The management and administration of people using remote work in the Covid-19 scenario

A gestão e administração de pessoas com utilização do trabalho remoto no cenário do Covid-19

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ABSTRACT
The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the economic market and labor contexts around the world. Brazil has suffered one of the worst social and governmental managements of the COVID-19 crisis, forcing workers and organizations to develop coping strategies. This environment can affect both well-being and job performance. Sustainable well-being at work refers to different patterns of relationships between performance and well-being. It may include eudaimonic (eg, Meaning of Work - MOW) or hedonic (eg, emotions) forms of well-being. This study tests the moderating role of job stress recovery on the relationship between flexibility i-ideals and patterns of sustainable well-being at work in Brazilian teleworkers. To this end, we emphasize i-deals as a tool that companies have put into practice to help and manage certain areas of their companies more assertively.

Keywords: Pandemic, Work, Remote, Flexibility.

1 INTRODUCTION

The 2021 outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic caused more than five million deaths worldwide. These are accompanied by disruption to all aspects of life, including economic and financial threats, job insecurity, and physical and mental health challenges such as stress and anxiety.

Governments have attempted to reduce community transmission using strong control policies (Helliwell et al., 2021). More than 21,000,000 cases of COVID-19 have been confirmed in Brazil, making it the third country with the most confirmed cases of COVID-19. More than 607,000 deaths have been reported, and the number is still growing. In addition to the cases of COVID, Brazilians have been experiencing the pandemic harshly. The stress impacted their well-being and performance differently, depending on their coping skills and how they deal with norms (GELFAND et al., 2021) and stress.

In the midst of this pandemic uncertainty in Brazil, organizations and teleworkers have developed strategies to deal with the problems, seeking to enhance or preserve their labor and personal resources. Brazilians have low trust in institutions and a collectivist and loose culture. Consequently, interpersonal relationships and individual experiences are especially salient features for predicting individual outcomes. Thus, organizations and remote jobs have established idiosyncratic agreements (i-deals), defined as "special conditions of employment negotiated between an individual worker and his or her employer" (ROSSEAU, 2005).

In addition, teleworkers developed personal strategies for off-the-job recovery from job stress by engaging in activities that lead to psychological distancing, relaxation, mastery, and control. Cognitive, emotional, and physical distancing after work are crucial predictors of employee health. These special conditions lead to increased well-being and performance.

The Happy-Productive Worker Thesis (HPWT) suggests that well-being and performance are related, but other researchers have shown that well-being and performance are not always aligned. This new proposition has been called Sustainable Well-Being at Work (PEIRÓ et al., 2014), and expands the HPWT study to cases where the previous thesis does not fit. The SWBW proposal includes four patterns of relationship between well-being and performance (PEIRÓ et al., 2014; 2015; 2019), creating four types of workers: (1) unhappy and unproductive, (2) happy and unproductive, (3) unhappy and productive, and (4) happy and productive (PEIRÓ et al., 2014). SWBW states that the happy-productive group is the most sustainable for the organization and the worker.

2 THE STRATEGY FOR MANAGEMENT IN SCHOOLS AND THE FIELD OF WORK

2.1 THE STRATEGY TO MANAGEMENT IN SCHOOLS FOR THE ENTREPRENEURIAL PROFILE

Education policies typically regulate school learning resources-standardizing curricula, monitoring student-teacher ratios, equalizing per-student spending, and providing common teacher training-but students' homes and neighbourhoods are much more disparate. The fact that most Canadian children spend more than 80% of their time out of school points to the power of non-school environments.

For most school-age Brazilians, the COVID-19 closures in 2020 created an amount of out-of-school time unprecedented in modern history. When classes resumed in mid-September 2020, most students had been out of school for six months.

Although most schools provided home learning platforms in the spring of 2020, their consistency, duration, and effectiveness are unclear. To provide a framework for weighing the possible impacts of being out of regular school for six months on children's academic performance, we next review the literature on four main sources of out-of-school time (STEWART et al., 2018).

The first important source is children's preschool years. School readiness is "an essential precursor to successful content-based learning" and positive interactions with peers and teachers (PERRY et al., 2018, p. 1544; DENHAM et al., 2013). Gaps in readiness have been attributed to systematic differences in children's early environments (HERTZMAN, 2009).

Children with low NSE are more likely to start school with lower levels of reading and math skills (DUNCAN et al., 2014) and are less "school ready" in the areas of physical health, social confidence, emotional maturity and language, and communication skills (JANUS et al., 2021).

Longitudinal studies find that early gaps in school readiness tend to persist as children progress through school, generating not only unequal outcomes in education, but also inequalities in health, employment, and judicial involvement (DUNCAN et al., 2007; PERRY, BRAREN, & BLAIR, 2018).

As companies grow progressively or increasingly competitive, schools have obviously resisted and continued to expand their services to strive and compete more efficiently; however, this can only be achieved by developing a highly skilled workforce.

Companies often have difficulty obtaining skilled workers. As a result, companies are compelled to seek talent in other nations, resulting in more cultural diversity in the workplace.

Although cultural diversity has numerous dimensions, it is seen as an essential component of human resources and a perpetual challenge for companies to deal with effectively.

Awais Bhatti et ai. (2014) suggested that if handled properly, cultural diversity can help companies gain a competitive advantage in local and international markets. Furthermore, Shen et al. (2009) noted that while diversity concerns differ by nation, gender disparity and multicultural strains are the most prevalent diversity challenges worldwide, particularly in China.

Multinational corporations around the world have a cross-cultural and multicultural workforce (SHEN et al., 2009). Without monitoring or regulating the work performance of a multicultural workforce, organizations will not be able to achieve their desired goals.

Optimizing the job performance of something like a culturally diverse team is a two-way process. To begin with, organizations with multiethnic or multicultural workforces must transition from domestic human resource management practices to global human resource management practices that support multicultural environments and promote climates of psychological diversity to improve employee job satisfaction (Cletus et al., 2018). Cletus et ai. (2018) stated that local human resource management trends and methods are unable to deal with the cultural variations that occur among ethnic backgrounds only by instigating and applying diversity initiatives (ALUWI and SAIHANI, 2013).

To develop a diverse environment, researchers have tried to emphasize which global human resource management performances and techniques are vital to increase job satisfaction and performance of multicultural workforces (BHATTI et al., 2019).

2.2 THE DIVERSITY

The way the world is inhabited and how you perceive the world is changing as a result of global diversity. Global diversity is visible; whether a corporation is global or not, it affects us all, explicitly or implicitly. Alliance or collaboration and multicultural teamwork are critical to an organization's success.

People must learn to perceive their diversity as strengths, not weaknesses, if they are to function successfully. What matters more than the labels you use is what they mean. Managing diversity is a realistic business approach that focuses on optimizing workforce efficiency, innovation, and dedication while meeting the requirements of diverse customer groups, yet is built on cultural transformation.

In basic words, diversity refers to "transcendence," or human characteristics that are distinct from our own and exist outside the groups to which we belong. There is a whole variety of characteristics that distinguish one person from another.

According to Agrawal (2012), diversity is defined as "being distinguished from others by having separate or different components or characteristics." This includes differences in age, culture, training, employment position, family structure, ethnicity, ethnic background, personal characteristics, gender, geographic heritage, religion, sexual preference, and work style in the workforce. The common views of employees about a set of human resource procedures geared toward identifying and embracing differences among individuals are called a diversity climate.

The diversity environment, in particular, includes shared organizational perceptions of how dedicated a company is to diversity-friendly management practices (e.g., diversity coaching, hiring and mentoring) and diverse leadership that values all demographic groups (CHOI, 2012).

Because affirmative action alone is insufficient to enable the growth of a diverse workforce, public organizations also support management and spending initiatives that promote the absorption of individuals with diverse backgrounds to increase efficiency and competitiveness (NAFF and KELLOUGH, 2003).

2.3 LABOR DIVERSITY RECRUITMENT

One of the most effective methods of helping job seekers see a company as a great place to work is through diversity recruitment. Diversity training programs are often designed to reduce inter-organizational disputes and promote competitiveness in a diverse workforce. In addition, by allowing the expression of original ideas and minimizing stereotypical attitudes, diversity-oriented leadership for representation of all parts of society helps workers contribute fully to organizational success.

Employees gain a shared sense of a supportive diversity environment when a company engages in diversity-friendly management practices (e.g., diversity training, hiring, and mentoring) and diversity leadership to appreciate all demographic groups (OBERFIELD, 2016).

To manage personnel, human resource professionals have used many strategies, such as recruitment and selection, training and development, performance appraisal, and compensation. Moreover, as corporate configurations evolve and the workforce becomes more diverse, the essence of these practices has changed. As a result, when applying any method or strategy in managing workers, human resource professionals have taken into account the diversity factor to be more effective in managing a heterogeneous workforce.

The human resources department deals with inequalities in recruitment, training, performance evaluation, and incentives (GOODMAN et al., 2003). Managers have constantly improved the status of equitable employment opportunities and driven innovation in multicultural workforces by applying human resource management toolkits. Training and development are important human resource tasks that help companies provide their employees with the necessary information, talents, and skills. Conventional literature on training and development has established that training and development activities help employees obtain the essential skills and capabilities to complete job tasks, and potentially improve overall job performance (BHATTI et al., 2019).

Traditional training and development processes, including recruitment and selection, may not be appropriate and beneficial for a multicultural workforce. Because multicultural employees differ in terms of personality, behavior, requirements, culture, and skills, training and development activities may differ from those used in traditional workplaces (BHATTI et al., 2019). As a result, companies must conduct a thorough assessment of their training needs and create training programs appropriately.

With that said, Roberson et al. (2003) stated that when working in a diverse workplace, human resource professionals must conduct a thorough training needs assessment and provide training programs that meet corporate objectives. Furthermore, Kossek et al. (2006) noted that while diversity training may cause employee disagreement in the short term, the outside trainer participating in diversity training can help achieve higher productivity in the long term. Furthermore, Aldoghan et al. (2019) recommend that managers and employees be aware of their biases and engage in ongoing diversity training, as solitary training sessions would not improve employee behavior.

2.4 EVALUATION AND PERFORMANCE SYSTEMS

Performance appraisal systems, to satisfy employees and job performance, have been the subject of much research in the past (Awais Bhatti et al., 2014). Transparent and fair performance appraisal systems, according to previous research, assist companies in employee satisfaction, which leads to better job performance. In this case, the point of contention is that a traditional appraisal method may not be as effective or appropriate when working with such a diverse workplace.

Management should create more customized performance appraisal methods that can meet the demands of multicultural workforces in the climate of diversity. The performance appraisal

committee, for example, should reflect all ethnicities, nationalities, and age groups in the organization. In this context Kossek et al. (2006) advise that minorities be involved in the committee that evaluates, selects, and promotes individuals to properly execute the performance appraisal method in a diverse workforce. In addition, rather than focusing on personality, the evaluation language should focus on performance.

Studies have examined the link between job satisfaction and job performance in the past, but the results were conflicting, leaving the relationship between these two factors unclear. According to Yang and Hwang (2014), only a small amount of research has looked at the link between job happiness and job performance. Various individual elements that affect job satisfaction may explain the conflicting results. Although previous research has shown that job happiness is a key factor affecting job performance, human resource professionals are still trying to figure out what role job satisfaction plays in the success of multicultural workforces. Nolan (2012) stated that globalization has significantly altered the aspects of work for employees, presenting a difficult opportunity for the management team seeking to improve employee job satisfaction.

According to Awais Bhatti et al. (2014), no previous research has focused on the importance of diverse climates in multicultural contexts. To fill this gap, this research can explain how various human resource strategies, such as cross-cultural training and employee performance evaluation, can impact diverse climates. They evaluated faculty members' performance in response to various human resource practices, such as training and performance appraisal systems, but could not assess the impact of human resource practices in shaping diversity climate. In addition, it was suggested that job satisfaction be explored as a mediator between human resource practices and diversity climates.

Thus, based on the analogy made in previous segments of the introduction on training and development of diverse workforce, performance appraisal of a diverse workforce, job satisfaction and diversity climate in a diverse workforce, some questions were raised such as: Do human resource practices have any connection with diversity climate? and Does job satisfaction have any role to play in forming the connection between human resource practices and diverse climates? This paper attempted to address these questions by assessing the degree of association between human resource practices and diversity climate, along with an exploration of the link of job satisfaction between them.

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3 DEVELOPMENT

3.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT

As the number of diverse employees in the public sector grows, academics and practitioners in public administration are becoming more interested in the aspects of employment structure that influence work-related consequences. The relationship between diversity programs and organizational success is particularly intriguing (Choi and Rainey, 2013).

Scholars believe that a highly diverse workforce is detrimental to productivity because of serious relationship conflicts caused by differences among employees, according to social categorization theory. In comparison, it has been proposed, based on information/decision-making theory, that diversity can be a human capital resource of diverse viewpoints that increases decision quality and performance (Pitts et al., 2010). Employees' shared views of a set of human resource procedures geared toward identifying and embracing differences among individuals are called a diversity climate (Choi and Rainey, 2013). This diversity climate, in particular, includes shared organizational perceptions of how dedicated a company is to diversity-friendly management practices (e.g., multicultural training, hiring, and mentoring) and diversity management to appreciate all demographic groups. According to optimal distinctiveness theory, a person has competing but opposing needs: belonging and dissimilarity or uniqueness.

Individuals strive to achieve the highest levels of their identities by balancing these requirements. In other words, while social categorization theory or information/decision-making theory emphasize a sense of belonging and uniqueness, optimal distinctive theory states that individuals achieve an optimal amount of inclusion by balancing two competing requirements (Hornsey and Jetten, 2004). This shows that whether the organization's culture exhibits an adequate commitment to diversity *through* inclusion of all employees, regardless of socioeconomic category, is a vital aspect of successful diversity management (Shore et al., 2010). These theories have provided the basis for the importance of diversity climate in workforce diversity management.

Blau established the social exchange theory, stating that when companies adopt human resource practices, workers feel that their company cares about employees (Blau, 1964), then they acquire favorable attitudes toward their jobs, which leads to job satisfaction (Allen et al., 2003).

Therefore, Andreassi emphasized the need for studies to clarify why human resource management techniques affect the level of job satisfaction in a multicultural environment (Karin Andreassi et al., 2014).

Personal disparities in sense of accomplishment may be due to personal qualities or cultural variations. As a result, when companies deal with diverse workforces, assessing job satisfaction and performance becomes more complicated. For example, Lim and Ling (2012) argues that when companies use the best selection and recruitment methods, workers perceive that the company is dedicated to providing equal opportunities, resulting in employee happiness. Moreover, as the company recruits and selects the best candidates, these workers perform better in the workplace. Similarly, providing training and development opportunities makes employees feel that the company cares about their professional development, which leads to higher job satisfaction. Therefore, based on social exchange theory, job satisfaction could mediate between the training and development of a diverse workforce and the evaluation of the workforce to the diversity climate.

3.2 TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT, PERFORMANCE EVALUATION, AND WORKFORCE DIVERSITY CLIMATE

Kossek et al. (2006) noted that while diversity training may cause employee disagreement in the short term, the outside trainer participating in diversity training can help achieve higher productivity in the long term.

Performance appraisal systems, employee job satisfaction and job performance have been the subject of much research in the past. Fair and transparent performance appraisal systems, according to previous research, help companies to satisfy their employees, which leads to better job performance. In this case, the source of the conflict is that a traditional appraisal method may not be as effective or appropriate when working with such a diverse workforce. Companies must establish more customized performance appraisal methods that can meet the demands of multicultural workforces in a diverse environment. The performance appraisal committee (Bhatti et al., 2019). In this context, Abidi et al. (2017) advise that minorities be involved in the committee that evaluates, selects, and promotes individuals to properly execute the performance evaluation method in a diverse workforce.

Also, instead of focusing on personality, the evaluation language should focus on performance.

According to Yang and Hwang (2014), only a small amount of research has examined the link between job happiness and job performance. Different individual components affecting job satisfaction may explain the conflicting results.

Although previous studies have also shown that job satisfaction seems to be a key factor affecting job performance, human resource professionals are still trying to find out what role job satisfaction plays in the success of multicultural workforces (Biswas and Varma, 2012). Biswas and Varma (2012) stated that globalization has significantly changed the type of work for workers, presenting a difficult opportunity for management seeking to improve worker job satisfaction. Workers develop these opinions based on organizational policies, processes, and workplace conditions, but opinions about the value of diversity in the workplace may differ from one worker to another. Workplace diversity policies and programs, according to Jin et al. (2017) , play an essential role in improving the diversity climate.

The human resources department must actively participate in building an inclusive business environment and effectively managing diversity concerns in this regard. Employee perceptions of diversity and prejudice in the workplace, according to, create a diverse atmosphere.

Madera et al. (2016) stated that previous studies had overlooked the importance of examining a good diverse atmosphere and happiness at work. Furthermore, McKay et al. (2010) concluded that studies have begun to show the benefits of a positive diversity atmosphere, such as increased job satisfaction and organizational dedication. Furthermore, Kim et al. (2015) argues that when employees believe that organizational policies and procedures apply equally to all workers, regardless of gender, language, color, or ethnicity, their organizational commitment and job satisfaction increase. Employees generally expect organizations to care about employee development and growth and also provide a diverse environment that sends a message to employees that their company is impartial and concerned about their well-being (Greening and Turban, 2000).

As a result, it can be argued that workers are satisfied with their jobs when companies create a psychologically diverse atmosphere. When it comes to diversity management, people are more satisfied with their jobs when they believe that their company values diversity and avoids bias. Similarly, when multicultural employees believe that their employer is committed to eliminating bias, promoting diversity, and caring for their well-being, growth, and development, they are more satisfied with their jobs, which leads to better job performance (McKay et al., 2010).

3.3 WELL-BEING IN THE WORK ENVIRONMENT

The global pandemic situation has been difficult; however, the situation in Brazil has been much worse. In this environment, organizations and teleworkers have aspired to develop sustainable positive relationships to maintain the synergy between well-being and performance necessary for individual and organizational outcomes that lead to high performing teleworkers.

Worker well-being and performance have long been studied in management research and practice. In short, happy workers perform more efficiently than unhappy workers; this is called the Happy and Productive Worker Thesis (HPWT). However, most studies have published only positive relationships and neglected negative or zero relationships. The sustainable well-being at work (SWBW) thesis, proposed by Peiró et al. (2014), emerged from HPWT (Wright et al., 2007) and expanded it in several ways (Peiró et al., 2021). First, it considers that the relationship between well-being and performance is more complex than a linear relationship. Second, this relationship is perhaps measurement dependent. Well-being is primarily measured by hedonic well-being (e.g., happiness, positive emotions, job satisfaction); however, other operationalizations can be used, for example, eudaimonic well-being (e.g., Meaning of Work) (Peiró et al., 2021). Third, they suggest that both constructs are longitudinally synergistic, which may have two interpretations: (1) well-being and job performance show an enduring symbiosis, or (2) they reinforce each other, contributing to an upward spiral of well-being and performance.

The SWBW identified four patterns considering workers' behaviors: happy-productive, happy-improductive, unhappy-productive, and unhappy-improductive. Previous results in the pandemic context supported these four patterns (Kelly et al., 2020). Since SWBW is derived from HPWT, we will use happiness as a synonym for well-being. In addition, we expect workers to fluctuate between these patterns over time. For example, when a PhD student is writing a paper, he will feel unhappy but productive for a period until the paper is published, and he will feel happy and productive. The problem arises when a misaligned pattern continues over a long term.

3.4 THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS OF OFFERS TO EMPLOYEES

Maintaining the outputs of organizations in many sectors (e.g. energy, food, education) is necessary to preserve life, public safety, and the basic functioning of society. Brazilian organizations and employees have developed individual conditions for teleworkers, trying to maintain their outputs via i-deals. These are voluntary agreements between employer and employee that, according to a meta-analysis, benefit both. I-deals also benefit organizations because they allow employees to obtain arrangements that can motivate and accommodate their

unique situations (Bal and Rosseau, 2015), increasing or maintaining performance. Although i-deals appear to contribute to roductivity and higher customer satisfaction, this relationship is only partially supported (Kelly et al., 2020).

I-deals benefit the employee by reducing their emotional exhaustion and increasing their performance, measured as customer satisfaction. In particular, i-deals benefit knowledge employees because their performance depends on cognitive processes that can be affected by negative emotions, which may be especially relevant in the stressful context of COVID-19. I-deals allow employees to cope with role stress, workload, and work pressure. They can also contribute to the development of positive affect; for example, empirical research has found that i-deals have increased employee job satisfaction.

The three most common forms of i-deals are development, flexibility, and workload reduction. For this paper, we will focus on flexibility i-deals, which are related to working hours. This type of i-deal is prevalent in organizations and has a strong potential to influence employees. Due to the fast-paced pandemic and home invasion of their work tasks, flexibility i-deals should be addressed to help workers perform better in their work and private lives (Kelly et al., 2020) and increase well-being. Flexibility i-deals will likely provide a better work-life balance, bringing more personal energy to their different roles.

Flexibility i-deals offer workers the opportunity to fit their jobs, expand their action repertoires, become more focused, and support others. Based on this, i-deals flexibility could be considered a resource to address the pandemic stressful environment in Brazil, helping to develop and maintain high levels of performance and well-being, i.e., promote sustainable well-being at work. Supportive management and flexibility at work (e.g. flexible working hours) were important antecedents of well-being during the pandemic. Workers value how and when to work more than ever before. There is some evidence that i-deals of flexibility were established by some teleworkers in the pandemic environment in Brazil (Mishima-Santos et al., 2021).

I-deals represent the Human Resource Management system (Hornung et al., 2008) that questions the "one size fits all" approach. Pandemic is a perfect motivation for managers to implement them, considering the need for accommodation to regulate work content and conditions (Bal and Vossaert, 2019). Although flexibility i-deals show inconclusive results regarding performance (Hornung et al., 2008), the results came from a different context that cannot be generalized. Flexibility i-deals decrease stress (as an example, emotional exhaustion (Bal and Boehm, 2019) and improve well-being and performance because teleworkers can manage their

personal and professional demands. Thus, flexibility i-deals have the potential to improve SWBW during the Brazilian pandemic environment.

2.5 RECOVERY AS A RESOURCE FOR THE WORKER

Recovery from work is a process by which individual functional systems acquired during a stressful experience return to their pre-stressor levels. During the pandemic outbreak, having the opportunity to recover from work stress was a critical personal resource that could help employees be healthy and efficient.

Recovery as a psychological construct was operationalized (Sonnentag and Fritz, 2007) into four recovery experiences: psychological detachment from work, relaxation, mastery, and control.

Recovery is elicited by the rehabilitation process, a specific subjective experience in leisure or sleep (De Jonge, 2020). It does not refer to any specific strategy; each person will experience a different psychological process through a specific strategy. Thus, psychological detachment-oriented activities involve leaving work behind in psychological terms (e.g., physical exercise or social relationships); relaxation-oriented experiences are often associated with relaxation-oriented activities (e.g., walking or reading a book); mastery-oriented activities support the recovery process by increasing new resources, such as challenges and learning opportunities in domains other than work (e.g., learning a new language); and control-oriented activities are related to the ability to choose an action from a range of options (e.g., choosing leisure experiences) (Sonnentag, 2018; De Jonge, 2020). Recovery can be conceptualized as the opposite of the deformation process (Quinones et al., 2017).

One can make several recommendations for future research based on the limitations of this study. One limitation of this study was the sample of possible companies on how they are interacting with their employees and management.

The companies see the need to modify their way of working, changing their dynamics, their know-how, pertinent training, sampling the community, research receiving feedback from society and specialists, thus obtaining standards of excellence and the trust of their consumers.

The future researcher can conduct several case studies to explore the mutation of large and small companies in a larger sample of companies from different areas to compare and contrast with other segments, thus giving mechanisms for organizations, companies to be able to use remote work as a fundamental way nowadays for work performance.

3 CONCLUSION

Reduced well-being and performance can be described as the lack of individual resources that can be restored during recovery (Virtanen et al., 2020). Along these lines, Resource Conservation Theory (COR) assumed that people struggle to obtain, retain, and protect their resources. Resources can be external entities, such as objects or financial assets (i.e., houses, cars, clothes, food) or internal attributes, such as personal characteristics or energies.

Stress threatens these internal resources and can consequently impair health and well-being. COR theory helped explain the relevance of stress recovery in the Brazilian pandemic context, as well as in other contexts (Ménard et al., 2021), because maintaining personal resources can moderate the relationship between labor resources (i-deals) and sustainable standards, catalyzing the relationship.

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