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WORK-LIFE BALANCE, EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT, AND EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY AMONG PRIVATE SCHOOL TEACHERS IN KHAIRPUR MIR'S, PAKISTAN

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Abstract

In this study, the researchers looked into whether there is an association between work-life balance and employee productivity in private school teachers of Khairpur Mir's, Pakistan and whether these associations are explained by employee engagement. Teachers have high workloads in both instruction and emotion and also have a high level of concern about their families, which can create a balance that may diminish the effectiveness of the teacher. Private school teachers were 384 participants who completed a quantitative, cross-sectional survey and Partial least squares structural equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was used to test the hypothesised model. Work-life balance was positively linked to employee productivity ($\beta=.28, p<.001$) and employee engagement ($\beta=.65, p<.001$); and employee engagement was positively linked to employee productivity ($\beta=.52, p<.001$). The total effect was $\beta=.62$, with the indirect effect through engagement having a significant contribution ($\beta=.34, p<.001$), and the two indirect effects complemented each other: the indirect effect through engagement accounted for approximately 55% of the total effect. As it is cross sectional and productivity is self-reported, the results offer an association rather than causation. The study broadens the focus of work-life research to an under-researched educational environment and proposes that work-life policies can boost the productivity of teachers by safeguarding their work-life balance and improving their engagement.

Keywords: Work-Life Balance, Employee Engagement, Employee Productivity, Private School Teachers, PLS-SEM, Pakistan

1. Introduction

One of the critical concerns in organizational behaviour and human resource management is the productivity of employees as it is directly linked to the effectiveness of an organization (Robbins & Judge, 2022). It is even more important in the world of education, as teachers' work quality affects student learning and institutional quality (OECD, 2019; UNESCO & International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030, 2024). The study of factors that foster teacher productivity is thus of practical importance for schools, especially in developing countries where resources are scarce and in need of "low cost" improvement in teacher working conditions.

Work-life balance (WLB), which is here described as the ability to fulfill careers and personal life without conflicts between them (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011; Haar et al., 2014), has been receiving increased attention. Positive balance has been shown to correlate with higher levels of job and life satisfaction and mental health across cultures (Haar et al., 2014; Sirgy & Lee, 2018), while work-family conflict has been correlated with lower satisfaction and mental health (Allen et al., 2020; Kossek & Ozeki, 1998).

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It is especially challenging for teachers to maintain balance. Their work involves emotional labour, classroom management and administrative tasks that often take place outside of school hours (OECD, 2019; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). From the evidence gathered from Sindh and Punjab, it is found that teachers of private schools, and especially women teachers are caught up in heavy workloads at work and at home (Khaskhelly et al., 2024; Khizar & Islam, 2025).

Work engagement, a positive and fulfilling state of work, is defined as a state of vigor, dedication and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2002) and presents a plausible explanation for how balance can translate to performance. Employees' engagement is linked to task and contextual performance and involves them in their work and in paying attention to their work (Bailey et al., 2017; Christian et al., 2011). For teachers, engagement is associated with job resources and to the job performance measured weekly (Bakker & Bal, 2010; Hakanen et al., 2006). As noted to earlier, there is indication that engagement is related to work-life balance, but the direction of the relationship is unclear (Wood et al., 2020).

1.1 Problem Statement

While there is a large body of work-life literature, the evidence regarding productivity is less conclusive than may be thought. A review of work-life balance policies revealed that there were positive and significant links with career motivation, attendance, recruitment, and retention, but not with productivity (Wong et al., 2020). This implies that the relationship between balance and performance must be specified more clearly in terms of mechanisms for this relationship. A large portion of the evidence also stems from studies conducted in the developed world, from samples consisting of companies and/or public institutions and may not be applicable to private schools in developing countries (Brough et al., 2014; Haar et al., 2019).

The teachers in private schools in Pakistan frequently struggle to achieve a balance between their work and personal lives due to low institutional support, high-performance expectations, and heavy workloads (Khaskhelly et al., 2024). Researchers have studied the impact of work-family conflict, job performance and quality of work life of teachers in the country (Arif & Ilyas, 2013; Khizar & Islam, 2025). To date, however, few studies have examined whether engagement is a mechanism of how work-life balance is related to productivity and even fewer have been conducted in a semi-urban district like Khairpur Mir's. This study fills that gap.

1.2 Research Objectives

- To explore the impact of work-life balance on employee engagement of private school teachers
- To find out the effect of employee engagement on employee productivity in the case of private educational institutions (Saks, 2022; Schaufeli, 2018).
- To examine the mediation effect of employee engagement between the relationship of work-life balance and employee productivity

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses

The findings from Pakistan indicate that there is a close relationship between teachers' work and personal lives. Another study on female teachers in private schools of district Matiari in Sindh revealed excessive demands in their work and home life that might cause mental and physical harm (Khaskhelly et al., 2024). A comparison of teachers in public schools and private schools in Punjab revealed that there was more work-family conflict among the public-school teachers, and higher job performance among private school teachers (Khizar & Islam, 2025). These results suggest that private schools are not categorically underperforming but simultaneously reveal a correlation between conflict and performance within private school students. Since private schools vary widely in the number of children who attend, in resources available to them, and how they are run, evidence from a particular district is required to make sense of the relationship between balance, engagement and productivity locally.

2.1 Theoretical Foundation

There are two parallel approaches to the study. The social exchange theory suggests that positive attitudes and behaviors can be expected from workers in response to the positive treatment they receive from their employers (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano et al., 2017). The job demands-resources (JD-R) model suggests that high levels of JD create strain through a motivational process, while high levels of job resources facilitate

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engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). This study considers working conditions that provides teachers with sufficient time and energy for personal life to be a favorable condition and to be considered a resource that should facilitate engagement and then, engagement to performance. Theories are not tested directly as organizational support and job demands were not measured, they are used to help interpret the hypothesized pathways.

2.2 Work-Life Balance

WLB is defined as the match-up between work and nonwork roles, as perceived by them (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011). It has been examined as an outcome of demands and resources (Haar et al., 2019) as well as as a predictor of well-being and job attitudes (Haar et al., 2014; Sirgy & Lee, 2018). Teachers' work is highly connected to home life as preparation, marking and communication with parents are frequently outside school hours (OECD, 2019). Balance, therefore, is not only a personal issue—it is determined by the way that tasks and time are distributed in schools and is a legitimate concern for school management as well as for individual teachers.

2.3 Employee Engagement

Engagement is a sustained positive state in the work, which is defined by vigor, dedication and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2002) and is most often assessed using Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) (Schaufeli et al., 2006). It is more than just satisfaction because it is about how people engage themselves in the work tasks and not feeling good about them (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018). In the case of teachers, engagement is closely related to the resources that are offered in the job (Hakanen et al., 2006).

2.4 Employee Productivity

Productivity is an indicator of how efficiently and effectively workers do their work and deliver their service responsibilities and meet the organization's goals (Robbins & Judge, 2022). For teachers, it is manifested in the quality of teaching, class discipline and administration tasks. These outputs are hard to observe objectively, and, in some cases, productivity is measured on the basis of self-reported or supervisor-reported performance, which may have implications for interpretation, as outlined below limitations.

2.5 Hypothesis Development

Conflict stress is reduced and workers have more time, energy and attention for work tasks. In line with this, greater balance is linked to higher levels of well-being and job attitudes (Haar et al., 2014; Sirgy & Lee, 2018); however, there is inconsistent evidence on productivity specifically (Wong et al., 2020). In Pakistani teachers, work-family conflict has been linked with the performance in the job (Khizar & Islam, 2025). The first hypothesis is thus predicting the direct association.

H1: Employees who enjoy a better work-life balance are more productive.

The JD-R model states that conditions that maintain energy conservation facilitate engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Thirty-seven empirical studies have been reviewed to date, and the results show that there is a consistent link between work-life balance and work engagement, although the direction of causality remains unclear (Wood et al., 2020). Other evidence in Pakistan also shows a relationship between quality of work life (which includes work-life balance) and engagement (Arif & Ilyas, 2013). The mechanism is simple, if personal needs do not continually encroach upon working time, and working needs do not creep in upon the personal need for recovery, then employees have energy and psychological top-side to engage. The mechanism is particularly important for teachers, for whom it may be crucial to remain focused and emotionally responsive in the classroom.

H2: Employee engagement is positively related to work-life balance.

Engaged employees demonstrate greater task and contextual performance (Christian et al., 2011), and starting teachers' weekly engagement is positively related to their weekly performance as teachers (Bakker & Bal, 2010). Teachers who are engaged work with more energy and are immersed in their work and should be more productive. They also tend to be more likely to do more than what is "required" of them, such as carefully preparing lessons, helping students who are struggling, and participating in school events, which enhances the effectiveness of the school as a whole (Christian et al., 2011).

H3: Employee productivity is positively related to their engagement.

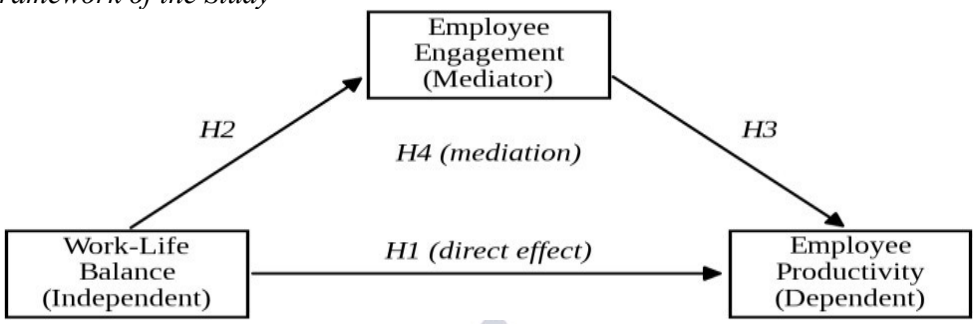
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These arguments together suggest that balance is related to productivity, in part, because of its relation to engagement. When teachers are not exhausted by role conflict, they have more available energy to put into teaching, and demonstrating care for employees results in engagement (Saks, 2022). Based on this, the mediation hypothesis is formulated as below and the complete mediation model is shown as in Figure 1.

H4: Employee engagement mediates the relationship between work-life balance and employee productivity.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework of the Study



3. Method

3.1 Design and Participants

A quantitative, cross-sectional, deductive survey was conducted (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019). Members of the population included teachers of registered private educational institutions of district Khairpur Mir's, Sindh. The multi-stage sampling process was employed for both the schools and teachers, resulting in 384 respondents in the 300–400 range deemed sufficient for PLS-SEM (Hair et al., 2022).

3.2 Measures

A self-administered, structured and paper-based questionnaire was administered or filled out using Google Forms. Work-life balance was assessed using Hayman's (2005) scale which was scored such that high scores represent a better balance. The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (vigor, dedication, absorption; Schaufeli et al., 2002) was used to measure engagement. For productivity, items were adapted from previous human resource management research on perceptions of productivity, workplace efficiency and productivity. The items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

3.3 Analysis and Ethics

The data were analysed using SmartPLS 4. The reliability was determined by Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach's alpha > .70); convergent validity was determined by the average variance extracted (AVE > .50); and discriminant validity was determined using the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (Henseler et al., 2015). The model was tested using 5000 bootstrap resamples, and structural paths and indirect effects were obtained. Participants were encouraged to reply voluntarily and anonymously and informed consent was obtained.

4. Results

4.1 Respondent Profile

384 questionnaires were used. Of the sample, 58%were women and 42%were men. The majority of teachers were aged 26–35 years (46%), 36–45 years (32%)and under 25 years and over 45 years (22%). When it comes to teaching experience, 25%had 1–5 years, 35%had 6–10 years and 40%had more than 10 years.

4.2 Measurement Model

Reliability and convergent validity of the constructs are shown in Table 1. The internal consistency of the instrument was assessed in terms of Cronbach's $\alpha$and composite reliability, which were high (all greater than .70) and showed good internal consistency (Hair et al., 2019). The reported average variance extracted (AVE), found in the final column, should be greater than .50, suggesting good convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

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Table 1

Reliability and Convergent Validity of the Study Constructs

Construct	Cronbach's α	Composite reliability	AVE
Work-life balance	.89	.91	.503
Employee engagement	.92	.94	.611
Employee productivity	.88	.90	.536

Note. AVE = average variance extracted. Cronbach's α and composite reliability should exceed .70, and AVE should exceed .50.

4.3 Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Descriptive statistics and correlations are shown in Table 2. Respondents reported moderate to high scores on work-life balance $(M, = 3.62SD = 0.74)$, employee engagement $(M, = 3.75SD = 0.68)$, and employee productivity $(M, = 3.81SD = 0.70)$. All the correlations were positive and significant $(p < .01)$with a mediation between work-life balance and engagement $(r = .62)$and between work-life balance and productivity $(r = .58)$, along with engagement and productivity $(r = .71)$.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Among Study Variables

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3
1. Work-life balance	3.62	0.74	—		
2. Employee engagement	3.75	0.68	.62	—	
3. Employee productivity	3.81	0.70	.58	.71	—

Note. $N = 384$. All correlations are significant at $p < .01$.

4.4 Structural Model

The direct effects are shown in Table 3. Work-life balance had a significant positive effect on employee productivity $(\beta, =, .28t = 4.12p < .001)$ and on employee engagement $(\beta, =, .65t = 12.35p < .001)$, and engagement had a significant positive effect on productivity $(\beta, =, .52t = 8.91p < .001)$. Thus, H1, H2 and H3 were supported. The path coefficients are slightly different from the zero-order correlations in Table 2 as the estimated path coefficients in PLS-SEM are weighted latent variable scores, and for the case of the productivity equation, the other predictors are adjusted.

Table 3

Direct Effects in the Structural Model

Hypothesis	Path	β	t	p
H1	Work-life balance → Employee productivity	.28	4.12	< .001
H2	Work-life balance → Employee engagement	.65	12.35	< .001
H3	Employee engagement → Employee productivity	.52	8.91	< .001

Note. β = standardized path coefficient.

4.5 Mediation Analysis

The test for mediation was performed on 5,000 bootstrapped resamples (Table 4). The indirect effect of work-life balance on productivity through engagement was significant $(\beta, = .34t = 7.88)$, which is consistent with the product of the two component paths $(.65 \times .52 \approx .34)$. The direct effect was still highly significant $(\beta = .28)$, and so the total effect was $\beta = .62$. Both the direct and indirect effects were statistically significant and in the same direction, so that each effect complemented and contributed to the other effect, explaining about 55%of the total effect $(.34 \div .62)$. H4 was therefore invited.

Table 4

Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects of Work-Life Balance on Employee Productivity

Effect	β	t	Result
Direct: Work-life balance → Productivity	.28	4.12	Significant
Indirect: Work-life balance → Engagement → Productivity	.34	7.88	Significant
Total (direct + indirect)	.62	—	Complementary partial mediation

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Note. Bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples. Variance accounted for by the indirect effect = .34 ÷ .62 ≈ 55%.

The following table summarizes the hypothesis tests. All four hypotheses were confirmed, and the engagement pathway ($\beta = .34$)was stronger than the direct pathway ($\beta = .28$).

Table 5

Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Statement	Result
H1	Work-life balance → Employee productivity (positive)	Supported
H2	Work-life balance → Employee engagement (positive)	Supported
H3	Employee engagement → Employee productivity (positive)	Supported
H4	Engagement mediates the work-life balance → productivity relationship	Supported

On a practical level, the standardized co-efficients suggest that a teacher one standard deviation above the sample mean would be expected to have engagement scores approximately two-thirds of a standard deviation above the mean, and engagement has the highest unique association with productivity. All three constructs had mean scores ranging from 3.62 to 3.81 on a five-point scale, suggesting positive, but not outstanding, perceptions of them with scope to improve, particularly work-life balance with lowest mean.

5. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the correlation between work-life balance and productivity of private school teachers in Khairpur Mir and to find out the mediation role of engagement in the correlation between work-life balance and productivity among private school teachers. All four hypotheses were supported. H1: Positive relationship between work-life balance and productivity is in line with research indicating that balance is linked to improved well-being and job attitudes (Haar et al., 2014; Sirgy & Lee, 2018) and Pakistani findings that indicate work-family conflict and teacher performance have a negative link (Khizar & Islam, 2025). It should be interpreted in conjunction with the meta-analysis that work-life balance arrangements are not as consistently associated with productivity as other outcomes (Wong et al., 2020). In the present study, the direct pathway ($\beta = .28$)was not strong when engagement was added, meaning that balance is important for productivity primarily because of the impact that it has on teachers' energy and involvement rather than because of its impact on productivity alone.

Descriptive results offer good context. The lowest mean for the three constructs was for work-life balance ($M = 3.62$), indicating that on average teachers thought that the balance was moderately favorable, but was the least developed of the three resources. This is possible because of the anecdotal evidence of teachers working in private schools in Sindh being under a lot of strain at work and at home (Khaskhelly et al., 2024).

The strong link between the constructs of work-life balance and engagement (H2) can be explained by the JD-R theory that suggests that conditions where energy is conserved will lead to engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017) and by the findings of the various reviews which have consistently identified a correlation between the two (Wood et al., 2020). Teachers who are not overstimulated by other role demands in school are more likely to have the energy, commitment, and passion that are central to engagement (Hakanen et al., 2006; Schaufeli et al., 2002). However, the size of this path ($\beta = .65$)should be treated with some caution since both constructs were self-reported from the same subjects at the same time.

Consistent with the findings of Christian et al. (2011) and Bakker and Bal (2010) who found that engaged employees are more productive on the task and contextual dimensions, respectively, there was a strong correlation between engagement and productivity (H3). The self-rated productivity is plausible of engaged teachers in that they make more careful preparations, pay more attention to management, and accept administrative work more readily. Given the fact that engagement had the highest unique association with productivity, it may be possible that activities designed to increase engagement will be the most direct strategy to improve teaching success.

There's one additional issue to consider: what's the difference between balance perception and balance policy? The meta-analytic evidence indicating no significant relationship between productivity and formal

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work-life balance arrangements were based on teachers' perceptions of the fit between their work and personal life. The present study included measures of teachers' perception of the fit between work and personal life, while the meta-analytic evidence did not find such associations for formal work-life balance arrangements. Policies can be in place but not felt to be supportive, and balance feelings can be more important than arrangements for energy and involvement. This separation could account for some discrepancies, but this aspect cannot be directly tested with the present design.

The mediation result (H4) suggests that engagement accounts for over 56%of the association between work-life balance and productivity. This is consistent with the motivational process of JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017), and also consistent with the reciprocity logic of social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano et al., 2017), which states that favorable conditions are reciprocated as involvement and effort. Theories, however, have not been measured in the study, so they are supported only in that they predict the pattern that was observed. Furthermore, the data is cross-sectional and from literature, it is suggested that there may be a bidirectional relationship between the measures of balance and engagement (Wood et al., 2020). In addition to the measured variables, engaged teachers may feel their lives are more balanced, and unmeasured variables such as workload, family responsibilities or income might have an impact on all three variables. The mediation finding should thus be interpreted as a finding of a statistically consistent pathway but not as a finding of causal ordering.

6. Implications

6.1 Theoretical Implications

First, the results provide evidence of teacher samples that is consistent with the motivational process of the JD-R model, namely, that energy-conserving conditions are linked to engagement and engagement is linked to performance. Second, they are also consistent with the reciprocity viewpoint of social exchange theory, which could be added in future research to determine if teachers view balance as a measure of employer care. Third, the study extends research on work-life on the private schools in a semi-urban district of Sindh which is under-represented. In this way, it addresses the fear that the results of research conducted by corporations and in Western countries may not readily be transferred to teachers in developing nations (Brough et al., 2014).

6.2 Practical Implications

School administrators can make sure that there is a balance by setting reasonable workloads, limiting after school duties (such as sending out messages, doing extra grading), and scheduling meetings and duties in a predictable way. If there is flexibility in play, this should be carefully designed and not create additional workload (Kossek et al., 2015). Finally, leaders must build engagement through the recognition, development and engagement of employees in decision making, since it appears that engagement follows (Saks, 2022). The principals can also establish a good example by not asking students for late assignments and can make sure that the workload of non-teaching assignments are evenly divided among teachers. Support for recognition of household responsibilities may be especially important as 58%of the respondents were women.

6.3 Policy Implications

Schools and their education authorities and/or regulators might include workload guidelines and provisions for teacher well-being in their registration or monitoring conditions. Schools could monitor in the longer-term if teachers were periodically surveyed anonymously about their balance and engagement. These measures should be introduced, tested and assessed in a pilot basis before being expanded.

7. Limitations and Future Research

A few restrictions must be noted. First of all, cross-sectional design does not allow for causal inferences and is subject to reverse and reciprocal causality. Secondly, relationships were measured at the same time and from the same sources, which could have resulted in common method bias affecting the results (Podsakoff et al., 2012), and productivity measures relied on self-judgement rather than objective measures or supervisor ratings. Third, the sample consisted only of private school teachers in one district and the results are thus not generalizable to public schools or other districts. Fourth, the model did not contain control variables as gender, workload and experience which may be related to all three constructs. Fifth, the

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instrument used in the questionnaire for productivity was modified instead of being taken from a single instrument, therefore needs to be examined again in future samples.

Future studies could employ longitudinal or experimental research designs to better understand the causal relationships between variables, gather productivity data from principals or student outcomes, and also involve public school teachers in the study for comparison. Other mediators and/or moderators could be explored (e.g., job satisfaction, perceived organizational support, leadership style, job demands) and other studies could be conducted to test for whether there are gender differences in pathways.

8. Conclusion

The present study investigated the relationship between work-life balance and productivity of teachers in private schools in Khairpur Mir's with employee engagement as a mediator. Work-life balance was found to be positively related to both engagement and productivity, engagement was found to be positively related with productivity, and engagement partially mediated the relationship between work-life balance and productivity. The results indicate that helping teachers to strike the right balance is important, in part because it maintains engagement leading to productive work. It is therefore important that private schools and education authorities consider reducing workload and reducing role strain if they want to increase teachers' productivity in addition to their efforts to increase engagement. It would be likely to have a positive impact on teachers' health and the quality of teaching that is received by students. Given the cross-sectional, self-reported design these conclusions are best interpreted as associations, and longitudinal, multi-source studies are required to validate the hypothesized path.

Ethics Statement

This study adhered to all ethical standards of research during the conducting of this study. We collected data from secondary sources, and no human participants were involved in the collection of data. Therefore, there is no conflict of interest of any human participant to this study.

Author's Contributions

All author/s participated in ideation, development, and writing the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author/s declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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Data Availability

The datasets generated and analysed during the current study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. The authors are committed to transparency and will provide detailed methodological information and analysis protocols upon request.

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