

Impact of Ethical Leadership on Teaching Staff Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Mandera County

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ABSTRACT

Unethical leadership has catastrophic results to an association. Mandera County being fear inclined makes it hard to control and screen the sort of leadership in the education segment. This current study aims to determine the impact of ethical leadership on performance of the teaching staff in public secondary schools in Mandera County, Kenya. The research used descriptive research design to answer the research questions. Both the quantitative data and the qualitative one were collected and later analysed. The target population of the research incorporated the 57 Secondary school Principals from Mandera and 313 secondary teachers in Mandera County, Kenya. The research used stratified random sampling procedure to choose 50 Principals and 176 teachers. Interview guide and questionnaire were used to collect data from the principals and teachers respectively. Data was analysed quantitatively utilizing the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. The research was of importance National Government and County Administrations, teaching fraternity and education segment partners as it adds to the theory and standards of leadership. The study concluded that ethical leadership significantly impacts teaching staff job performance in Kenyan public secondary schools, with inclusiveness being the most influential factor. Recommendations include training school leaders in ethical practices emphasizing fairness, openness, selflessness, and inclusiveness, and actively involving teaching staff in decision-making processes to improve job performance.

Keywords: Ethical Leadership, Concern for fairness, Selflessness by leaders, Job Performance,

INTRODUCTION

A leader is an individual who propels a group of individuals to accomplish its tasks and keep up group solidarity all through the procedure (Sheikh, 2015), while leadership is the progression towards impacting individuals to achieve the indicated goals (Beach & Dale, 2010). According to Avolio and Bass, (2012) Leadership isn't just a personal characteristic, instead it is the aspect of uniting the individuals of different shades of thought together with those of identical views. Strategic leadership is the leader's capacity to foresee, make a dream, enable others and exercise adaptability for the progress of the association (Kleijnen, 2009). Effective leaders set the strategic objectives, vision and mission for the association. They do this by creating structures and procedures that effect the present and future execution of the association (Boal & Hooijberg, 2011).

Northouse, (2010) defines leadership is a practice where someone inspires a group of people to achieve a shared objective. According to Yukl, (2012) leadership is a procedure of impact towards the achievement of goals. This perspective on leadership for the most part centres around the connections between a chief and subjects whereby deliberate impact is practiced by managing, organizing and encouraging exercises and

interactions in a gathering or in an association. Associations of all sizes are occupied with an aggressive domain and thus need the correct sort of leadership to prosper. Associations with viable leaders will react to changes in their sectors and prevailing conditions, innovatively address difficulties, and continue posting superb outcomes (Vardiman, et al., 2006).

As indicated by Cotton, (2003), world over it has been discovered by authorities that kinds of conduct by principals considerably impact juniors' accomplishments, foundation of a reasonable attention on juniors learning by having a dream, clear learning objectives, and exclusive standards for learning for all learners. Equally a study conducted in India by Bandyopadhyay and Subrahmanian (2008) additionally noticed those principals' conduct and leadership styles impacts collaborations and sincere associations with pertinent stakeholders as far as correspondence and communication, passionate and relational help, perceptions and openness. Furthermore, they additionally build up a school philosophy helpful for instructing and learning via shared leadership, shared opinions and mutual cooperation.

In Uganda research was carried out by Maicibi, (2013) who hypothesized that specific leadership styles of school leaders could have either positive or negative effect on instructing and learning conditions and procedures prompting upgrades in learner's exhibition in curricular exercises and scholarly accomplishments (Russell & Stone, 2002).

In Kenya, just like in many other countries, education is a very vital pillar towards the realisation of Vision 2030 and the Big Four Agenda of His Excellency Uhuru Kenyatta. It is on this note that highest budgetary allocation of Sh473 billion has been allocated to this sector (Obura, 2019) which the intent making our education system churn out highly skilled and productive work force to help in the realisation of the nation's dreams. As such the performance of the teaching staff and school leadership is an issue of concern to all the relevant stakeholders. The education leadership frameworks both inside our schools and the county level assume a critical job in guaranteeing high ethical benchmarks are upheld in our schools among the tutors and learners of state funded schools in Kenya. This is on the grounds that educational leaders, particularly school principals, impact school viability (Pashiardis, 2004).

School principals play very important roles in the overall development of their institutions (Kalkan, et al., 2020). They sit in the BOM as secretaries and are agents of both TSC and MOE. Beside the general administration function, they are in charge of human resource management, performance management, curriculum implementation and financial management and control. It is in recognition of their pivotal role that the MOE had introduced short education management courses for the school leadership at KEMI. While this is a positive development, situations in many schools are yet to improve (Okoko, 2020).

In many schools, the quality of education continues to deteriorate as a result of wanting leadership. Cases of parent roughing up principals and apportioning to them the biggest blame for dismal performance are common occurrence in our media (Mulford, 2003). The wanting quality of education in our public schools have forced many parents who are dissatisfied to take their learners to private schools, many of which register sterling performance (Shiundu, 2024) To overcome these challenges, school leadership is expected to initiate organizational change through observing fairness and selflessness, participative decision making, inspiring co-workers, and building working teams, communicating effectively roles and expectations as well as offering moral leadership. In such instances, ethical and transformational leadership should come into play where through stakeholder participation, they build and strengthen the school culture based on values such as fairness, hard work, selflessness, empathy and teamwork (Kumar, & Dhiman, 2020).

There's a connection between ethical leadership and performance of individuals. All organizational members from the leaders to the lower cadre employees are expected to inculcate both ethical virtues and participatory leadership that involves all parties to ensure high performance standards. Educational institutions have a bias of team work in ensuring high performance in national examinations and behaviour

of students. This requires stiff and instrumental ethical leadership that would facilitate high performance and ensure limited cases of underachievement.

One of these factors is the crucial part played by school leadership in change and performance management in public secondary schools. Though the stakeholders have been forthright in tackling the issue head on, meaningful change is slow and invisible. There is likelihood that this is attributed to weak governance capacity in the institutions. This study sought to analyze the impact of ethical leadership on teaching staff accomplishment in public secondary schools in Mandera County. This study is important as it will address the persistent poor outcomes in government-funded high schools in Mandera County, which stem from unethical practices and weak administrative systems. By examining the impact of ethical leadership on job performance, the findings can inform best practices and policy implementation at both national and county levels, potentially leading to improved governance and educational outcomes

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Effective leadership is crucial in organizations where performance of staff is concerned. Organizations have to enhance its staff performance particularly at the point where challenges arises and deal with unethical behaviours (Oates et al., 2021). Mwaponda (2009) termed that conformity to established moral standards was necessary to attain organizational objectives. (Oladimeji & Abdulkareem, 2023) discovered a correlation of a constructive nature between moral leadership and staff performance. They contended that the perspective of moral leadership had beneficial associations to increased staff job outcome. Nthini (2013) discovered that leadership had a degree of impact on employees' moral behaviour. He found that the performance of employees was impacted by strategic leadership that was effective. Indeed, organizations are characterized by felony, corruption, facilitation and discrimination problems among others.

In the education sector in Mandera County, numerous unethical governance practices have been brought to the fore. Inadequate consultations, heavy handedness, lack of participatory approach in running schools, inequity, unprofessional acts like political influence, clanism and other form of favouritism have been raised by the stakeholders. The lack of fairness and professionalism might have led to frustration, unmotivated workforce, non-compliance with the code of conduct and overall decline in productivity in job outcomes by the staff (Sanjay and Malik, 2022). These types of unethical practices if not managed suitably can possibly affect performance of staff. In spite of this, there has been scanty documented research on ethical leadership in the education sector in Kenya and its relationship with teachers' job performance. This shows that there is a big area of research that requires further investigation. Therefore, this study looked to explore the research question; what is the impact of ethical leadership on teaching staff job performance in government-funded high schools in Mandera County?

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study sought to determine the influence of ethical leadership on teaching staff job performance in public secondary schools in Kenya while casing on Mandera County.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concern for Fairness

Moral leadership is about inspiring the workforce and creating a culture of trust, respect and fairness. Equity is the foundation of moral leadership. In an organization, people do interact and how they do so matter a lot. Various studies conducted have shown that when employees are treated fairly they in turn reciprocate the same by viewing and treating others objectively. One major lesson to be drawn from social exchange theory

is that workers who are treated with equity and dignity tend to portray favourable perceptions towards job executions and this in turn impact on employee conducts and job outcomes. (Brown and Treviño, 2006; Brown and Mitchell, 2010).

Ethical leaders treat all their subordinates in the same manner. Staff whose work stand out are rewarded irrespective of one's affiliation to the organization leadership. Balanced processing entails punishing employees in the same manner for the same offence. This will foster a conducive work atmosphere and enhance hard work and loyalty in an organization. Discrimination in a work place is a signal of lack of moral leadership. Respect is created and fostered in an organization through creation of level playing field for all the employees when it comes to job execution, reward, punishment and promotion. (Khuntia & Suar, 2004). Moral leaders are required to impartially mediate conflict among the staff at the workplace by actively listening to both parties before rendering a fair verdict which is necessary for the success of the organization. To ward of any form of discrimination should use policies and codes of conducts to enhance equity at the workplace.

Moral behaviour includes showing required conduct in line with the appropriate values and principles such as honesty, integrity, objectivity, and having empathy for others. Leaders who are ethical portray conduct that is useful to others and refrains from those that can cause harm to others (Toor & Ofori, 2009). Ethical leaders should display moral values and equity in decision making, consider its effects on others, and clearly enumerate to employees how their conducts at work help to realize the overall goals of the organization (Piccolo, Greenbaum, Den Hartog, & Folger, 2010).

Selflessness by Leaders

Selflessness entails putting the common public good before one's interest. Wu, Liden, Liao and Wayne, (2021) holds the view that a moral leader's personal interest is secondary to the bigger organizational interest. Such leaders set standards for themselves and for the entire group and strive to abide by them. They set great examples for their subordinates who view them as role models. Selfless leaders are honest, open, purposeful, humble and flexible. They lay their focus on serving others. Talking of selfless leadership, Mahatma Gandhi aptly puts it when he said that the best way for one to find oneself is through service to others.

Ethical leaders have a broader sense of vision and often focus on the 'we' and not 'I'. According to Kinch (2022), they come with strategic vision and cascade down the same to the subordinates through clear communication of the strategic goals of the organization. Selfless superiors are empathic and model servant leadership thus help build greater rapport with others. They build trust focus associations and organizational cantered culture. (Khan, Mahmood & Shoaib, 2022). In such an environment employees feel more recognized and appreciated hence just like their superior they too will keep the firms' strategic goals in their minds thereby leading to greater productivity.

Bello, (2012) argues that selflessness is the basis for moral leadership. Godbless, (2021) in agreeing with the above sentiment observe that a leader's preoccupation with selfish interest negates the concept of ethical leadership. As such they posit that superiors should shelve their personal agenda when making decisions in the interest of the common good. This helps reduce tension and in fights and thereby makes the team to gel together

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research assumed a mixed method research design. This is because it permits both quantitative and qualitative methods in the data gathering (concurrently) and analysis from a large section of the population. The data was analysed and interpreted. This research design was descriptive and sought to answer the

question: what, where and how of a given matter or subject (Sileyew, 2019). Descriptive research design uses both quantitative and qualitative data (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2020).

The study sampled 50 Principals, and 176 school teachers making a total of 226 samples for observation. According to Khan (2014), there is no set number of participants that determines the suitable size for a given population.

The study was done using questionnaires and interview schedule. These questionnaires were distributed by pick and drop method. The researcher then thereafter collected the questionnaires for data analysis. Semi structured interviews were also conducted with the school principals.

Data gathered from the field was processed by editing for completeness and consistency. The researcher coded the data into various categories for ease in analysis. The study adopted descriptive and inferential statistics for analysis. This is mainly because the data collected is purely quantitative (Cooper & Schindler, 2003). The information was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. The study findings were illustrated on charts, figures and tabulated tables. Data collected using interviews were analysed qualitatively. The responses were arranged thematically according to the objectives of the study in a narrative form.

RESULTS

Concern for Fairness

The first objective of the study was to determine the contribution of on teaching staff job performance in public secondary schools in Mandera County. The participants were requested to show their level of conformity to the given statements with regard to concern for fairness in the scale of 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree. The results are tabulated in table 1 below.

Table 1: Concern for Fairness

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev
The Board of Management take concerns of unfairness by the teaching staff serious.	4.6667	.51640
The school management provides fair teacher treatment	4.1667	.75277
There is fairness in appointing teachers to leadership positions.	4.0000	0.6324
Teachers have recourse in case of unfair treatment	3.839	.4777
County education officials ensure all matters raised by the teaching staff are duly addressed within proper timings	4.3333	.5164
Unfair treatment of teachers leads to poor performance of teachers	4.2433	0.3732

As per the participants responses, it was found that the Board of Management take concerns of unfairness by the teaching staff serious as shown by a mean of 4.667 and standard deviation of 0.5164; The school management provides fair teacher treatment as indicated by a mean of 4.1667 and .a standard deviation of 0.75277; There is fairness in appointing teachers to leadership positions as indicated a mean of 4 and standard deviation of 0.6324 and lastly they attested that teachers have recourse in case of unfair treatment with a mean of 3.839 and standard deviation of 0.4777, County education officials ensure all matters raised by the teaching staff are duly addressed within proper timings with a mean of 4.3333 and a standard deviation of 0.5164, and unfair treatment of teachers leads to poor performance of teachers with a mean of

4.2433 and standard deviation of 0.3732. It can be deduced that an increase in concern for fairness increased trust for the principals’ leadership thereby increasing teaching staff job performance.

Commitment to Selflessness

The second objective of the study was to establish the effects of commitment to selflessness on teaching staff job performance in public secondary schools in Mandera County. The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the following statements with regard to commitment to selflessness in the scale of 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree. The results are shown in table 2 below.

Table 2: Commitment to Selflessness

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.
The school principal maintains an “open door policy” and is always available when required by teachers.	3.6667	.51640
The school principal has developed a culture of giving in a selfless manner, and also gives the teachers an opportunity to donate at their own will.	4.5000	.54772
The principal expresses a positive attitude toward teachers by emphasizing the importance of emotional and mental wellness of the teachers	4.0000	.63246
The school principal allows and encourages teachers to commit themselves towards professional development and growth.	4.3333	.51640
The principal appreciates work well done by teachers by celebrating success, whether small or big.	3.1667	.40825
The school principal places public interest above selfish interest.	3.8123	.56343

The findings indicated that the school principal maintains an “open door policy” and is always available when required by teachers as shown by a mean of 3.6667 and standard deviation of 0.5164; The school principal has developed a culture of giving in a selfless manner, and also gives the teachers an opportunity to donate at their own will at a mean of 4.5 and a standard deviation of 0.54772; The principal expresses a positive attitude toward teachers by emphasizing the importance of emotional and mental wellness of the teachers as shown by a mean of 4.000 and standard deviation of 0.63246; The school principal allows and encourages teachers to commit themselves towards professional development and growth shown by a mean of 4.333 and a standard deviation of 0.5164; The principal appreciates work well done by teachers by celebrating success, whether small or big as shown by a mean of 3.1667 and a standard deviation of 0.40825 and lastly The school principal places public interest above selfish interest with a mean of 3.8123 and standard deviation of 0.56343. This suggests that there was a significant improvement on the teacher classroom performance as indicated by majority of the respondents. From the above results, it is clear that increasing commitment to selflessness enhances teaching staff job performance. This therefore this means that commitment to selflessness has an effect on teaching staff job performance in Mandera County.

Teaching Staff Job Performance

The respondents were requested to provide their perceived rating on the Teaching Staff Job Performance in the scale of 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree as shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Teaching Staff Job Performance

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.
Our school Principal leadership style facilitates high teaching staff job performance	3.56	.8650
Conflicts between school leadership and teaching staff contribute to limited teaching staff job performance.	3.96	.787
Clan preferences, favoritism and conflicts fuel low teaching staff job performance.	3.76	.3450
Diversity in teaching staff enhances high student performance.	4.43	.457
Divisive participation of teaching staff lowers overall school performance	3.94	.956
Lack of adequate resources in schools, lowers the performance of the school and morale of the teaching fraternity.	4.02	.767
Religious biasness in school management has lowered overall school and teaching staff job performance.	3.96	.345
Teachers are frequently sent for workshops and Seminars	4.89	.376

Based on the finding on the responses of the participants on the effect of company’s synergy on Teaching Staff Job Performance, the respondents agreed that Our school Principal leadership style facilitates high teaching staff job performance with a mean of 3.56 and standard deviation of 0.8650; Conflicts between school leadership and teaching staff contribute to limited teaching staff job performance as shown by a mean of 3.96 and a standard deviation of 0.787; Clan preferences, favouritism and conflicts fuel low teaching staff job performance with a mean of 3.76 and standard deviation of 0.3450; Diversity in teaching staff enhances high student performance with a mean of 4.43 and standard deviation of 0.457; Divisive participation of teaching staff lowers overall school performance as shown by a mean of 3.94 and standard deviation of 0.956; Lack of adequate resources in schools, lowers the performance of the school and morale of the teaching fraternity with a mean of 4.02 and standard deviation of 0.767 and lastly Religious biasness in school management has lowered overall school and teaching staff job performance as shown by a mean of 3.96 and standard deviation of 0.345.

Inferential Statistics

To determine the link between variables (independent) on the teaching staff job performance, a multiple regression analysis was utilized. This was done by coding, entering and computing the multiple regressions measurements of the study using SPSS version 21.

This was done with reference to the sampled teachers and the five variables and the Table 4 below generated.

Table 4: Model summary Ra

Model	R	R Square	Adjustable R square	Std error of the estimate
1	.834	.688	.267	0.567

a. Predictors: (Constant), concern for fairness, commitment to selflessness

Source: survey data 2023

Table 7: ANOVA

Model	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig
Regression	2.344	1	0.586	4.069	0.007

Residual	7.357	156	0.144		
Total	4.326	157			
a. Predictors: (Constant) concern for fairness, commitment to selflessness.					
b. Dependent Variable: teaching staff job performance					

Source: survey data 2023

The significance value is 0.007 which is under 0.05 consequently the model is measurably significant. Since F ascertained is more noteworthy than the F critical (value = 4.069) this demonstrates the general model was huge. As indicated by the regression condition built up, considering all elements (concern for fairness, and commitment to selflessness) consistent at zero the teaching staff job performance will be 1.692.

Table 8: Coefficient of determination.

	Unstandardized coefficient B	Standard error	Standardized co – efficient Beta	t	Significance
Constant	1.692	1.012		0.842	0.002
Concern for fairness	0.623	0.145	0.087	0.578	0.015
Commitment to selflessness	0.435	0.068	0.155	0.96	0.019
a. Dependent Variable: Teaching Staff Job Performance					

Source: survey data 2023

The researcher conducted a regression analysis so as to determine the relationship between Ethical Leadership and Teaching Staff Job Performance in Kenya. The regression equation ($Y = B_0 + B_1X_1 + B_2X_2 + \epsilon$) was:

$$Y = 1.692 + 0.623X_1 + 0.435X_2$$

Whereby Y= Teaching Staff Job Performance, X_1 = Concern for fairness and X_2 = Commitment to selflessness.

According to the regression equation established, taking all factors (Concern for fairness, and Commitment to selflessness) constant at zero, the Teaching Staff Job Performance will be 1.692%. A unit increase in the concern for fairness will lead to a 0.623 increase in in the Teaching Staff Job Performance. A unit increase in commitment for selflessness leads to a 0.435 increase in Teaching Staff Job Performance. This therefore shows that there is a weak positive insignificant correlation between Ethical Leadership and Teaching Staff Job Performance. Therefore, it can be deduced that Ethical Leadership has an impact on the Teaching Staff Job Performance although not significant.

DISCUSSION

Concern for Fairness

The results from the study in Mandera County revealed a substantial positive perception of fairness among

the teaching staff in public secondary schools. These results are aligned with the works of Brown and Treviño (2006) and Brown and Mitchell (2010), which emphasize the crucial impact of equitable treatment on job performance and organizational dynamics. Similarly, the study corroborates findings by Khuntia & Suar (2004), highlighting the importance of moral leadership in fostering an environment of respect and hard work through fair treatment.

However, the findings also present a slightly contrasting perspective to those presented by Toor & Ofori (2009) and Piccolo et al. (2010), which assert the pervasive influence of ethical leadership on organizational outcomes. While these studies focus broadly on ethical behavior across various organizational settings, our study specifically pinpoints the nuances of fairness in the educational leadership context of Mandera County and its direct correlation to teaching staff job performance.

This slight divergence could suggest that while ethical leadership is universally beneficial, the specific aspects and manifestations of such leadership might vary significantly across different educational and cultural contexts. This underlines the importance of context-specific studies in understanding the multifaceted nature of fairness and leadership in educational settings.

Commitment to Selflessness

The findings from this study underscore the positive impact of leadership selflessness on the job performance of teaching staff in public secondary schools in Mandera County. The research demonstrated that a leadership style characterized by openness, availability, and a commitment to promoting staff well-being and professional development correlates positively with improved job performance.

Notably, the practice of maintaining an “open door policy” and prioritizing public interest over personal gains by the principal received favorable responses, aligning with the observations by Brayer (2022), who advocates that moral leaders should place organizational interests above their own. This emphasis on selflessness is foundational for ethical leadership, as suggested by Bello, (2012) and further supported by Godbless, (2021), who argue that selflessness helps reduce internal conflicts and fosters a cohesive team environment.

However, the comparatively lower scores related to the recognition and celebration of teacher successes indicate a possible area for improvement. This aspect slightly contrasts with the findings by Gomez (2022), who emphasizes that selfless leaders significantly boost recognition within their teams, enhancing overall job satisfaction and performance. The discrepancy suggests that while selflessness is present in some leadership actions, there might be a lack of consistency in applying these behaviors across all areas of leadership practice.

This study’s results not only corroborate the significance of selflessness in leadership as found in broader educational settings but also highlight specific areas where further attention might enhance the overall impact of selfless leadership practices. By focusing on a holistic application of selflessness, school principals can potentially elevate their influence on staff morale and productivity, thereby aligning more closely with successful models of leadership documented in the literature.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions of the Study

The study found that, as perceived by teaching staff, positively influences teaching staff job performance in

public secondary schools in Mandera County. The respondents' agreement that the school management takes concerns of unfairness seriously and demonstrates openness and clarity in interactions indicates that fostering an environment of openness in decision-making positively affects job performance.

The findings suggest that concern for fairness by school principals has a positive impact on teaching staff job performance. Teaching staff perceives fairness in the appointment of teachers to leadership positions, indicating that fair decision-making practices enhance job performance.

The study reveals that a commitment to selflessness in school leadership positively influences teaching staff job performance. Teaching staff agrees that school principals who practice servant leadership, involve teachers in decision-making, and emphasize the well-being and professional growth of teachers contribute to improved job performance.

The study concludes that ethical leadership, characterized by concern for fairness, and commitment to selflessness has a positive and statistically significant impact on teaching staff job performance in Kenyan public secondary schools. These findings underscore the importance of ethical leadership practices in creating a conducive and productive educational environment.

Recommendations

Based on the results and inferences drawn from the study, the following recommendations can be made to improve teaching staff job performance in Kenyan public secondary schools:

1. School principals should actively promote openness in their decision-making processes. They should encourage feedback and address concerns of teaching staff promptly. Establishing mechanisms for open communication and feedback can enhance trust and job performance.
2. School leaders should adopt servant leadership styles, which prioritize the well-being and development of teaching staff. This can include mentorship programs, professional development opportunities, and promoting a culture of selflessness.
3. School leaders should actively involve teaching staff in decision-making processes and school activities. Promoting diversity and inclusiveness can lead to a more engaged and motivated teaching staff, which positively impacts job performance.

By implementing these recommendations, educational institutions and authorities can create an environment that fosters ethical leadership and, in turn, leads to improved job performance among teaching staff, ultimately benefiting the quality of education in Kenyan public secondary schools.

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