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## Leadership Style and Employees Productivity in the Local Government System in Benue State, Nigeria

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### **Abstract:**

*The study investigated the effect of leadership style on employee productivity in the local government system in Benue State, Nigeria using descriptive and inferential test of chi-square. The study made use of both leadership and productivity theories in the investigation of the relationship. The study found a positive and significant relationship between productivity styles and employees' productivity in the local government system in Benue State. The study therefore recommends that leaders especially at the local government level should imbibe the participatory style of leadership in order to improve productivity in the local government system.*

**Keywords:** Leadership, Productivity and Chi-square

### **1. Introduction**

Leadership is the focal point of the directing function of modern management. This involves other variables such as motivation, communication and coordination. Leadership is the process of stimulating and motivating subordinates to accomplish assigned tasks. The leader, although part of the group, is distinct from it because he is concerned with guiding, conducting and directing it (Theirauf, Klekamp, and Geeding, 1977: 490). I examine leadership inclination in terms of the leaders themselves, the subordinates and the situations. Ocholi (2007: 17) says that the key to effectiveness is hinged on the ability to lead others successfully through creating positive impacts. It is imperative to know that effective and successful way of leading people enhance productivity. Leadership depends on the ability of the leaders to use their authority, human resources and relationship with people to achieve organizational goals.

Leadership as an influence process is natural to either formal or informal group in the society. It is a field of interest to many people. The word encompasses people who have to direct, guide and preside others to achieve group objectives. Leadership covers all aspects of human endeavours. It could be military, political, religious, cultural and societal leaders. Understanding of the subject is special and important to people as it affect their lives.

Notable leaders like Gandhi, Mohammed, Mao Tse-Tuno, Julius Ceasar, Charlemaone, Alexander the great influenced high respect and commitment and as well developed intense followership. Also, other undistinguished people like Adolf Hitler, Claudius Caesar make it to the top. Why leaders like Winston Churchill and India Gandhi were deposed despite their power and high accomplishments. This therefore indicates that some leaders have loyal followers who are willing to sacrifice their lives, whereas other leaders are so despised that subordinates conspire to murder them (Yukl, 2002). The major ingredient of leadership effectiveness is influence. The different actions of leaders determine their level of organizational effectiveness and acceptability or otherwise by their subordinates or followers.

Sanders (1967) classifies leadership into two divisions of worldly or traditional and spiritual types. He submits that the worldly or traditional type of leadership derives its roots from man but the spiritual one is directly by God.

- i. Worldly or traditional leadership: this type of leadership takes decisions within the spheres of people. The people are materialistic, selfish and power drunk. According to Tapkida (1994), worldly or traditional leaders take their decisions without the face of God. They have their tall ambitions and expectations. They are arrogant and enjoy giving orders to their subordinates. Most of the leaderships in Nigeria are typical of worldly or traditional types. This is because; personal interest is the overriding objective.
- ii. Spiritual Leadership: this type of leadership may center on selfless service. The essence or pivot point is service to the people rather than to cheat, deceive, dominate and undo the subordinates to your advantage. Tapkida (1994) states that the spiritual leadership is God driven and obeys his will. It is modest and the love of God and people is the major consideration. The engine of spiritual leadership to most people and writers is Faith in God's calling (Mambula, 2006). The reason is that a spiritual leader believes that God has chosen him or her to leadership position not because of his credentials but God has the ability to qualify him or her to succeed on the position.

The Nigerian economy consist of two sectors – the private sector whose bulk of wealth is owned or held by individuals or group of individuals, and the public sector whose wealth is owned collectively by the public. The public sector consists of all organizations whose objectives involve the provision of services where profit is not a primary motive. This means that the equity interest of the

public sector cannot be owned, bought or sold by individuals and profit earning does not contribute significantly to its survival. The public sector in Nigeria consists of

- The Federal Government of the thirty-six (36) states and Abuja, and the 774 local governments, almost all of which are involved in public enterprises (Okwoli, 2007:2)

One of the criteria to measure an organization's performance is the level of productivity. Simply put, productivity is the net output from a known input of the factors of production – land, labour, capital and entrepreneurship – within the same period. The Nigerian National Productivity Centre describes productivity as any of the following:

- a) Doing the right thing the right way;
- b) Getting more output with less input;
- c) Getting more output with the same input;
- d) Punctuality and promptness;
- e) Eliminating of wastes in all forms;
- f) Justifying your pay;
- g) Improving in all aspects of life;
- h) Producing more and more better quality goods at less and less cost, so that more people can buy them; and
- i) The relationship between input and quality and quantity of goods and services produced (National productivity Centre, Information Book, 1991, p.2).

Local government system otherwise known as the third-tier of government is the closest tier of government to the grassroot people. It is often called the government at the grassroot. Uya (2003) also agrees with this when he pontificated that, local administration is “the cornerstone of a people-centered democracy everywhere in the world”. The people at the helm of local government system are supposed to be in constant touch with the grassroots population and this interaction may either enhance or affect the people's aspirations.

Over the years, the problem of bad leadership in the local government system has been the basic obstacle that has militated against effective and efficient utilization of resources to attain goals which the system is supposed to achieve. This assertion has been encapsulated in Oloko (1997) who articulates that:

- The problem of leadership is one of the basic problems which all social systems, irrespective of their size, structure and primary functions must solve in order to survive, p.33.

The importance of quality leadership in the success of every organization be it formal or informal cannot be over-emphasized. This is manifested in the fact that for productivity to be achieved in any public sector in this regard, the local government system has to be determined by good leadership.

It is not in doubt that focus leadership enhances productivity. Leadership disposition towards certain behaviours like corruption, training and development, rewards and employee involvement affects productivity.

Issues that provide impetus for this research include problems of reward, corruption, leadership style, personality of leaders, training and development, and employee involvement. Reward system is capable of positively or negatively influencing productivity in the local government system depending on how it is instituted and handled.

Leadership style defines a leader's inclination in decision making. It affects productivity in different ways depending on the forces in the leader, subordinates and on the situation.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Leadership

Leadership is a very critical element of management. As a component of management, leadership features very prominently in every aspect of human endeavor. It provides the compass that drives the attainment of set goals and objectives. In a very simplistic sense, leadership encompasses determination personality and innate ability at the right time for a given competitive situation. Different leaders have their peculiar and individual leadership styles; but fundamentally, leadership has remained at the core of driving the mechanics of organizational objectives.

There are various perspectives to the explanation of the concept of leadership. For instance, it may be conceived to mean the process of getting others to follow or getting people to willingly do things. Put in another way, leadership connotes the use of authority relationship in decision-making. Mullins (2007) corroborates this notion when he notes that leadership can

- ... be exercised by as an attribute of position or because of personal knowledge or wisdom. Leadership might be based on a function of personality or it can be seen as a behavioural category. It may also be viewed in terms of the role of the leaders and their ability to achieve effective performance from others (p.363).

It is usually difficult to generalize about leadership; but the indisputable reality is that it is a relationship through which one person (leader) influences the behavior and actions of others (followers) toward a targeted outcome. Deriving from this logic, it is obvious that there is an inseparable nexus between the process of leadership and the behavior and activities of groups in the context of team building.

Useem (2001:297) argues that leadership is a matter of making a difference through changing an organization and making active choices among viable alternatives; depending upon others and mobilizing them to get the appropriate job done at the appropriate time. Useem further submits that:

- Leadership is at its best when the vision is strategic, the voice persuasive and the results tangible. In the study of leadership, an exact definition is not essential but guiding concepts are needed. The concepts should be general enough to apply to many situations, but specific enough to have tangible implications for what we do.

Useem's articulation is suggestive of the fact that vision and strategy have been joined by new critical capabilities – leading out and leading up – particularly in the business environment where the increasing use of outsourcing compels managers to acquire the skills to lead out and not just to assign tasks to subordinates but to also have the necessary talent for lateral leadership in arranging work with colleagues.

### 2.1.1. Definitions of Leadership

There are almost as many different definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept (Bass, 1990).

Leadership may be considered as the process (act) of influencing the activities of an organized group in its efforts toward goal setting and goal achievement (Stogdill, 1950:3). Leadership involves joint efforts of people toward a shared goal.

Leadership is the behavior of an individual when he is directing the activities of a group toward a shared goal (Yukl, 2006:27).

Leaders have the responsibility of guiding and influencing team members to achieve their conceived objectives.

Leadership is the accomplishment of a goal through the direction of human assistants. A leader is one who successfully marshals his human collaborators to achieve particular ends (Humphrey, 2002:493). It is the ability of leaders to willingly convince followers to contribute meaningfully to actualize organizational objectives.

Leadership is interpersonal influence, exercised in a situation, and directed through the communication process, toward the attainment of specified goal or goals (Tannenbaum, 1966:24). The display of human skills to guide and influence group members toward a shared goal.

Leadership is the initiation and maintenance of structure in expectation and interaction (Stogdill, 1974:411). Leadership involves influencing and guiding followers to ensure group cohesion and sound decisions.

Leadership is a process of influence between a leader and those who are followers (Hollander, 1978:1). A leader attracts followers. This is because a person without followers is not a leader.

Leadership is the art of mobilizing others to want to struggle for the shared aspirations (Kouzes & Posner, 1995:30). A leader mobilizes others to see the vision, key into it and make it a reality.

Leadership is an interaction between two or more members of a group that often involves a structuring or restructuring of the situation and the perceptions of members. Leadership occurs when one group member modifies the motivation or competencies of others in the group. Any member of the group can exhibit some amount of leadership (Bass, 1990:19). It is a process of people coming together, reasoning and solving their problems willingly as already designed by the organization.

Marvin (2011:25) defines leadership as to influence positively how people think, feel and act so that they become committed to making a valuable contribution to achieving the objectives of their work team, department and organization. It is the outcome of people's contribution to realize organizational objectives.

Alan and Robert (1969) see leadership as a process where one person exerts social influence over the members of a group, a leader, then, is a person with power over others who exercises the powers for the purpose of influencing their behavior, leaders provide direction, influence and facilitate achievement of group goals. Leadership is exercised when persons mobilize institutional, political, psychological and other resources so as to arouse, engage and satisfy the motives of followers (Burns, 1978:18). The leader involves different ways or means of influencing followers toward attainment of organizational goals. Jacobs and Jaques (1990:281) define leadership as "a process of giving purpose (meaningful direction) to collective effort, and causing willing effort to be expended to achieve purpose, Leadership is about given direction and willingly convincing people to contribute towards achievement of goals. Leadership is about articulating visions, embodying values, and creating the environment within which things can be accomplished (Richards and Engel, 1986:206). Leaders are responsible for creating conducive environment for organizational success (Ronald, 2009 and Sev and Kwahar, 2014.).

Tannenbaum (1966) views leadership as the exercise of power or influence in social collectivity such as groups, organizations, countries or nations. Leadership involves collection effort to achieve a common goal or group task. Leadership is the ability to persuade others to seek defined objectives enthusiastically (Davis, 1967). The leader is saddled with the responsibility of convincing people willingly to satisfy group values or goals. Lipham (1964) sees leadership as the initiation of a new structure or procedure for the accomplishment of organizational objectives and goals, the thinking, feeling and actions of leaders set stage for group achievement.

Morphet, Johns and Rellers (1982) see leadership as the act of influencing of the actions, behavior, beliefs and goals of one actor in a social system by another actor with the willing cooperation of the actor being influenced. Leadership influences the actions, behavior and beliefs of group members to achieve organizational success.

Leadership is the process of influencing the activities of an organized group towards goal setting and goal achievement (Stogdill, 1950). Influential leaders recognize that the quality of people in their group is responsible for organizational success.

From the several definitions of leadership by different scholars and practitioners, leadership is about guiding and directing group activities. It is the process of influencing the thinking, feeling and action of group members to willingly contribute their effort to actualize the dream and vision of the organization. He initiates action, direct, guide and inspire members to achieve strategic vision of the group.

### 2.2. Productivity

Generally speaking, productivity is defined as the relation of output to input. Productivity is therefore, on the one hand, closely connected to the use and availability of resources. This means in short that productivity is reduced if an organization's resources are not properly used or if there is a lack of them. On the other hand, productivity is strongly linked to the creation of value. It is argued that productivity is one of the basic variables governing economic production activities, perhaps the most important one (Singh, Motwani & Kumavi, 2000). Elimination of waste give rise to improve productivity.

Productivity is a relative concept, which cannot be said to increase or decrease unless a comparison is made, either of variations from competitors or other standards at a certain point in time, or of changes over time. Misterek, Dooley and Anderson (1992) agree that improvements in productivity can be caused by five different relationships:

- (1) Output and input increases, but the increase in input is proportionally less than the increase in output.
- (2) Output increases while input stays the same.
- (3) Output increases while input is reduced.
- (4) Output stays the same while input decreases.
- (5) Output decreases while input decreases even more.

Productivity is an economic measure of efficiency that summarizes and reflects the value of the output created by an individual, organization, industry or economic system relative to the value of the inputs used to create them (Denisi and Griffin, 2005). They agree that organizations around the world have come to recognize the importance of productivity for its ability not only to compete but also to survive, furthermore, an organization that is serious about productivity will need to lead workers by given them direction and focus to create high quality products and services. Effective leadership in an organization results to enhance productivity (Ene, 2008). Hartzell (2011) views productivity as a measured relationship between the quality and quantity of results produced and the quantity of resources required for production. Productivity is in essence a measure of the work efficiency of an individual, work unit or entire organization. He further stressed that productivity can be measured in two ways, one way relates the output of an enterprise, industry or economic sector to a single input, such as labour or capital. The other relates output to a composite of input combined so as to account for their relative importance. The choice of a particular productivity measure depends on the purpose for which it is to be used. He further defined productivity as a war against waste. Even if the technical and economic concept of productivity is taken into consideration i.e. productivity is the ratio of output and input. This could be favourable only when planned efforts are made to utilize the scarce resources as economically as possible to achieve the best result. He concludes that among several factors affecting productivity, safety in industry, one of the most important factor to be kept in view for promoting productivity is the rate of output of a worker or machine.

Nwachukwu (2002:56) argues that productivity is the measure of how well resources are brought together in an organization and utilized for accomplishing of set result produced in reaching the highest level of performance with the least expenditure of resources. It can be seen as the amount of production in relations to labour put in.

Explaining productivity, Kerlinger (1980:208) states that public managers have worked under the uneasy assumption that a good, smoothly functioning programme was an effective one. He went further to explain how a manager used to think that if he or she spent the entire budget allocation and did not hear complaints from clients or the public, he or she was running an effective programme. From that perspective, productivity is equated to the quantity of public complaints. Nevertheless, several more precise measures of the public sector have emerged in recent years where productivity is measured in terms of cost efficiency, cost effectiveness, and programme worthiness.

### 2.3. Theoretical Framework

This paper adapted the **Path-Goal Approach to Leadership of the contingency theory**. The theory is a brain child of Robert House. The Path-goal theory argues that the main function of a leader is to clarify and set goals with subordinates, help them find the best path for achieving the goals, and remove obstacles. The approach has studied leadership in a variety of ways, and the theory builds on various motivational and leadership theories of others (House, 1971). Its theoretical foundations are stated in terms of paths, needs and goals (House and Dessler, 1974). The theory proposes that situational factors contributing to effective leadership should be considered. These factors include:

- (i) The characteristics of subordinates, such as their needs, self-confidence, and abilities.
- (ii) The work environment, including such components as the tasks, the reward system and the relationship with co-workers.

The theory further categorizes leader behaviour into four groups:

- (i) Supportive leadership behaviour which gives consideration to the needs of subordinates, shows concern for their well-being, and creates a pleasant organizational climate. It has the greatest impact on subordinate's performance when they are frustrated and dissatisfied.

- (ii) Participative leadership allows subordinates to influence the decisions of their superiors, which may increase motivation.
- (iii) Instrumental leadership gives subordinates rather specific guidance and clarifies what is expected of them. It involves aspects of planning, coordinating, and controlling by the leader.
- (iv) Achievement-oriented leadership involves setting challenging goals, seeking improvement of performance, and having confidence that subordinates will achieve high goals.

The theory suggests that there is no one best way to lead people, but that the appropriate style depends on the situation. The key to the theory is that the leader influences the path between behaviour and goals. The leader can do this by defining positions and task roles, by removing obstacles to performance, by enlisting the assistance of group members in setting goals, by promoting group cohesiveness and team efforts, by increasing opportunities for personal satisfaction in work performance, by reducing stresses and external controls, by making expectations, and by meeting members expectations.

#### 2.4. Factors of Production Theory

The principal authors of the theory of factors of production remain Say, J.B. (1767-1832) and Bastiat, F. (1801-1850). They ascribe the capacity to produce value to the three factors of production; labour, land and capital. All goods come into existence through the co-operation of these three factors of nature, capital and human labour power. These factors appear as the productive funds from which all the wealth of a nation springs, and constitute its fortune (Oloko, 1997). The income from each factor of wages, rent and interest was declared equal to the productive contribution of the factor. The earnings of the various factors of production were explained by their contributions to production, and the size of their contributions were, in turn, explained by their earnings. The theory of the factors of production was the foundation for the apologetic conclusions that under capitalism, social distribution is just and class interests are in harmony.

#### 2.5. Empirical Review

Alhassan, Ibrahim, Mohammed & Eliasu (2014) ascertain the effects of leadership styles on staff productivity in Tamale Polytechnic Ghana. The article is similar to the current study in terms of the concept such as, productivity, and leadership. The study differs in the scope, nature and level of research. The study examines the effects of leadership styles on productivity in Tamale Polytechnic, Ghana. The research design is descriptive survey. The study adopted qualitative method to assess the effects of leadership styles on staff productivity. The finding suggest that management should as much as possible try to avoid transactional leadership style such as autocratic, task-oriented or laissez-faire leadership styles as they do not enhance staff performance. The researcher concludes that polytechnics in some situations exhibited a high level of autocracy by failing to consult with subordinates (p.20). Management must endeavor to exhibit democratic, people-centred or transformational leadership styles for that matter to enhance staff performance (p.21).

Similarly, Tahir, N., Yonsafzai, I. K., Jam, S. & Hashim, M (2014) in a study on the Impact of training and Development on Employees Performance and Productivity. A case study of United Bank Limited, Peshawar City, Kpk, Pakistan found that training and development enhance skills and teach the technique of performing a job to employees (p.91). The researchers conclude that employees working in UBL region Peshawar considered the training and development as a major factor that enhance employees' performance and productivity.

### 3. Methodology and Analysis

The descriptive statistics of mean ( $\bar{X}$ ) and standard deviations were used to answer the research questions. The cut-off mark of 2.50 was used for decision making for each item on the instrument. Any item with a mean of 2.50 and above was considered as having significant effect on productivity while anyone below 2.50 was considered as having no significant effect on productivity. The

formulated hypothesis for the study was tested using Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test of independence at 0.05 level of significance. The Chi-square test of independence is a non-parametric tool designed to analyse group differences when the variables are measured in nominal terms as it is in this study. Specifically, the Chi-square test of independence does not require equality of variances among the study groups or homoscedasticity in the data. It permits evaluation of both dichotomous independent variables, and of multiple group studies.

#### 3.1. Analysis of Result

Given the null hypothesis of the study stated as Productivity is independent of leadership styles in the Local Government System in Benue State; two questions were used to generate data for this hypothesis namely:

Question 1 has the following frequency distribution

Effect of leadership styles on Productivity

Yes	174
No	84
Sometimes	105
	<u>363</u>

Question 2 has the following frequency distribution

Types of leadership styles that affect

productivity	<u>Frequency</u>
Autocracy	48
Participative	222
Laissez-faire	93
	<u>363</u>

These data were combined to form the contingency Table (Table 1)

Types of Leadership styles that affect Productivity	Effects of Leadership styles on Productivity			
	Yes	No	Sometimes	Total
Autocracy	48(27.17)	0(11.64)	0(13.36)	48
Participative	126(3.61)	88(21.71)	8(46.81)	222
Laissez-faire	0(44.58)	0(22.55)	93(174.08)	93
Total	174	88	101	363

Table 1: Contingency Table Based on Responses of Respondents to Questions 1 and 2 of the first cluster

The expected frequencies are calculated using the formula:

$$E_{ij} = \frac{n_i \times n_j}{N}$$

Where  $E_{ij}$  is the expected frequency for the cell in the  $i$ th row and the  $j$ th column

$n_i$  is the total number of subjects in the  $i$ th row

$n_j$  is the total number of subjects in the  $j$ th column and

$N$  is the total number subjects in the whole table

E (Autocracy and yes)	$= \frac{174 \times 48}{363} = 23.0$
E (Autocracy and No)	$= \frac{88 \times 48}{363} = 11.64$
E (Autocracy and Sometimes)	$= \frac{101 \times 48}{363} = 13.36$
E (Participative and yes)	$= \frac{174 \times 222}{363} = 106.41$
E (Participative and No)	$= \frac{88 \times 222}{363} = 53.82$
E (Participative and Sometimes)	$= \frac{101 \times 222}{363} = 61.77$
E (Laissez-faire and yes)	$= \frac{174 \times 93}{363} = 44.58$
E (Laissez-faire and No)	$= \frac{88 \times 93}{363} = 22.55$
E (Laissez-faire and Sometimes)	$= \frac{101 \times 93}{363} = 25.88$

$$\text{Thus } \chi^2 = \sum_{i=1}^n \sum_{j=1}^m \frac{(o_{ij} - e_{ij})^2}{e_{ij}} =$$

$$\frac{(48-23.0)^2}{23.0} + \frac{(0-11.64)^2}{11.64} + \frac{(0-13.36)^2}{13.36} + \frac{(126-106.41)^2}{106.41} + \frac{(88-53.82)^2}{53.82} + \frac{(8-61.77)^2}{61.77}$$

$$+ \frac{(0-44.58)^2}{44.58} + \frac{(0-22.55)^2}{22.55} + \frac{(93-25.88)^2}{25.88} = 365.5$$

Using df = (C - 1) (R - 1)  
 (3 - 1) (3 - 1)  
 2 x 2 = 4

Or

<i>Foi</i>	<i>Fei</i>	<i>Foi - Fei</i>	$(Foi - Fei)^2$	$\frac{(Foi - Fei)^2}{Fei}$
48	23	25	625	27.17391304
0	11.64	-11.64	135.4896	11.64
0	13.36	-13.36	178.4896	13.36
126	106.41	19.59	383.7681	3.606504088
88	53.82	34.18	1168.272	21.70703084
8	61.77	-53.77	2891.213	46.80610167
0	44.58	-44.58	1987.376	44.58
0	22.55	-22.55	508.5025	22.55
93	25.88	67.12	4505.094	174.0762906
<b>Total</b>				<b>365.4998402</b>

Table 2: Chi-Square Calculation on the Effect of Leadership Styles on Productivity in the Local Government System

$\chi^2$  critical at 5% confidence level and degree of freedom of 4 = 9.49  
 (See Appendix 'A' for detailed analysis)

Decision

Since  $\chi^2$  calculated (365.5) is greater than  $\chi^2$  critical at 5% confidence level (9.49), the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis which states that 'Productivity is dependent on leadership styles in the Local Government System in Benue State' is accepted.

This means that leadership styles have a significant role to play in employee productivity in the Local Government System in Benue State. This finding conflicts with the findings of Muhammad, Khan and Qamar (2015) who stated that, even the autocratic style of leadership has the following advantages which could lead to increase in productivity; good control, no long discussions before taking decision, group members know what they must do and when to do it, stringent rules make employees to be discipline and upright. On the other hand, this finding agrees with the finding of Bhatti et al (2010) and Obiwuru et al. (2011) who found out that leadership styles (transactional and transformational) has significant effect on employee's performance and consequently, on productivity. The implication of this finding therefore is that, leadership styles have a significant relationship with employees' performance in the Local Government System. For instance, participative type of leadership style creates a sense of belonging among employees and consequently enhances productivity as opposed to autocratic style of leadership where the leaders take sole decisions about the operations of the local government system. Similarly, the finding of the study shows that, the laissez-faire styles of leadership where employees are alienated from the decision-making process adversely affect productivity in the local government system. The finding therefore supports the participative style of leadership as regards productivity in the local government system.

**4. Conclusion and Recommendations**

The study investigated the effect of leadership styles on employee productivity in the Benue State Local Government System. The study made use of the chi-square technique and found out that, productivity is dependent on leadership style. That is, employees are more inclined to effective and liberal leadership style than stringent leadership style.

It is obvious that respondents (employee) favour participative style of leadership. The researcher therefore recommended that leaders especially at the local government level should imbibe participative leadership style as this will improve productivity in the local government system.

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