The Interactive Effect of Organizational Politics in the Justice, Organisational Support and Job Satisfaction Relationships

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Abstract: The study of the antecedents of job satisfaction (JS) is important because of the strategic role JS plays in organisational productivity. Three pervasive perceptions of work environment, organisational politics (OP), organisational support (POS) and justice (PJC) predict JS and affect individual’s decisions in an exchange process. Joint effects of these variables have been theorized, but never tested. This study tested the interactive role of OP when POS, PJC and JS are contained in the same model. The study utilised 400 participants drawn from organizations in Nigeria. The results of the hierarchical multiple regression analyses, indicate that PJC and POS have direct effects on JS, while OP interacts with PJC to predict JS. The study highlights the importance of including OP, POS and the PJC in JS models.

Keywords: Justice, politics, support, job satisfaction

INTRODUCTION

Job satisfaction (JS) is a critical work attitude that is widely studied in the field of organizational behaviour (Kinicki et al., 2002). This is due to the realization that JS affects important organizational variables that are instrumental to an organization achieving its goals (Lepine et al., 2002; Koys, 2001; Griffeth et al., 2000; Vandenberg and Lance, 1992). Thus, the identification of the antecedents of JS would be an important aspect of the study of how organizations excel in their operations.

Individual perceptions of work context and environment have been identified as antecedents of job satisfaction and organisational outcomes (Fields et al., 2000; Masterson et al., 2000). There has been debates as to the redundancy of three perceptions of work environment namely, fairness (procedural, distributive and interactional), support and politics, when put in the same model (Randall et al., 1999; Nye and Witt, 1993). However, Andrews and Kaeoar (2001) established that justice (procedural and distributive), support and politics are distinct constructs, while Roch and Shanock (2006) established empirically that the three justice constructs (distributive, procedural and interaction) are distinct also. These findings should have encouraged studies aimed at understanding the joint effects of these variables on work and personal outcomes such as JS. However, review of existing studies indicated a gap that should be addressed. For example, some studies included only two justice constructs in their model (Erdogan et al., 2006; Masterson et al., 2000; Dailey and Kirk, 1992; McFarlin and Sweeney, 1992; Folger and Konovsky, 1989). We found only Roch and Shanock (2006) that included the three justice constructs in same model and found them affecting work and personal outcomes differently. No study was found that included the three justice constructs, perception of organisational support (POS) and organisational politics (OP) in a model explaining JS. For effective understanding of how people perceive their work environment, which would ultimately affect work and personal outcomes, there is the need to close this gap by studying the joint effects of these
constructs, when put in the same model. This assertion is important based on Leigh et al. (1988) words that employees hold implicit causal theory about their work environment and so while, attributing causes of their job satisfaction, employees would look more to broader work environment than to their particular roles.

Many studies have identified the direct and interactive effects of organisational fairness and support on job satisfaction (Roch and Shanock, 2006; Fields et al., 2000; McFarlin and Sweeney, 1992). However, Ferris and Kaomar (1992) and Madison et al. (1980) have talked about the short fall of similar studies involving organisational politics, despite the fact that it is reported as pervasive and common (Ferris et al., 2002; Cropanzano et al., 1985), widely accepted as an aspect of organisational life (Mintzberg, 1985), capable of negatively affecting individual decisions in the broader exchange process in the work place (Cropanzano et al., 1997) and work environment has been described as a political arena (Mintzberg, 1985). Ferris and Kaomar (1992) assert that despite the realisation of the importance of organisational politics in organisational life, the conceptualization of organisational climate neglects the perception of OP.

Few studies have tested the direct effect of organisational politics on job satisfaction (Hochwarter and Treadway, 2003; Parker et al., 1995), we are not aware of any study that has tested direct and interactive effects of OP, in a model that contains perception of organisational support (POS) and the three components of the perception of organisational fairness. This study is undertaken to widen the knowledge available in the understanding of the relationships among perception of organisational fairness, POS and job satisfaction, by considering the direct and interactive effects of OP in the relationships.

**Theory and Hypotheses**

**Perception of Justice**

There has been constant changes in the factorial representation of justice construct in the last 10 years, resulting to the identification of the various dimensions of the construct (Roch and Shanock, 2006) and application of social exchange or broader exchange theory in justice research. After what Colquitt et al. (2005) referred to as the third wave, organizational researchers had identified three justice dimensions of distributive justice (DJ), procedural justice (PRJ) and interactional justice (INJ). According to Rock and Shanock (2006) DJ and PRJ are defined as ... feelings of fairness surrounding the allocation of organizational resources... and ... feelings of fairness regarding the procedures used in an organizational processes, respectively. The third dimension, INJ is referred to as fairness judgment based ... on the quality of interpersonal treatment received during execution of the procedure (Masterson et al., 2000). The high correlation identified between PRJ and INJ has resulted in some researchers combining them into a single construct (Erdogan et al., 2006; Rupp and Cropanzano, 2002), a fact that is contrary to a two-factor best fit model stated by Roch and Shanock (2006) and Masterson et al. (2000). A three-factor structure of distributive, procedural and interactional justice is utilized in this study.

The relationship between each of the PJC and JS can be explained by the broad social exchange theory (Blau, 1984) and the reciprocity norm of social exchange (Gouldner, 1960). In an organisational setting, work attitudes and just work environment can be used as basis for social exchange relationship (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). Thus, a work environment that is perceived as just would according to the norm of reciprocity attract high work attitudes. Hence, Roch and Shanock (2006), Masterson et al. (2000), Fields et al. (2000) and McFarlin and Sweeney (1992) found positive relationship between some justice variables and JS.

Based on the results above the following hypotheses are tested

H1: DJ is positively related to JS.
H2: PRJ is positively related to JS.
H3: INJ is positively related to JS.
Perception of Organisational Support (POS) is the perception of the employees that the organization cares about them and values their contributions. POS has always been conceptualized in social exchange terms (Eisenberger et al., 1986). When employees see their organisation as supportive, the principle of reciprocity norm of social exchange, predicts that such employees would return the good gesture of the organisation. As stated above, work attitude is seen as a social exchange currency, which employees can use to affect exchange for the organisation’s good gesture. Hence, POS has been found to be positively related to job satisfaction (Allen et al., 2003) and thus, the hypothesis below.

H4: POS is positively related to JS.

Perception of Organisational Politics (OP) is defined in this study as ... an intentional social influence process in which behavior is strategically designed to maximize short term or long term self interest (Parker et al., 1995). It occurs in an ambiguous and poorly managed diverse work environment. Politically charged environment is risky and thus, workers would be hesitant in making investment by way of increased work attitude in such environment. Thus, OP has been found to affect JS and job performance (Witt et al., 2001; Feris and Kacmar, 1992) and communication level (Jablin, 1981). Significnt interactive effects of OP has been documented by past studies (Zivnuska et al., 2004; Hochwartner and Treadway, 2003; Witt et al., 2002), but none of them involves interaction with justice constructs to predict JS when POS is in the model. However, Erdogan et al. (2006) identifed that organizational culture moderated the relationship between distributive justice (DJ), interactional justice (INJ) and leader-member exchange. When OP is widely perceived in an organisation, it is viewed as an aspect of organizational culture and a form of individuals global perception of their social environment at work (Cropanzano et al., 1997), which may likely moderate the relationships between perception of justice and JS. The following hypotheses involving OP is tested:

H5: OP is negatively related to JS.

H6: OP will interact with DJ to reduce the value of the positive relationship between DJ and JS is reduced.

H7: OP will interact with PRJ to reduce the value of the positive relationship between PRJ and JS is reduced.

H8: OP will interact with INJ to reduce the value of the positive relationship between INJ and JS is reduced.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

**Analytical and Statistical Procedure**

The study is based on cross sectional data acquired through self-report questionnaire administered on chosen employees in some organisations in Nigeria. The participants for this study were drawn from employees in the offices of some organisations located in Lagos metropolis in Nigeria. Many organizations were approached for the study, but only seven organizations that agreed to take part in the study received questionnaires. The organisations are in the banking, oil, manufacturing and service industries. The study was conducted between November and December 2007 in Lagos, Nigeria. Each organization provided a contact person who coordinated the study in his/her organization. Six hundred questionnaires were distributed to the 7 organisations, in the ratio of the number of employees in each organisation to the total number of employees in all the participating...
organisations. One of the researchers helped the contact persons in each organisation to randomly select the participating employees, who filled out questionnaires given to each organisation. The participants were assured of confidentiality of information provided and were given envelopes to return the filled out questionnaire. Four hundred completely filled questionnaires were returned representing 67% return rate. The sample contains 264 males (66%) and 136 females (34%), 192 senior staff (48%) and 164 supervisors (41%), average age 31-40 years (264). The average tenure in the organisation is less than 10 years (252).

Though the measures used in this study have been validated and their factor structure confirmed by past studies (Vigoda, 2002; Aryee et al., 1999; Niehoff and Moorman, 1993; Kaemar and Ferris, 1991; Eisenberger et al., 1986), we carried out principal component analyses to confirm factor structures, since we could not locate studies that had utilized some of the variables in Nigeria. Factors extracted by the principal component analyses satisfied two criteria. They had eigenvalues greater than or equal to one and were justified by scree-plot as necessary (Preacher and MacCallum, 2003; Kim and Mueller, 1978). Items that have loadings less than 0.4 on their factor and cross loaded onto another factor, were removed to enhance uni-dimensionality (Koufteros et al., 2002). Hypotheses 1 to 8 were tested using hierarchical moderated multiple regression analyses. In these regression analyses, the demographic variables were included in step one, POS and PIC were in step 2, OP was entered in step 3 and the interaction terms in step 4. The variables were centered prior to calculating the interaction terms to avoid multicollinearity (Aiken and West, 1991).

Measures

The questionnaire containing the measuring instruments is in two parts. The first part contains four questions that obtained participants bio data (job status, age, sex and organisational tenure), while the second part contains 35 questions that measured the six study variables. All the measures utilized 6-point Likert scale scored in such a way that high figures indicate high value of the construct.

Organisational Politics

This is operationalised as the degree to which individuals perceive their work environment as political and therefore unfair and unjust. It is a 5-item scale taken from the work of Kaemar and Ferris (1991) and used by Vigoda (2002). The value of the reliability for this scale in Kaemar and Ferris (1991) and Vigoda (2002) and in the current study is 0.74, 0.77 and 0.71, respectively.

Distributive, Procedural and Interactive Justice

These are taken from the study of Niehoff and Moorman (1993). Distributive justice scale measured the extent to which an individual believes his/her work outcomes are fair. Procedural justice measures formal procedure, if it exists and the extent to which the procedures consider individual’s needs. The interactive justice measures the extent to which employee needs are taken into consideration in job decisions and adequate explanations provided. To reduce the length of the questionnaire, five items that loaded most in each factor in the study by Niehoff and Moorman (1993) were utilized. The Cronbach alphas for the three factors were reported to be above 0.9 in Niehoff and Moorman (1993). The values obtained in the current study are 0.8, 0.84 and 0.81, respectively.

Perception of Organisational Support

The shortened 9 item version of Eisenberger et al. (1986) were used. The items measure the extent to which an organization values employees contributions and cares about their well-being. The Cronbach alpha obtained in the above study is 0.74, while it is 0.84 in the current study.
Job Satisfaction

The 6-item measure used was taken from the study of Aryee et al. (1999). It measures overall job satisfaction without considering individual work aspects. Cronbach alpha obtained in the above study is 0.82, while it is 0.84 in the current study.

Control Variables

Past studies have identified that some demographic variables should be controlled for in any model of job satisfaction (Witt et al., 2002; Fields et al., 2000; Parker et al., 1995; McFarlin and Sweeney, 1992). In line with these studies we controlled for the variance attributable to job status, sex, age and organisational tenure. Job status was measured in four categories of junior, senior, supervisor and Manager while sex was stated as 1 for male and 2 for female. Age and organisational tenure were measured in five intervals.

RESULTS

The principal component analyses extracted six factors, representing the study variables and accounted for 70% of the variance in the 35 items. Discriminant validity test was done using the method adopted by Fornell and Larcker (1981). From Table 1, the variance extracted by each factor is more than the square of the correlation it has with other factors. For example, the variance extracted by DJ is 0.75 and the square of its correlation with PRJ is 0.084 (0.29^2). The level of common method variance was established using the method by Podsakoff and Organ (1986), in which an unrotated factor analyses was done with the 35 items. The first factor extracted only 13% of the variance, compared to 57% extracted by the rest five factors, which is an indication that common method variance is minimal in this study.

The pairs PRJ/INJ and PRJ/POS have high zero order correlation; hence confirmatory factor analyses were carried out using Analysis of Moments of Structures (AMOS), to confirm their distinctness. The confirmatory factor analyses (Table 2, 3) and partial correlation (Table 1) confirm that PRJ, INJ and POS are best treated as separate factors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Alpha</th>
<th>Var. extr. (%)</th>
<th>DJ</th>
<th>PRJ</th>
<th>INJ</th>
<th>OP</th>
<th>POS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DJ</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>0.29*</td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRJ</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>0.56*</td>
<td>(0.05)</td>
<td>(0.33)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INJ</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>-0.28*</td>
<td>(-0.17*)</td>
<td>-0.37*</td>
<td>-0.37*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OP</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>0.43*</td>
<td>(0.25*)</td>
<td>0.64*</td>
<td>0.51*</td>
<td>-0.37*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POS</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>0.4*</td>
<td>(0.27*)</td>
<td>0.35*</td>
<td>0.21*</td>
<td>-0.14*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.44*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DJ =** Distributive justice, **INJ =** Interactive justice, **PRJ =** Procedural justice, **OP =** Organisational politics; **POS =** Perception of organisational support, **JS =** Job satisfaction, *p<0.05; () = Partial correlation (correlation between two variables when other variables are controlled)

Table 2: Confirmatory factor analyses model fit indices (PRJ, INJ)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>CFI</th>
<th>GFI</th>
<th>AGFI</th>
<th>χ²/df</th>
<th>χ²</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>RMSEA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One-Factor PRJ and INJ combined</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>92.04*</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.184</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-Factors (PRJ and INJ Separate)</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>25.65</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>66.39*</td>
<td>0.083</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PRJ = Procedural justice, INJ = Interaction justice, CFI = Comparative fit index, GFI = Goodness-of-fit index, AGFI = Adjusted Goodness-of-fit index, χ² = Chi-square, df = Degrees of freedom, RMSEA = Root mean square error of approximation, *p<0.05
Table 3: Confirmatory factor analyses model fit indices (PRJ, POS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>GFI</th>
<th>AGFI</th>
<th>( \chi^2/df )</th>
<th>( \chi^2 )</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>RMSEA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One-Factor PRJ and POS combined</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>7.194</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>143.88*</td>
<td>0.242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-Factors (PRJ and POS Separate)</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>1.258</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>120.33*</td>
<td>0.048</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PRJ = Procedural justice, POS = Perception of organisational support, GFI = Comparative fit index, AGFI = Adjusted Goodness-of-fit index, \( \chi^2 = \) Chi-square, df = Degrees of freedom, RMSEA = Root mean square error of approximation, *p<0.05

Table 4: Moderated multiple regression results (Dependent Variable = J)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Step 1</th>
<th>Step 2</th>
<th>Step 3</th>
<th>Step 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job status</td>
<td>0.25*</td>
<td>0.21*</td>
<td>0.20*</td>
<td>0.20*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational tenure</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DJ</td>
<td>0.24*</td>
<td>0.23*</td>
<td>0.23*</td>
<td>0.23*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INJ</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRJ</td>
<td>0.28*</td>
<td>0.25*</td>
<td>0.25*</td>
<td>0.25*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POS</td>
<td>0.14*</td>
<td>0.17*</td>
<td>0.17*</td>
<td>0.17*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OP</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OP*DJ</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OP*PRJ</td>
<td>-0.15*</td>
<td>-0.15*</td>
<td>-0.15*</td>
<td>-0.15*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OP*INJ</td>
<td>-0.57*</td>
<td>-0.57*</td>
<td>-0.57*</td>
<td>-0.57*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>0.094</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.322</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \Delta R^2 )</td>
<td>0.094*</td>
<td>0.22*</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>0.084*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DJ = Distributive justice, INJ = Interactive justice, PRJ = Procedural justice, OP = Organisational politics, POS = Perception of organisational support, J = Job satisfaction, *p<0.05, \( \Delta \) Standardized regression coefficients are reported

Fig. 1: OP as a moderator of relationship between INJ and J. OP = Organisational politics; INJ = Interactive justice; J = Job satisfaction Note: Plotted lines show the effect of INJ on J for those scoring 1 standard deviation above mean OP (high OP) and 1 standard deviation below mean OP (low OP)

The moderated hierarchical regression analyses in Table 4 indicate that DJ, PRJ, INJ and POS had significant positive relationships with J. The relationship between OP and J though negative was not significant. Hence, hypotheses 1 to 4 are supported while hypothesis 5 was not supported. The parameters of the interaction terms OP*INJ and OP*PRJ were significant, while OP*DJ was not. Hence, hypothesis 6 is not supported, while hypotheses 7 and 8 are supported. The three justice variables and POS accounted for 22% of the variance in J, while the significant interaction terms accounted for additional 8.4% variance in J.

To interpret the significant interaction terms in Table 4, we divided the sample into low and high OP, which contains those scoring 1 standard deviation below and above mean OP respectively. Two regression equations were developed for the low and high samples, using INJ and PRJ as independent variables and J as dependent variable (Aiken and West, 1991). The results in Fig. 1 and 2 indicate that, for high OP participants, the positive relationships between PRJ and J and between INJ and J are consistently lower than those of low OP participants.
DISCUSSION

This study had two aims, namely, to determine the combined effect of the three justice constructs, POS and OP on JS and to study the interactive effects of OP in the model. A total of 8 hypotheses involving the study variables were postulated and tested. Five were accepted while three were rejected. After controlling for the demographic variables, the main effects of two justice constructs (DJ, PRJ) and POS on JS were significant (step 2 of Table 4), while those of INJ and OP were not. These results replicate and also extend past studies on the relationships among the three justice constructs (DJ, PRJ, INJ), POS, OP and JS. It replicates other studies that found positive relationship between the justice constructs and JS (Roch and Shanock, 2006; Masterson et al., 2000) and between POS and JS (Cropanzano et al., 1997). These results can be justified by broad exchange theory and norms of reciprocity, which see work attitudes as exchange currencies that are made available, when employees perceive fair environment and treatment by organisational participants. A major contribution of this study is the testing of these relationships in the same JS model. To our knowledge, this is the first time that the three justice constructs, POS and OP are used to predict JS in the same model.

Similarly, after controlling for the effects of the demographic variables and the main effects of the study variables, two of the hypothesized interaction terms were significant (OP*PRJ, OP*INJ), while OP*Dj was not (step 4 of Table 4). The two significant interaction terms accounted for additional 8.4% of the variance in JS. When this joint effect size is broken down, the size due to each interaction term is within the typical range of effect sizes for non-experimental studies, put at 0.01-0.03 (Chaplain, 1991; Campoux and Peters, 1987). The variance in JS contributed by the interaction terms would not have been reflected, if the interaction terms were excluded from the model. Their exclusion would have resulted in the overestimation of employees’ JS and subsequent wrong intervention by management.

The non significant direct relationship between OP and JS obtained in this study agrees with the results obtained by Parker et al. (1995), but conflicts with that of Witt et al. (2001) and Cropanzano et al. (1997). The latter studies were based on correlation analyses, while the former and our study were based on regression analyses. The result obtained here, is an indication that employees do not vary their level of JS based on perception of OP alone. The pattern of relationships obtained in this study highlight the importance of including the justice variables, POS and OP in any model of JS, so as to obtain relationships that would enhance managerial intervention. Since JS affects important organisational variables (Koys, 2001; Griffith et al., 2000; Vandenberg and Lance, 1992), error in its determination would have a multiplier effect that would eventually be detrimental to organisational productivity.
Limitations

The results obtained should be interpreted in the context of some limitations. The study was based on cross sectional data, which does not allow for causal inference. The presence of common method bias may not be completely ruled out. However, since the focus of this study is individual perception, the self-report methodology is well suited for it (Crampton and Wagner, 1994; Spector, 1994). The unrotated factor analyses done indicated that the first factor extracted only 13% of the variance in the study variables, compared to 57% extracted by the other five factors, which further confirms that common method bias is low.

CONCLUSION

The current study has shown the critical role OP plays in predicting JS. Individuals are constantly evaluating the benefits derivable from making investment into their work environment. In a work environment perceived as high in OP, individuals will find it very stressful, since they are not sure of what benefits would result from their investment into the environment and if the benefits will actually be given equitably and timely. Political environment is created by actions and inactions of management. Hence, there is need for managers to be conscious of their dealings with employees, so as to remove occasions that give rise to high perception of OP. In area of research, this study has demonstrated the benefits derivable from having the three perceptions of justice, POS and OP in the same model that predicts JS. Since JS affects other organisational outcomes that affect productivity, the only way to have accurate rating of employees JS is by looking at the joint effects of the variables. Further study can be carried out to determine the joint effects of the study variables on other work attitudes and outcomes.

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