



Does Motivation Impact Employees' Job Performance in Public Sector Organizations? A Myth or A Reality

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ABSTRACT

This study's objective was to identify the impact of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on the job performance of the employees of public sector organizations. To conduct the study, employee engagement was incorporated as a mediating variable, and the working environment was incorporated as a controlled variable. The study's research methodology was explanatory, with a deductive approach and positivist research philosophy. The study data was cross-sectional and collected through convenience-based sampling from respondents with a grade level of BPS-16 and above. The collected data was analyzed using hierarchical regression analysis through IBM-SPSS. The findings showed intrinsic and extrinsic motivation's direct and indirect contribution to job performance by mediating employee engagement. The study's originality to the literature remained the utilization of employee engagement and working environment as mediating and controlled variables to assess the impact of motivation.

1 Introduction

In today's fast-changing dynamics, employee motivation is crucial in determining organizational performance (Vashishth et al., 2024). When employee motivation is the agenda of the discussion, ultimately, it is comprehended only money can create employee motivation. This was true till the mid-19th century, but with time, researchers identified other factors that facilitate employee motivation in the workplace (Fischer et al., 2019; Sendawula et al., 2018). If those other motivation factors are added, employee job performance can be increased (Ghaffari, 2017).

Motivated employees contribute with a high level of effort to achieve organizational performance. Researchers have determined that well-motivated employees

are inclined to have better job performance (Kuswati, 2020). This, as a result, leads to enhanced job performance. Employee motivation is created by combining intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Both are required to boost the job performance of the employees. In the era of rapid globalization, organizations are under pressure to perform well, and for this, it is necessary to make the best use of human resources. For an organization's successful growth, employees are required to perform well. Its prerequisite is the employees' effective performance, which is keenly delivered by the employees' motivation.

The literature illustrated that motivation studies through job performance, employee engagement, and working environment remained rare. Like, the study of Abdelwahed et al. (2024) and Leitao et al. (2022) focused on employee performance through leadership and motivation. Similarly, to understand the motivation, the study of Abdullah et al. (2023) utilized McClelland's need theory. The study of Aldabbas et al. (2023) focused on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to understand employee creativity. The study of Ghosh et al. (2020) and Nehra (2023) used intrinsic motivation to understand employee engagement. Besides, these studies it was revealed that in public sector organizations, the study of Kyambade et al. (2024) utilized the motivation with leadership to understand employee performance and conversely, the study of Nguyen et al. (2024) incorporated the motivation to understand the team support. With this, it was validated that motivation is under the lens of research in private-sector organizations. The studies have rarely focused on public sector organizations by utilizing the abovementioned variables. At present, motivation is crucial in all sectors and organizations. However, there is little empirical research on the motivation of public-sector employees (Kuvaas et al., 2017). Thus, there is a need to study the impact of motivation on the job performance of public sector organizations' employees to judge whether motivation is a reality or a myth.

Besides the availability of the aforementioned rich gaps, the role of employee engagement is very crucial. Effective employee engagement results in the organization's required objectives (Awada, 2019). Employee engagement impacts motivation positively. However, an organization's good working environment creates employee motivation, job performance and engagement. Thus, it is essential to address the literature gap to identify the impact of public sector employee motivation on their job performance with the support of employee engagement and the role of the working environment.

In light of the above, this study is designed to identify the impact of employee motivation on the job performance of public sector organization employees through the support of employee engagement and working environment.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Motivation, Job Performance and Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

Motivation is a psychological state that directs an employee to perform the job. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are essential in determining employees' job performance. The self-determination theory defines employees' motivation towards job performance. The SDT is a macro-level theory that drives employee motivation (Khan, 2023). It is also considered the most influential theory on motivation in the twenty-first century (Forner et al., 2020). The SDT assists in understanding the role of motivation in generating the required job performance (Forner et al., 2020), specifically in the context of public sector organizations. Motivation in public sector organizations is usually high, as rendering a job in a public-owned enterprise helps generate higher motivation (Corduneanu et al., 2020). Employee motivation is composed of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Both are required to boost the job performance of the employees. Prominent

researchers opined that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are independent (Kuvaas et al., 2017). Thus, both are required to be looked at independently to assess their impact.

2.2 Hypotheses Development

2.2.1 *Intrinsic Motivation, Extrinsic Motivation and Job Performance*

Dessler (2020) describes intrinsic motivation as a pleasure someone gets by doing the job. Extrinsic motivation is created by outside factors that help perform the job. Both types of motivation are critical in creating an employee's job performance. Job performance is the expected value of the employee's distinct behaviour to the organization (Lado & Alonso, 2017; Mario, 2019). The study conducted by Mardanov, (2021) has identified a positive relationship between intrinsic motivation and job performance and extrinsic motivation and job performance. Employees with low levels of intrinsic motivation result in poor job performance (Shin & Grant, 2019). In an organization, when an employee receives a challenging task, intrinsic motivation becomes high (Stringer et al., 2011), which, as a result, generates job performance.

On the other hand, extrinsic motivation is generated by outside factors. It is when an employee works for monetary and non-monetary rewards such as cash awards, bonuses, appreciation and recognition. Organizations enhance employee performance through effective monetary and non-monetary benefits (Koo et al., 2020). This creates an extrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation positively impacts employee job performance (Ndungu, 2017). The following hypotheses are proposed for the study in light of the above discussion.

H1: Intrinsic motivation has a positive impact on employees' job performance.

H2: Extrinsic motivation has a positive impact on employees' job performance.

2.2.2 Intrinsic Motivation, Extrinsic Motivation, Job Performance and Employee Engagement

Employee engagement refers to taking a keen interest and reflecting excitement while performing the job (Ologbo & Sofian, 2012). The employees who depict excitement at work are the ones who work with full loyalty, dedication and commitment (Hossan et al., 2020). Organizations take different initiatives to improve the performance of their employees (Koo et al., 2020). It is always challenging for an organization to engage employees to yield high job performance results. Employee-related needs are satisfied when engaged in the workplace (Forner et al., 2020). This ultimately leads to higher job performance. Employee engagement plays a significant role in the organization's growth and sustainability. Once employees believe they are important to the organization, they start showing loyalty towards the organization, hence putting more effort into the job, leading to high performance (Baqir et al., 2020). It is universally accepted that employees' contribution is significant for the growth of an organization. Thus, keeping employees motivated and engaged will deliver results for the organization (Awada, 2019). According to Fischer et al. (2019), employee engagement positively impacts the employees' intrinsic motivation. In the literature, evidence of motivation and employee engagement is richly available in studies (Aldabbas et al., 2023). Employee engagement is a significant contributor to job performance, creating a bridge between motivation and job performance. The studies of Riyanto et al. (2021) and Scrimshire et al. (2023) identified that employee engagement is a mediator between employees' motivation and job performance. Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation positively influence job performance through employee engagement (Hossan et al., 2020). The following hypotheses are proposed for the study in light of the above discussion.

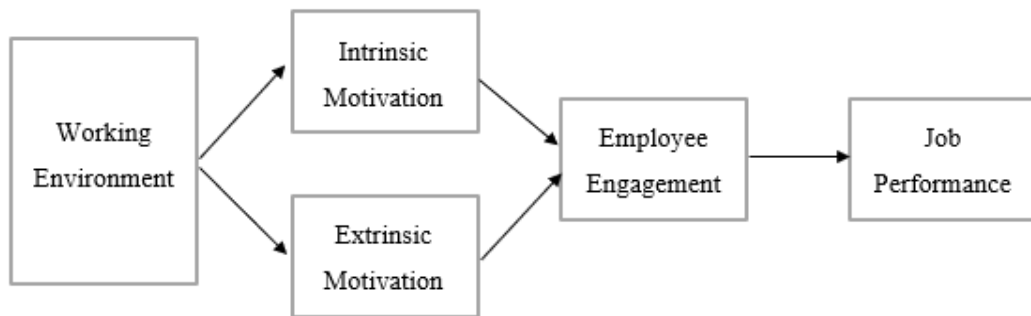
H3: The intrinsic motivation impact on employees' job performance is mediated by employee engagement.

H4: The impact of extrinsic motivation on employees' job performance is mediated by employee engagement.

2.2.3 *Role of Working Environment*

Parker (2003) defined the working environment as employee perception regarding the work culture. The perception is created based on the routine working environment and depends on the employees' attitude to work, peer relationships, and coworker communication. The work environment influences and governs employee motivation and job performance. For intrinsic motivation, a supportive working environment is required (Stringer et al., 2011). Lundqvist et al. (2024) identified employee engagement support through the working environment. The working environment in public sector organizations highly varies. It is not similar to what is being witnessed in private sectors. The public sector employees do not have a working culture under which a robust HR culture is robustly implemented. The working environment impacts the employees' motivation (Flynn, 2011). Thus, based on that observation, the working environment is the controlled variable that minimizes its influence on employees' job performance in public sector organizations.

Figure 1 Theoretical Framework



3 Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a positivist research philosophy. In positivist research philosophy, the researcher's role is that of a natural scientist who utilizes the existing theory to generate hypotheses and collects quantifiable observations to generalize the results (Saunders et al., 2009). Thus, in line with the research philosophy and the data requirements, the study design was explanatory with a deductive research approach. The data time horizon was cross-sectional. The data was collected through the questionnaire survey technique. The questionnaire was closed-ended and designed to collect the respondents' demographic and variable information. A convenience sampling technique was used to collect the data. The estimated population for the study was employees of public sector organizations in Karachi. Amongst the estimated population, only employees with a grade level of BPS-16 and above were targeted for data collection. It was decided considering the complexity of the work at that level and effective decision-making for which motivation is keenly required. The selection of respondents with a grade level of BPS-16 and above was also justified, considering the understanding of the study variables to provide a robust and reliable response. In public sector organizations, employees with a grade level of BPS-16 are recruited through a robust recruitment process. This also reflects the credibility of the respondents selected for responding.

3.2 Measurement of the Variables

The variables were measured on a five-point Likert scale with options on both sides, from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The employees' motivation was measured through intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The study's intrinsic motivation operational definition was any action to create inherent satisfaction (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Intrinsic

motivation was an independent variable; its measurement scale was adopted from Kuvaas et al. (2017). Any job performed to gain an external reward (Rehman et al., 2016) was used as an operational definition for extrinsic motivation as an independent variable. The extrinsic motivation measurement scale was adopted from Dysvik et al. (2013). The study's operational definition of employee engagement was that employees take a keen interest and reflect excitement while delivering the outcomes (Ologbo & Sofian, 2012). The employee engagement scale was adapted from the Soliman and Wahba (2019) study. One item from the scale was dropped while adapting the scale. Employee engagement in the study was a mediating variable. The operational definition of the working environment in the study was employee perception regarding the work culture (Parker et al., 2003). The scale working environment was adopted from the Soliman and Wahba (2019) study. The working environment was a control variable in the study. The study's operational definition of job performance was the expected value of the employee's distinct behaviour to the organization (Lado & Alonso, 2017; Mario, 2019). The scale for job performance was adopted from the study of Koo et al. (2020). The job performance was a dependent variable in the study. The variables information is provided in the following table.

Table 1 Adopted Variable Scales

S. No.	Variables Type	Variable Name	Items	Reference
1	Independent Variable	Intrinsic Motivation	6	(Kuvaas et al., 2017)
2	Independent Variable	Extrinsic Motivation	4	(Dysvik et al., 2013)
3	Mediating Variable	Employee Engagement	7	(Soliman & Wahba, 2019)
4	Control Variable	Working Environment	8	(Soliman & Wahba, 2019)
5	Dependent Variable	Job Performance	4	(Koo et al., 2020)

3.3 Survey Response

The primary data collection respondents were public sector organizations employees with an employment grade of BPS-16 or above. A total of 200 respondents

were requested to participate through convenience-based sampling. However, only 111 respondents responded. From the responses received, 13 questionnaires were dropped due to incompleteness, which provided the final data of 98 respondents for the statistical analysis. The survey response rate stood at 55.5%, reflecting the survey's effectiveness.

4 Data Analysis and Findings

After the collection of the data, the data was performed by using the IBM-SPSS. The analyzed data and study findings are presented in this section.

4.1 Pilot Testing

A pilot test on the adopted scales was performed to determine their suitability, identify any weaknesses, and gauge the difficulty level in understanding the questionnaire. Thirty respondents' responses were obtained in line with the requirement of estimating the pilot testing results mentioned in the book authored by Cooper and Schindler (2014). Cronbach alpha was applied to determine the scale robustness before proceeding to the collection of primary data. The results are provided in the following table.

Table 2 Scales Reliability Result in the Pilot Testing

S. No.	Variables	No. of items	Cronbach Alpha (α)
1	Intrinsic Motivation	6	0.94
2	Extrinsic Motivation	4	0.85
3	Employee Engagement	7	0.91
4	Working Environment	8	0.94
5	Job Performance	4	0.94

The pilot testing reliability was above the threshold value of 0.70 for all the variable scales. The rule of thumb for accepted reliability is 0.70 (Hair et al., 2010). This ensured the robustness of the scales and enlightened the path for primary data collection.

4.2 Primary Data Collection

The survey results provided the final data of 98 respondents for performing the analysis. The demographic profiling followed by hypothesis testing is provided below.

Table 3 Respondents Demographic Characteristics

Demographics	Group	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	70	71%
	Female	28	29%
Age	21-29	6	6%
	30-39	49	50%
	40-49	20	21%
	50-59	19	19%
	60 plus	4	4%
Qualification	Graduate	33	34%
	Post Graduate	48	49%
	Others	17	17%
Experience	Less than 1 Year	11	11%
	1 to 5 Years	19	19%
	6 to 10 Years	34	35%
	11 to 15 Years	34	35%

The demographic profiling of the respondents revealed that the majority of the participants who responded to the survey were male, which reflects the domination of the male gender in the public sector organizations' workforce. Similarly, the respondents' ages remained dominated in between 30-39 years, along with postgraduate degree qualifications and a strong work experience of over six years.

Table 4 Scale Reliability Result in Primary Data Collection

S. No.	Variables	No. of items	Cronbach Alpha (α)
1	Intrinsic Motivation	6	0.91
2	Extrinsic Motivation	4	0.87
3	Employee Engagement	7	0.90
4	Working Environment	8	0.93
5	Job Performance	4	0.92

For all the variables scales the reliability was above the threshold value of 0.70. The rule of thumb for accepted reliability is 0.70 (Hair et al., 2010). This ensured the robustness of the scales and enlightened the path for performing the hypotheses testing. The standard deviation values reflected that the data is not far from the mean, which is why variability in data is minimal. Similarly, the Bivariate Pearson Correlation results reflected the significance of all the variables.

Table 5 Mean, Standard Deviation and Bivariate Pearson Correlation

S. No.	Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Bivariate Pearson Correlation				
				1	2	3	4	5
1	Intrinsic Motivation	3.7	0.9	1	0.32**	0.79**	0.70**	0.69**
2	Extrinsic Motivation	3.7	1.1	0.32**	1	0.39**	0.28**	0.33**
3	Employee Engagement	3.8	0.8	0.79**	0.39**	1	0.64**	0.83**
4	Working Environment	3.5	0.9	0.70**	0.28**	0.64**	1	0.61**
5	Job Performance	3.9	0.9	0.69**	0.33**	0.83**	0.61**	1

** Significant at the 0.01 *Significant at the 0.05

4.2.1 Hypotheses Testing

H1: Intrinsic motivation has a positive impact on employees' job performance.

The hypothesis was tested by utilizing the hierarchical regression analysis. In model 1, job performance was regressed with a working environment, which provided a significant impact of 39% ($R^2 = 0.39$ with significance level $p < .01$). The multicollinearity at this model level was also identified through the tolerance statistics test. Its value remained 1, which was under the threshold criteria of multicollinearity, as mentioned in the book (Hair et al., 2010). In model 2, intrinsic motivation was entered in the model, which provided a significant increase of 13% between intrinsic motivation and employee's job performance ($R^2 = 0.52$ with significance level $p < .01$). The multicollinearity at this model level remained at 0.51. The significant increase in the

impact of intrinsic motivation and job performance provided rich evidence for accepting hypothesis 1.

H2: Extrinsic motivation has a positive impact on employees' job performance.

The hypothesis was tested by utilizing the hierarchical regression analysis. In model 1, job performance was regressed with a working environment with a significant impact of 39% ($R^2= 0.39$ with significance level $p < .01$). The multicollinearity at this model level was also identified through the tolerance statistics test, its value remained 1. In model 2, extrinsic motivation was entered in the model, which provided a significant increase of 3% between extrinsic motivation and employee's job performance ($R^2= 0.42$ with significance level $p < .01$). The multicollinearity at this model level remained at 0.92. The significant increase in the impact of extrinsic motivation and job performance provided rich evidence to accept hypothesis 2.

H3: The intrinsic motivation impact on employees' job performance is mediated by employee engagement.

The hypothesis was tested by utilizing the hierarchical regression analysis. In model 1, job performance was regressed with a working environment with a significant impact of 39% ($R^2= 0.39$ with significance level $p < .01$). The multicollinearity at this model level was also identified through the tolerance statistics test; its value remained 1. In model 2, intrinsic motivation was entered, which provided a significant increase of 13% between intrinsic motivation and employee's job performance with ($R^2= 0.53$ with significance level $p < .01$). The multicollinearity at this model level remained at 0.51. In model 3, employee engagement was entered in the model, which provided a significant increase of 18% impact of intrinsic motivation and employee's job performance through its mediation with ($R^2= 0.71$ with significance level $p < .01$). The multicollinearity at this model level remained at 0.49. The significant increase in the impact of intrinsic motivation

and job performance through the mediation of employee engagement provided rich evidence for the acceptance of hypothesis 3.

H4: The impact of extrinsic motivation on employees' job performance is mediated by employee engagement.

The hypothesis was tested by utilizing the hierarchical regression analysis. In model 1, job performance was regressed with a working environment, which provided a significant impact of 40% ($R^2 = 0.40$ with significance level $p < .01$). The multicollinearity at this model level was also identified through the tolerance statistics test, its value remained 1. In model 2, extrinsic motivation was entered in the model, which provided a significant increase of 2.7% in the impact of intrinsic motivation and employee's job performance with ($R^2 = 0.42$ with significance level $p < .01$). The multicollinearity at this model level remained at 0.90. In model 3, employee engagement was entered in the model, which provided a significant increase of 27.4% in the impact of intrinsic motivation and employee's job performance through its mediation with ($R^2 = 0.70$ with significance level $p < .01$). The multicollinearity at this model level remained at 0.56. The significant increase in the impact of extrinsic motivation and job performance through the mediation of employee engagement provided rich evidence for the acceptance of hypothesis 4.

Table 6 Regression Analysis Result for Intrinsic Motivation with Job Performance

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Δ R-Sq	
	Stand. Coeff	R-Sq	Sig	Tol./Coll. Stat.	Stand. Coeff	R-Sq		Sig
Controlled Variable								
Work Envir.	0.62	0.39	**	1	0.26			
Independent Variable								
Intrinsic Motivation					0.50	0.52	**	0.51
								0.13

** Significant at the 0.01 *Significant at the 0.05

Table 7 Regression Analysis Result for Extrinsic Motivation with Job Performance

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Δ R-Sq	
	Stand. Coeff	R-Sq	Sig	Tol./Coll. Stat.	Stand. Coeff	R-Sq		Sig
Controlled Variable								
Work Envir.	0.62	0.39	**	1	0.57			
Independent Variable								
Extrinsic Motivation					0.18	0.42	**	0.92
								0.03

** Significant at the 0.01 *Significant at the 0.05

Table 8 Regression Analysis Result for Intrinsic Motivation with Job Performance Through the Mediation of Employee Engagement

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Δ R-Sq		
	Stand. Coeff	R-Sq	Sig	ToI/Col I. Stat.	Stand. Coeff	R-Sq	Sig	ToI/Col I. Stat.	Stand. Coeff		R-Sq	Sig
Controlled Variable												
WE	0.63	0.39	**	1	0.27				0.15			
Independent Variable												
IM		0.51	0.53	**	0.51	0.02			0.13			
Mediating Variable												
EE						0.72	0.71	**	0.49			0.18

** Significant at the 0.01 *Significant at the 0.05, WE= Work Environment, IM = Intrinsic Motivation, EE = Employee Engagement

Table 9 Regression Analysis Result for Extrinsic Motivation with Job Performance Through the Mediation of Employee Engagement

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Δ R-Sq		
	Stand. Coeff	R-Sq	Sig	ToI/Col I. Stat.	Stand. Coeff	R-Sq	Sig	ToI/Col I. Stat.	Stand. Coeff		R-Sq	Sig
Controlled Variable												
WE	0.63	0.40	**	1	0.58				0.15			
Independent Variable												
EM		0.17	0.42	**	0.90	0.016			0.027			
Mediating Variable												
EE						0.72	0.73	**	0.56			0.274

** Significant at the 0.01 *Significant at the 0.05, WE= Work Environment, EM = Extrinsic Motivation, EE = Employee Engagement

5 Discussion and Conclusion

Self Determination Theory underpins the study to identify how intrinsic and extrinsic motivation impact the job performance of public sector employees. To validate the study objectives, four hypotheses were tested. The result of all the four hypotheses remained statistically significant. The study results provided similar results with and without including the mediating variable. Including the mediating variable provided a robust increase in the impact of motivation and job performance. The intrinsic motivation results obtained in the study remained aligned with the previous studies. It was identified that in the studies of Berdicchia et al. (2023), Nguyen et al. (2024), Park and Word (2012), Pham et al. (2023), and Stringer et al. (2011), rich support for the intrinsic motivation role in getting required performance outcomes is critical. These critical performance outcomes lead towards the job performance of the employees. The extrinsic motivation results obtained in the study remained aligned with the previous studies. It was identified that in the studies of Aldabbas et al. (2023), Kim (2018), Mardanov (2021), Sun et al.(2024), and Venketsamy and Lew (2024) rich support for the extrinsic motivation role in getting required performance outcomes is critical. These critical performance outcomes lead to the job performance of the employees.

5.1 Contributions of the Study

The findings proved that motivation is a reality in public sector organizations. The study results contribute to the self-determination theory's theoretical paradigm and the opinion that people serving in the public sector organizations have motivation generated by serving their state, which generates job performance (Corduneanu et al., 2020). Similarly, the research contributes to the literature on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation impacting public sector employees' performance. The effective role of the study's working environment as a controlled variable differentiates the study. The working

environment is considered a key factor in determining the effectiveness of job performance in public sector organizations. Thus, its incorporation has added value to the study and resembled its contribution to the literature. Utilizing employee engagement as a mediator in the study also enhanced the robustness of the model and provided a robust and uniform contribution to the study. Besides contributing to the literature, only focusing on the public sector organizations is also a valuable addition to the literature. Rarely have the elements of motivation and job performance been explored in these organizations, specifically in the study context.

5.2 Limitations, Areas of Further Research, Managerial Implications and Conclusions

One of the key limitations of the study was the sample size. Only 111 survey responses were collected. It was keenly due to the reluctance of the public sector employees to provide the questionnaire information. Thus, the researchers decided to use the convenience-based sampling technique. Considering this, it is highly recommended that studies be conducted in public sector organizations by adopting more resources and creating awareness of providing research data for their betterment. It is also recommended that future research studies be conducted in other provinces and cities to identify the comparison of motivation and job performance.

The study results have certain managerial implications for practice. Based on the study results, managers must create effective intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, which may improve employees' job performance. The effective job performance of the employees will ultimately lead towards the organisation's success. Managers must also utilize various methods of creating intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in employees, which may lead to successful job performance. An effective working environment and employee engagement are also fundamental to achieving results. The managers are advised to create

a healthy working environment in public sector organizations to improve employee performance.

Ultimately, the study concludes by fulfilling its core objective of identifying whether motivation impacts job performance in public sector organizations. It is a myth or a reality. Thus, it is a reality, and more research is required to enrich its understanding further. The success of any organization is highly dependent on the performance of its employees. If the employees are motivated, involved, engaged, and inspired by the working environment, which offers incentives for career growth and development, the employee's job performance always remains positive.

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