition, out of 307 teachers who participated in the study, 195 (63.5%) had attained grade III certificate as the highest level of qualification. This implied that 78.1% of the respondents had grade III certificates and below; this means that level of education for teachers in government aided primary schools in Isingiro district; Uganda was still low since majority of teachers had not got higher qualifications beyond diploma.

Table 2: Pearson correlation analysis of study variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Teachers accommodation	1								
Provision of meals to teachers	.168**	1							
Provision of medical care	.256**	.258**	1						
Provision of allowances to teachers	.151**	.221**	.487**	1					
School environment	.627**	.352**	.336**	.281**	1				
Welfare	.682**	.575**	.710**	.608**	.778**	1			
Human capital	.446**	.176**	.234**	.199**	.434**	.450**	1		
Monitoring System	0.044	.131*	.313**	.505**	.142**	.324**	0.091	1	
Performance of government aided primary schools	.441**	.285**	.254**	.421**	.448**	.546**	.385**	.415**	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

To get the findings shown in table 2, correlation analysis were used to answer the hypothesis which aimed at examining the relationship between human capital issues and performance of government aided primary schools. The analysis conducted aimed at testing the set hypothesis.

Ho1: Human Capital has no relationship with performance of government aided primary schools in Isingiro district.

The results in table 2 indicate that there is a positive significant relationship between teachers' welfare and performance of government aided performance primary school at 99% level of confidence ($r=.385$, $p<.01$), thus rejecting the null hypothesis ($Ho1$). The results signify that increase improved human capital is highly associated with good performance of government aided performance primary schools in Isingiro district, Uganda. It was further analysed that other factors like provision of accommodation to teachers($r = 0.441$, $p<.01$), provision of meals to teachers ($r = 0.285$, $p<.01$), provision of medical care to teachers ($r = 0.254$, $p<.01$), provision of allowance to teachers ($r = 0.421$, $p<.01$) and conducive school environment ($r = 0.448$, $p<.01$) in addition to human capital issues all had a positive significant relationship with good performance of government aided performance primary schools in Isingiro district, Uganda.

Table 3: Hierarchical regression model (model summary)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change R Square	F			Sig. F Change
						Change	df1	df2	
1	.568	0.322	0.318	0.25515	0.024	12.569	1	351	0.000
2	.546	0.298	0.296	0.25931	0.298	149.389	1	352	0.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Welfare

b. Predictors: (Constant), Welfare, Human capital

Using hierarchical multiple regression analysis, the predictive power of each variable was established. Results from Table 3 above, the comparative importance of each predictor was judged on the basis of how much it adds to the prediction of a criterion variable. To begin with, the results in model one (1) indicate that human capital in the regression, significantly affected the results in model implying that, human capital explains 2.4% (R Square change =.024) of the changes in performance of government aided primary schools in Isingiro district, Uganda. Similarly, results in model 2 teachers' welfare significantly predict performance of government aided primary school. The results in table 3, indicate that teachers' welfare explains 29.8% (R Square change=.298) of the variations in performance of government aided primary schools in Isingiro district, Uganda. Finally the two variables explain an overall of 31.8% (Adjusted R Square=.318) of the variations in performance of government aided primary schools in Isingiro district, Uganda. This also implies that the remaining 68.2% is explained by other variables not considered in this study.

Discussion

This section focuses on the discussion of the research findings in relation to the hypothesis that Human capital has positive significant effect on the performance of government aided primary schools in Isingiro district, Uganda ($r=.385$, $p<.01$). Employees who invest in education and training will raise their skill level and be more productive than those less skilled, and so can justify higher earnings as a result of their investment in human capital. This has been central in explaining individual earnings differences (Nerdrum & Erikson, 2001). In this study sub constructs such as qualification of teachers, attitude of teachers towards teaching, training of teachers, promotions of teachers after training, satisfaction of teachers at work, leadership styles of head teachers, effectiveness of school management committee members and involvement of teachers in decision making at schools were key issues the study wanted to address in relation to performance of government aided primary schools in Isingiro district, Uganda.

The official DO1 said that all the teachers in our schools are trained as professional teachers though majority are grade III certificate holders. Many of those who have got Diplomas and higher qualifications have not been considered for promotions and salary increments and this discourages many for upgrading and other trainings as professionals (District official DO1 Isingiro January,

2022). The views of the officials' DO1 and DO2 were similar to those of DO3. They agreed that many teachers who upgraded have not benefited from the promotions and salary increments. Majority of the teachers have grade III certificates and don't mind about teacher training workshops that are organized for staff development office at the district, more especially when no allowances are paid. This poor attitude and lack of training makes their work quite difficult when it comes to teaching and professionalism on side of teachers and this has a direct effect on their work as instructors of knowledge and hence poor performance in schools.

Asked if School Management Committee (SMC) members were doing their work properly, the official DO1 remarked that the majority of these committees are doing their work fairly, though many have limited education where some are primary school leavers and few of them with secondary or certificate level. This is a big problem with the management standards of our schools (District official DO1 Isingiro January, 2022). The official DO3 further remarked that in most of our schools, SMC members are not helping the head teachers to organize our schools using proper managerial styles of leadership. This is due to the fact that many SMC members have no experience in management and with low levels of education (District official DO3 Isingiro January, 2022)

Implication of the Study

This significant positive relationship among these variables can lead to the different implications which should be considered; human capital issues and teachers' welfare at school will generate job satisfaction which also leads to the effective and efficient performance of the government aided primary schools. Therefore, it is recommended that for the education system to be improved we definitely require to build any possible mechanism or technique to train, educate and motivate the teachers. The teaching profession which is not a highly rewarding job is not seen as satisfactory as other occupations and hence leads to poor performance in most of the schools in Isingiro district. Therefore, a teacher's productivity, professionalism and welfare like accommodation, meals, allowances, medical care and school facilities reform policies is recommended for the teaching staff in government aided primary schools especially in Isingiro district, Uganda.

In this study, provision of refresher courses, workshops and professional skills should be availed to teachers. This will increase their productivity at places of work. So, well-looked after teacher will be satisfied with their jobs and that will increase their performance of the schools. Finally, teachers' well-being is perceived to be part of the reward system of a school. So a well-motivated teacher will be satisfied with the jobs. The teaching profession which is not a highly rewarding job is not seen as satisfactory as other occupations and hence leads to poor performance in most of the schools in Isingiro district. Therefore, all these factors above should be catered for by making reform policies to address the issues in the government aided primary schools in Isingiro district, Uganda.

Conclusion

This study focused on the fact that, lack of motivation, knowledge, training and professional workshops would lead to dissatisfied and uncommitted teachers with less skills and knowledge, who may have higher rates of turnover, absenteeism, and withdrawal behaviors in schools. The most important thing that school leaders can do is, to raise employee satisfaction and focus on the intrinsic parts of the job, such as making the work challenging and interesting. In the view of the

researcher, although paying employees poorly will likely not attract high-quality teachers to the schools or keep high performers, managers should realize that high pay alone is unlikely to create a satisfying work environment. Therefore managers should regulate paying the workers' according to the standard of living conditions and may be create more training, knowledge acquisition and skills to improve the teachers productivity in the schools.

In conclusion this study is expected to contribute to the vast knowledge that social research scientists study about in particular the education sector which really requires important revisions and reforms in terms of teacher motivation, human capital and schools' performance because in this study it was found that there is significant relationship between human capital and performance of government aided primary schools in Isingiro district, Uganda and this can further be applied to make some improvements in the quality of education sector in other parts of Uganda.

Recommendations

It is recommended that education policy makers, implementers and managers pay much attention to human capital development in government aided primary schools in Isingiro district, Uganda to increase schools' performance. This will harmonize all the management issues that may affect government aided primary schools' performance; this should be in line with enhancing knowledge and skills for productivity. USAID will also invest in selected areas of education beyond basic professional education, including focused efforts in workforce development and in higher education. Also, it is recommended that teachers are encouraged to upgrade beyond grade III certificates and plan a head for better opportunities in education sector. This is because majority of the teachers in government aided primary schools in Isingiro district, Uganda had grade III certificate. Furthermore, it is recommended that minimum qualification should be set for SMC members. This will minimise the understanding gap between the teachers, head teachers and management committee members in these schools. Since majority of SMC members in government aided primary schools in Isingiro district, Uganda were primary school leavers or no properly known level of education. Finally, due to changes in technology and management systems or practices, there is need for all educational managers to study the new management practices that suit both situations and their employees. This is true as every moment of time, employees and employers adjust to new life styles with different expectations. This will harmonize the leadership style in the schools and hence good performance.

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