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NON-FINANCIAL INCENTIVES AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN NON-  
GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN NAIROBI CITY COUNTY, KENYA

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**NON-FINANCIAL INCENTIVES AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN NAIROBI CITY COUNTY, KENYA**

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**ABSTRACT**

Employee performance has become more important in today's economic climate, especially organizations that desire to retain their most valuable workers. Many not-for-profit agencies implement projects that are tied to a certain brief time limit. Thus, they mostly employ staff on brief periods tied to the project timelines and monetary remuneration is usually tied to the strict budgets that are allocated for project implementation. These types of organizations thus experience constraints with the problem of not using monetary elements like salary increases to motivate its staff. Therefore, minimal performance-related pay increase structures which can hamper performance, productivity and even staff retention. The study aimed at determining effect of non-financial incentives on employee performance in non-governmental organizations in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The specific objectives were; to establish how training, employee recognition, participative decision-making, and career advancement opportunities influence performance in non-governmental organizations in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The study was guided by competence theory, Fredrick Herzberg theory of motivation, decision participation theory, and Maslow's theory of motivation. A descriptive design was adopted. 325 registered Non-Governmental Organization in Nairobi City County were targeted. Stratified was used to sample 180 human resource managers. Questionnaires enabled data collection. The pilot study involved 18 human resource practitioners in from the NGOs in Nairobi City County. Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient was used to measure reliability. Content validity was used in this study. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics that included means, frequencies, and percentages using SPSS for Windows version 28.0. Inferential statistics used included regression and correlation analysis. Data was tabulated. Findings show; a moderate significant relationship between staff training and employee performance ( $r=0.397$ ,  $p=0.000$ ), a strong significant relationship between staff recognition and employee performance ( $r=0.501$ ,  $p=0.000$ ), a moderate significant relationship between participative decision-making and employee performance ( $r=0.314$ ,  $p=0.000$ ), and a weak significant relationship between career advancement and employee performance ( $r=0.501$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). The recommendations are that; NGOs should conduct training needs assessment surveys and staff appraisals to identify training gaps of every staff, the organizations should review the staff motivation techniques, managers should adopt a democratic leadership style rather than authoritative leadership and the organizations should improve on career advancement opportunities.

**INTRODUCTION**

Employees are viewed as an asset and a significant resource in the current corporate world. Employees are the most important component in developing and implementing strategies and policies. The success of a corporation is largely determined by the behavior of its employees, regardless of whether they deal directly with clients or not (Alalade & Oguntodu, 2015). Employee productivity and production can be influenced by businesses that recognize the impact of their employees' performance. Employee performance can be managed effectively to assist a

firm earn profits and achieve its objectives. Rewards are one method of effectively managing staff.

Employee are considered assets and vital resources in modern organizations, whether for profit or not for profit. Employees are the primary component in everything from planning to implementing plans and procedures. Employee productivity is higher in organizations that recognize the impact of their employees' performance. Employee performance can be managed effectively to assist an organization achieve its objectives. Employee productivity is very essential in the workplace particularly in organizations that value staff retention. Organizations are making efforts to appreciate productive employees who always arrive at work early, are willing to work extra time to beat deadlines, are innovative and make notable changes in the organization.

An active employee is more vigorous at the workplace, shows interest to learn new things, is concerned about colleagues, and very dedicated to their work. They are satisfied with their work and feel proud to be associated with the organization and always concentrate on achieving the organization goals (Imran & Tanveer, 2015). When a firm has a group of highly motivated people, they may easily achieve and exceed specified goals, giving them an advantage over their competitors. Work promotions, awards and recognition, flexible work arrangements, career advancement, and customizable work schedules are all examples of non-monetary benefits.

Employees in Kenya have been rewarded both financially and non-financially by their employers. According to Imbahale (2016), incentives and awards give employees liberty while also making them feel appreciated and rewarded for their work and achievements. The incentives make working in the office more enjoyable. Non-monetary incentives are thought to motivate personnel, resulting in increased allegiance and commitment to the organization as well as greater job performance.

In Nairobi City County, Kenya, Njagi and Mose (2021) found that despite the salary provided to employees working in Saccos, most individuals do not believe that money is the most important incentive and improved other non-monetary incentives such as social welfare benefits, employee recognition, access to health services, pension benefits, and on-job training support. Mwendu (2015) noted that motivated personnel apply their expertise to solve problems. The Kenyan government has also made steps to develop a motivated, well-trained, and internationally competitive labor force to assure optimum efficiency and efficient service delivery by the public organizations. Oburu and Atambo (2016) found that non-monetary staff motivation enhances improved staff performance.

### **Statement of the Problem**

With the rigorous programme or project needs, many non-governmental organizations either achieve targets or don't based on their employee performance. Many not-for-profit agencies implement projects that are tied to a certain brief time limit. Thus, they mostly employ staff on brief contracts (average one, two- and three-year contracts). Monetary remuneration is usually tied to the strict budgets that are allocated for project implementation. These types of organizations thus experience constraints with the problem of not using monetary elements like salaries increases to motivate its staff versus a performance-related pay increase structure which can hamper performance, productivity and even staff retention. Basically, performance cannot be rewarded solely through monetary incentives therefore alternative means of incentivizing employees needs to be implemented.

Effective staff motivation is among basic aspects of employee performance and productivity (Pulasinghage, 2019). Organizations need to have motivating factors such as incentives to improve employee performance. Non-governmental organizations in Kenya contribute to 20% distribution of aid (Moruri et al., 2018). They contribute to national growth through provision of employment, education, environmental conservation, health among other services. However, they face challenges in human resource management resulting to increased turnover rates and closure. According to the NGO Coordination Bureau (2018), close to 25% of NGOs in Kenya have closed down due to poor governance and poor resource utilization.

Omolo and Mose (2019) indicated that employee performance in non-governmental organizations has to be controlled through taking planned actions to enhance organizational, group, and each staff performance, whereby an employee performance management is connected to monetary and non-monetary rewards. Kibe and Obere (2018) study on employee performance in non-governmental firms revealed that appreciation and promotion opportunities significantly affected employee performance. They found that non-financial rewards accounted for 60% of variations in employee performance. Moruri et al. (2018) revealed strong significant relationship between staff recognition and performance.

Previous studies have assessed one or two variables on non-financial incentives, which provide limited literature on effect of non-financial incentives on employee performance in non-governmental organizations. This study bridged this gap by determining the effect of non-financial incentives on employee performance in non-governmental organizations in Nairobi City County, Kenya by assessing four variables. It answered questions on how training, recognition, participative decision-making, and career advancement opportunities affect employee performance in non-governmental organizations in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

### **Objectives of the Study**

- i. To establish how training affects employee performance in non-governmental organizations in Nairobi City County, Kenya
- ii. To find out how employee recognition affects employee performance in non-governmental organizations in Nairobi City County, Kenya

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Theoretical Review**

#### **Competence Theory**

McBer (1973) developed the competence theory. It proposes that competences, which consist of skills and knowledge enable staff perform tasks efficiently in an organization. Boyatzis (1982) defined three types of competencies: entry which are personal characteristics; general which are the knowhow and expertise needed to perform the job; and high performance which are behaviors that result in significantly better workgroup performance in more complex organizational environments. Although a company may have many skills, according to Prahalad and Hamel (1990), only a handful of them are coupled in such a way that they become core competencies.

Firms get a competitive advantage by focusing on their core strengths and doing what they are good at. According to Li (2009), the knowledge mentioned in the competence theory can only be obtained through 'learning-by-doing' and cannot be transferred. The Theory of competence contributes to human resources studies by offering understandings that are important in getting to

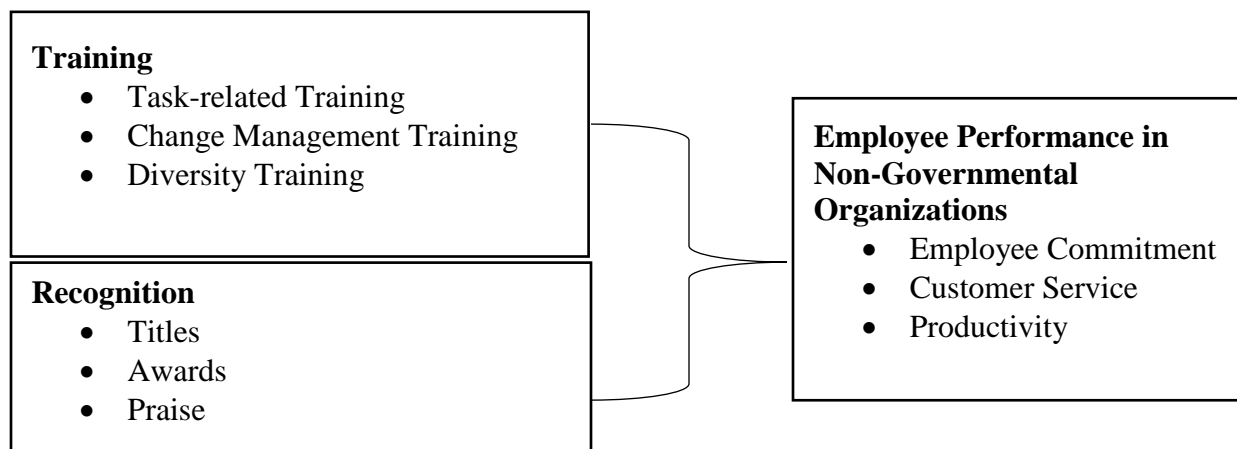
know how staff can achieve superior performance. This theory supports training variable since training provide employees with more knowledge and skills.

### **Herzberg's Two-factor Theory of Motivation**

This theory was developed by Herzberg in 1923. The theory describes elements in the work environment that enhances work contentment (motivation factors) and factors causing dissatisfaction (Hygiene or maintenance factors). Motivators, also known as satisfiers, are elements that lead to feelings of job satisfaction. These factors motivate through changing the working environment. They encourage people to develop their skills and realize their full potential. Intrinsic motivators are internal motivators. Responsibilities and learning opportunities, recognition, achievement, advancement, and growth are all driving factors for motivation (Bogardus, 2007). Fringe benefits include, health, pension, and child care, as well as salary that is appropriate with the quantity of labor accomplished, must be provided to promote employee satisfaction (Salanova & Kirmanen, 2010).

Motivators, also known as satisfiers, are the factors that lead to emotions of fulfillment at work. These elements inspire through altering the work environment. They push a person to grow their talents and reach their full potential. Intrinsic motivators are ones that come from inside. Recognition, achievement, progress, and growth are all motivating aspects in addition to responsibilities and learning opportunities (Bogardus, 2007). To improve staff satisfaction, various fringe benefits, including health, pension, and child care, must be provided, as well as compensation that is commensurate with the amount of work performed (Salanova & Kirmanen, 2010). Herzberg's theory, unlike other theories, differentiates motivators from non-motivators and is flexible, can be customized according to the sector, job position, state and many more. In addition, the theory allows prioritization of Hygiene or Motivators (Castglia 2013). This theory supports the recognition variable under study.

### **Conceptual Framework**



### **Training**

Ampomah (2016) defined training as an organization's official, ongoing attempts to improve the performance of its employees through various educational programs. Employee capacity building allows employees to broaden their knowledge and abilities in order to improve teamwork efficiency and personal development (Pulasinghage, 2019). When employees receive training, they gain confidence in carrying out tasks and increased job satisfaction than those

without training which translates to improved employee performance. Change is unavoidable in this age of technological growth. As a result, businesses must ensure that employee training is consistent in order to meet the challenges posed by political, financial, sociological, and environmental changes.

Employees can get training on how to use emerging and new technology effectively. It also provides tips on how to operate well in new work designs and contexts, such as virtual groups, as well as how to interact and communicate effectively with clients and other stakeholders from varied backgrounds in order to provide efficient services. By combining the interests of the company and the workforce, training is critical to accomplishing organizational goals (Athar & Shah, 2015). Employees are the most valuable asset and most important resource in any company. Organizations that provide training to their staff are produce better results. Hence, staff capacity building is an important part of every organization's long-term success.

### **Recognition**

Recognition is gratitude for employee productivity, achievement or a contribution to organization objective (Ramadan & Borgonovi, 2015). When employees receive public or private recognition for output and achievement, it motivates them to perform better. Employee recognition is a method of communication between organization leaders and staff that recognizes them for achieving specified objectives or delivering high-quality results in the organization while also helping them to improve their performance. Recognizing staff is intended to inspire them to do the same thing in the future (Saunderson, 2016). Recognition is an important part of performance, especially in workplaces where there are regular discussions about work. Recognizing and praising staff sends a message to them that they should keep up their excellent performance and conduct. Such effort also serves as a reminder to the remaining employees of what their boss expects of them (Eubanks, 2018).

The American Psychological Association (APA) has recognized employee recognition as among key factors contributing to healthy workplace settings. Work-life balance, well-being and safety, career development, and staff commitment were the other four aspects identified (Harney, 2019). Employee recognition not only makes them feel like they are a part of the organization, but it also improves their performance (Bell, 2018). Employee appreciation should be an annual event, and employees that do great work should be rewarded (Gerard, 2016). When employees feel appreciated, they improve for the company (Lencioni, 2015). As a result, staff who feel overlooked by their bosses may despise their jobs, irrespective of how well paid they are or how content they are in other ways.

### **Empirical Review**

#### **Training**

Anitha and Ashok (2016) reviewed effect of staff training on staff productivity in insurance companies in India. The sample size was 75 staff of the insurance companies sampled through simple random sampling. Results revealed that training was significantly related to employee performance. Effective employee training improved their performance particularly those in ICT and customer service. Hafeez and Akbar (2015) studied effect of employee training on performance in pharmaceutical industries in Pakistan where 356 staff were sampled. Findings showed that employee performance improved after training. Training prepared staff for bigger

roles in the organization with adequate abilities to overcome any challenges they may face in their new work station.

Nnanna (2020) reviewed role of training in employee performance in telecommunications firms in Nigeria. Data was collected using questionnaires. Results showed that the organization continuously trained their staff through seminars, workshops and sponsoring other on-job training to improve organization efficiency. Trained staffs were retained in the organization as they were considered as organization assets. In Tanzania, Khamis (2019) studied effect of staff training on performance of social security staff. Sample included 90 staff selected from a target of 160 staff through purposive and simple random sampling. Findings showed that public entity invested in staff training which included on-job training and new staff orientation. When hiring new permanent staff, first priority was given to staff on contract terms and those on attachment since they are aware of organizations operations and would not cost much to train. The staffs were trained through actual college classes sponsored by the organization, presentation by the managers, and departmental group discussions.

### **Employee Recognition**

Marcellus (2021) explored influence of employee recognition on performance of Casino staff. A phenomenological study design was employed and 17 staff were sampled purposively. Data was collected through interviewing study respondents. Results showed that some staff believed that they were recognized by the managers which made them feel happy, contented, and had the willingness to work at the Casino as long as they existed. However, some staff felt that they were not recognized and they were sad, uncontented and not willing to put in extra effort in their respective duties.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study used a descriptive design. Descriptive research design aims at describing the current state of affairs (Render et al. 2012). This design according to Flick (2011), aims to define topics like potential behavior, attitude, values, and qualities. This research design is appropriate because the investigation concentrated on non-financial incentives that affects staff performance. A population is a complete set of individuals' cases of items with certain common observable qualities from which a sample is taken by the researcher (Kothari, 2014). The target population was 325 non-governmental organizations in Nairobi City County. According to the Non-Governmental Organizations Coordination Board (2021), there are 325 registered Non-Governmental Organizations operating in different regions in Nairobi City County. The study employed stratified random sampling which involves grouping the population with similar characteristics together. In this study, NGOs were classified in their operational sector including; food security, governance, health, nutrition, protection of human rights, and WaSH. Therefore, in every sector the researcher purposively selected 30 human resource managers until 180 human resource managers were selected. The research used primary data. The data was collected using questionnaires. A questionnaire, according to Kothari (2014), is a list of items on which respondents are asked to provide information. A pilot is a mock test carried out prior to actual data collection. A pilot study ensures that research instruments are working properly, check the importance of the data through validity, and checking the wording of data collection tools for completeness (Wright, 2018). A pilot study was conducted with 18 human resources managers representing 10% of the sample. Respondents in the pilot test were excluded from actual study. Questionnaires in the pilot study were used to test instrument reliability. The goal

of the study is to find the fewest number of factors that explain for a set of variables' shared variance and indicate how much co-variation among the observed variables each factor accounts for. Factor loadings greater than 0.3 are regarded to fulfill the minimum acceptable threshold (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tathan, 2010). Factor loadings of 0.40 or more are considered highly significant, whereas factor loadings of 0.50 or more are considered more crucial. As a result, the lowest factor loading threshold projected is 0.3. To test questionnaire reliability, Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient was used. This method is preferred because it saves time since the tools are administered only once. The alpha coefficient ranges from zero to one. Reliability is considered strong if the scale is close to 1. The cutoff for Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient was 0.7, and all items with a value less than 0.7 were considered weak, and were edited or removed from the final questionnaire.

## **RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The study sampled 162 human resources managers and 154 returned answered questionnaires hence 95% response rate. The high response rate was a result of close follow up of the data collection procedure and constant contact with the sampled respondents. In addition, the human resource managers were adequately briefed on the study purpose and given adequate time to answer the questionnaires.

### **Descriptive Analysis of the Variables of the Study**

#### **Training and Employee Performance**

Results reveal that a higher number of human resources managers agreed that; trainings improve staffs' productivity (54.5%), and there is opportunity for promotion after trainings (61%). Other respondents disagreed that; the training programs are based on staff capabilities and professional background, (55.8%), the organization has a training policy which applies to every staff (57.1%), staff are trained after thorough needs' assessment (67.5%), employees attend the trainings that fit departments' need (53.2%), and the training methodology is related to the training goals (46.8%).

This implies that the organizations organize employee performance. These training are not based on the training needs of the staff due to lack of training needs assessment. The trained staff have higher potential of promotions they are perceived to have acquired better skills that may improve their effectiveness. Results conforms to Hafeez and Akbar (2015) who showed that staff training prepare staff for bigger roles in the organization with adequate abilities to overcome any challenges they may face in their new work station.

**Table 1: Training and employee performance**

	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
My organization has a training policy	2.4	3
The selection for training is based on need assessment	4	1
Employees attend the trainings that fit departments' needs	2.4	3
Training programs are designed at level of abilities	3	2
The method of training used by the organization is relevant		
Trainings are improving employees' performance	3.2	2
There is opportunity for promotion after trainings	3.9	1
<b>Valid N (listwise)</b>		



**Employee Recognition and Employee Performance**

Findings show that a higher number of the staff strongly agreed that; there was a rewarding policy for best performing staff (61%), staff prefer cash to in-kind rewards (64.9%), well-performing staff are awarded more allowances (61%), staff feel motivated when they are rewarded for a job well done (63.6%), recognition make staff feel respected (81.8%), recognition stirs staff interest in doing even better (26%) and the staff feel fulfilled when management acknowledges their service years. This implies that the NGOs recognize staff who perform better than their colleagues. The staff are not satisfied with the recognition method since majority preferred cash to kind. This may be due to the fact that when given cash, the staff may purchase a gift of their choice but they cannot make a choice on in-kind rewards. The rewarding policy is a guide on how to reward staff which brings about transparency when selected staff to be rewarded. The staff are motivated when they are rewarded which may encourage other staff in the department to work so as to be rewarded too.

**Table 2: Employee Recognition and Employee Performance**

	Mean	Std. Deviation
The organization has put in place a rewarding policy	4.32	6
Staff prefer cash to in-kind rewards	4	4.45
Well-performing staff are awarded more allowances	0	4.45
Staff feel motivated when they are rewarded	0	4.42
Recognition make staff feel respected	0	4.82
Recognition stirs staff interest in doing even better	0	4.05

**Alpha co-efficient**

Questionnaire reliability was tested using Alpha Coefficient. Reliability statistics in Table 4.1 show that; staff training had an alpha value of 0.768, recognition  $\alpha=0.864$ , participative decision making  $\alpha=0.763$ , and career advancement opportunities  $\alpha=0.719$ . Employee performance had an alpha value of 0.759 and the scale combination was 0.835 which is above the recommended threshold of 0.7 hence regarded reliable.

**Table 3: Alpha co-efficient**

Scale	Number of items	Alpha Coefficient
Training	7	0.768
Employee recognition	7	0.864
Employee performance	9	0.759

**Regression Analysis**

**Table 4 Model Summary**

Model	R	R2	Adjusted r2	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.711	0.568	0.522	.648

**Table 5 Analysis of Variance**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	35.977	7	5.140	7.291	.001 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	67.296	146	.975		
	Total	103.273	153			

**Table 6 Regression of Beta Coefficient and Significance**

Model	Unstandardized		Standardized	T	Sig.
	Coefficients		Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant/Y Intercept	4.613	.853		5.405	.000
Training	.570	.322	.190	1.773	.004
Recognition	.759	.303	.253	2.503	.015

The results show that the value of R<sup>2</sup> is 0.568. This shows that non-financial incentives account for 56.8% variations in employee performance. Therefore, other non-financial factors excluded from this study account for 43.2% variations in employee performance in the NGO sector in Nairobi City County.

The model was significant (p-value = 0.000) at the 0.05 level in describing the linear relationship between the study variables, as shown. The F-statistic of 7.291 indicates that the model is capable of predicting the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

The regression equation shows that; a unit change in staff training would predict a unit increase in staff productivity by a factor of 0.570, a unit change in staff recognition would cause a unit increase in a unit increase in employee performance by a factor of 0.759, a unit change in participative decision making would predict a unit increase in staff productivity by a factor of 0.287 and a unit change in career advancement would predict a unit increase in staff productivity by a factor of 0.261. Three variables (training, recognition) cause a significant change on employee performance sig<0.5 while career advancement causes an insignificant change on employee performance sig>0.5. Findings also show that staff recognition and training were the greatest determinants of employee performance in the NGO sector in Nairobi City County.

### **Conclusion**

Staff training enhances job performance although the NGOs invest in general training and individual staff training needs are not addressed. The staff may therefore be trained on a skill that they already have and hence no new knowledge. This could be due to the fact that the NGOs do not carry out training needs assessment. Training needs assessment enables the organization to understand the training needs of every staff. Training is then designed according to the training gaps identified in every staff. Failure to carry out training needs assessment means that the staff do not get training that fir their departmental needs. A staff may also be forced to attend trainings that are not aligned with their educational background hence feel demotivated to participate the trainings.

The NGOs management make efforts to recognize the staff who perform extemporarily which makes them motivated and more commitment to their work. Staff recognition also motivates other staff to be more productive so that they may also be recognized are rewarded. The staff efforts to achieve set goals eventually results to high organization productivity. Staff recognition also makes them feel that their efforts are not taken for granted and that the management recognize them as essential organization resources that must be retained at all costs. Though there may be various methods of recognizing staff, majority of the staff prefers cash rewards as opposed to kind rewards.

### **Recommendations of the Study**

NGOs ought to conduct training needs assessment surveys and staff appraisals to identify training gaps of every staff and develop training programs suited for the individual staff based on the staffs' educational background. The organizations should also frequently organize in-service training through seminars and workshops to enhance staff professional development. The training program should be reviewed regularly with suitable assessment of the organization needs and point out the skills, abilities, staff professional background to ensure that the staff gain new knowledge consistently and are conversant with changing trends globally.

The organizations should review the staff motivation techniques since majority of the staff are not satisfied with motivation in kind and would prefer cash recognition. Although this technique may be perceived as costly, it may result to employee satisfaction and consequently high productivity. The management should commit enough resources for employee recognition and establish annual staff recognition events which would motivate staff to work harder towards achieving organization set goals. The recognition should also be based on employee preferences and circumstances otherwise they may not appreciate the reward.

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