

Application of Qualitative Management Techniques in Administrative and Academic Decision Making at Higher Secondary Level in Punjab

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Abstract

The purpose of the present research was to study the application of qualitative management techniques in administrative and academic decision making at higher secondary level in Punjab. The present study was a kind of exploratory and descriptive research. By using stratified random sampling technique, (197) principals of public higher secondary schools' were selected as a sample. A self developed questionnaire was used to collect data. Data were analyzed by performing independent sample t-test. The findings of the study showed that there was no significant difference between over all male and female Principals' extent of the use of qualitative decision making techniques in planning, directing and as well as in administrative and academic decision making process. However, there found to be difference between over all male and female Principals extent of the use of qualitative decision making techniques in organizing process. Trainings may be launched to improve the use of decision making techniques.

Key Words: Qualitative Management Techniques, Decision Making, Planning, Directing, Higher Secondary Level.

Introduction

Education is an integral force in a society. Though it has many faceted aims and objectives, the significant aim is to develop human resources in schools, colleges and universities. It provides an apprenticeship for life as an accelerating agent. It aims to refine one's sensitivities' and perceptions that contribute to national solidarity, scientific attitude and independence of thoughts and also to help one hold a firm belief in achieving the chosen goals. All this is possible with efficient management system. Now, management can be considered as social process which is formulated to ensure participation, cooperation, intrusion and involvement of all the concerned for the achievement of predestined objectives. Here all the supervisors, administrators and executives are engaged in various fields' activities. The purpose of all management is to arrive at decision, leading to improve productivity and better distribution of amenities and services. The scientific management revolution of the early 1900s provided the foundation for a behavioral science approach in organizations. Theoretical formulations in behavioral science (qualitative studies), integrated concepts and propositions drawn from psychology, sociology, political science, and economics provide an interdisciplinary framework that influences the behavior of the members of organizations (Gibson, Ivancevich & Donnelly, 1991).

Now, managers are charged with the responsibility of taking actions that will make it possible for the individuals to make their best contributions to group objectives. Thus, management applies to small and large organizations, to profit and non-for-profit enterprises, to manufacturing as well as service industries. However, a given situation may differ considerably among various levels in an organization or various types of enterprises. The scope of authority held may vary and the types of problems dealt with, may be considerably different but, all managers obtain results by establishing an environment for effective group endeavor. The manager is, therefore, the dynamic, life-giving element in every business. Without the leadership of the manager, resources

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of production remain mere resources and never become production. In a competitive economy, the quality and performance of the managers determine the success of a business; indeed, they determine its survival.

Educational management can also be considered as an area of study and practice which deals with all the operations of educational organization. The process of deciding the aims of education is the core and centralized theme of educational management. In this way, the basic objective of educational management is to facilitate the educational organizations or the institutions to materialize its functions having maximum output. The major purposes of educational management are; (1) to make use of appropriate material for valuable development of human qualities, and (2) to carry out the programmes and activities for the institution so that its objectives may be fulfilled. Hence, the quality of any organization is directly linked with the efficiency and competence of its organizational members, so the heads of educational institutions can play vital role in the expansion of qualitative education in Pakistan. On the other hand, effective and efficient management is only possible if the manager is well acquainted with management techniques. Through managerial skills the managers can handle managerial tasks at institution level. These managerial tasks include; office management, financial management and establishment of good working relationship with the society members. These managerial tasks can be handled effectively by suitable and proper training in the field of management, but due to this managerial incompetence the performance and efficiency of the heads of the schools and educational quality in our institutions is not at desired level.

National Education Policy (2009) highlighted that educational management needs professional standards and experts at various levels, particularly at institutional level because the educational managers are not fully prepared to handle the educational and managerial tasks in professional ways. Also, decision making is an important part of a manager's duties because the decision of a manager is base to implement the programs or the decisions of a manager will be a framework to be organization activity. Decision-making research has a central place in economics, psychology, and organization theory. Since the 1950s, scholars from these fields have thoroughly researched how individuals and organizations make decisions. In escaping the "old fashioned utilitarian psychology" of the 19th century ([Sugden, 1991](#)), economists developed axioms for rational decision making ([Savage, 1954](#) & [von Neumann and Morgenstern, 1947](#)).

The implementation of decision-making result may be effective and easier if a manager is involved in the decision-making process directly. According to Hammer and Schmidt (1977) there are four variables that influence the decision making in an organization that's (1) organizational knowledge; (2) interpersonal relationships; (3) organizational commitment; and (4) leadership effectiveness. These four factors can influence individually and simultaneously. In the same context, [Adair \(2007\)](#) has described five steps in making decision, which are define the goals; collecting relevant data; producing good choices; making the decision; implementing the decision; and evaluating the decision. So, school as an organization in education needs to apply managerial decision to achieve its goals. Adair (2007) further says that decision making is to decide what action is taken, usually involves any choices. The good decision maker identifies the benefits and risks of each options, using any evidence that is available to determine the weight of choice logically and then to decide.

Principal is the educational leader who has major role in managing the school, so, he should operate the school, based on organizational principles because the principal is also a manager. The empirical study finds out that many of principals do not perform basic tasks and functions as expected by rules and regulations and as well as theories of educational management in decision making. Carudin (2011) provided evidence that generally, the principals' performance of state in decisions making was in middle category (61% of the ideal score).

Now, on the other hands, in Pakistan when we see the promotion criteria of the heads of educational institutions, it is very strange one. Here the heads of institutions are promoted on seniority basis among the secondary school teachers. Hence after promotion, no proper management training is imparted to enhance their required managerial skills. [Khan \(2004\)](#) says that Pakistan deficits a mechanism for imparting school heads proper management training before their promotion to principal-ship. But the successive government has paid somewhat concentration to school governance and management by formulating educational policies (Memeon, 2000). Furthermore, [USAID report \(2006\)](#) has also indicated that the standards of education provided by public sector in Pakistan have been recorded to be poor due to non-governance and poor management.

[Armides \(2000\)](#) adds that the school heads have to play three basic roles essentially such as interpersonal, informational and decisional role. Williams and Cummings (2005) comment, “Head teachers who are the front-line actors in school improvement and development programs never receive any formal training in the developing countries; even in their new leadership roles, they do not have extensive management training”. They further add that mostly the teachers are imparted training at the beginning of their career but the heads of the institutions are never given such kind of training that could help them for their managerial functioning. Although the professional training and development activities are necessary for the quality education, yet there seems no such means in Pakistan those could ensure enhancement of good governance at school level. That is why the school leaders are failing to play an effective role in enhancing the quality of education. [Quraishi and Khatoon \(2008\)](#) in their study found that the heads of the secondary school need training particularly in financial management, IT skills, guidance and counseling, co- curricular activities and management techniques and skills.

Taking into consideration, it comes to know that the managerial activities have become very complex due to knowledge explosion and heavy demands from the society to cope with this technological race. So, it is necessary to make right kind of decision to be safe from grave losses. It does not matter whether it is some manufacturing unit or services rendering agency but the available resources must be utilized to get maximum benefits in an efficient manner.

Consequently, effective management is imperative for qualitative use of decision-making techniques in an effective manner in the field of educational administration at school level. As [Scott and Webber \(2008\)](#) say that the schools’ principals govern today differ from than those of prior schools having lot of complex nature of responsibilities and challenges they have to face. In these circumstances, there is dire need to apply qualitative management techniques for decision making so that the probability of decision making may be increased for the betterment of the entire organizations.

Now, performing their managerial tasks, the managers can be assisted to great extent if they are well aware with the modern management techniques. Kandasmy and Blaton (2004) described that during the recruitment process of head teachers stress is given towards the qualification and teaching experience instead of management techniques and human relation skills. Similarly, [Harber and Davies \(2004\)](#) are of the opinion that professional development programmes of schools in developing countries must be harmonious with the needs of these countries and there is dire need for empirical work to assess these needs. This can only be done through research which is still neglected area.

In view of the above, it seems indispensable that the school leaders must make ready themselves with the modern management techniques and IT skills that are necessary to get maximum output with the limited available resources for an organization. So, it is the only way by which the schools may be turned into effective schools. [Crow, Lumby and Pashiardis \(2008\)](#) say that in schools’ scenario the responsibility of initiating and supporting change and also providing direction for the application of changes relies on the heads of the school leaders. So, judicious use of these management techniques for decision making would assist the organization in resolving intricate problems well in time, with greater accuracy and precision.

Now a day, a lot of qualitative management techniques are available to solve the managerial problems such as brain storming; check list; job enrichment /enhancement; management by objectives; management information system; Nominal group technique; theory X&Y and time management etc. The use of the above-mentioned techniques, not only help the managers to become clearer about his target objectives but also provide information to become most advantageous about their decision making. These management techniques are based on the manager’s personal experience and judgment. These include the manager’s intellectual and personal abilities to understand the behavioral techniques to solve the problems.

Now, a manager or administrator who possesses a sound knowledge of the techniques of management decision making procedures is much in better position to use and put into practice the qualitative sources of information and choices the alternative techniques to make best possible decision for the benefits of the organization.

Looking at the higher secondary schools’ situation in Pakistan, it seems that the heads of higher secondary schools have to manage at least three aspects of school i.e. academic, finance, over all general administration

and academic management. Academic management includes handling the teachers and students learning activities. Financial management includes managing different funding stream received from government; the fee collected from the students while the general administration is responsible and answerable for reporting to local administrative and governing bodies i.e. the decentralized educational offices at local levels.

Now, the academic management may be considered the familiar tasks among the head teachers but to manage the teachers within the institutions is considered complex task due to some certain reasons such as; scarcity of some teachers in particular subject; difficult working conditions and complex governing structure of managing teachers because math and science teachers are usually have greater demand and are normally less available than the arts teachers.

Financial management deals with the utilization of allocated funds either received from the government or from the internal resources of the school, prioritizing the needs of the institution. Budgeting the available funds and reporting the expenditure details to the quarter concerned. But very few schools' heads have competence and training in this area. Financial management can be handled effectively by finding alternative sources of funding to materialize the basic needs of the schools and by improving the use and reporting of the existing funds in a proper manner. [Mulkeen \(2005\)](#) says, "The areas in which the principals need further training include information technology, financial management, evaluation, strategic planning and human resource management".

For school improvement, the problem is not only the non-availability of funds but the lack of vision in financial management of schools often leads to imbalance in the allocation and proper utilization of resources. [Chapman \(2000\)](#) says, "Even if school managers or heads in Pakistan have availability of resources, they would not know how to best utilize these resources". In the same context, [Rizvi \(2008\)](#) further adds, "School heads in Pakistan do not like to throw away "Organizational model" i.e. top down model which they have been following for a long time and the reason is that they are doubtful that this model would alter their power and authority. This attitude of the head teachers limits their role to only as the administrative one.

The reason behind this flaw in Pakistan is that most of the head teachers are appointed on seniority basis having only teaching experience, a little knowledge of vision development; lack of knowledge in participative decision making; sharing and delegation of powers; assessment and evaluation; parents involvement and community participation and in addition to this other educational and leadership issues. Commenting on the above leadership and management situation of education at school level, [Kandasmay and Blaton \(2004\)](#) argue that the head of schools in Pakistan are deficient of administrative and management skills since school management is not taught at B.A, Masters (education) levels and no proper system of providing management training exists.

Although, the government has made compulsory induction training for the heads of the schools as well as for the newly inducted teachers, but this training does not encompasses all the needs of the school management, the head teachers have to face practically during their managerial functions instead it concentrates on the rules of reporting to the quarter concerned. [Mulkeen \(2005\)](#) says, "Most of the principals do not possess degrees in educational management and leadership. Rather, once they become principal, they may participate in an in-service or distance education workshop to develop skills in needed areas. These workshops tend to focus on administration and management (e.g. accountability, resource management and record keeping)". [Memon \(2000\)](#) further adds that school leaders in Pakistan are not acquainted with management skills, so, they seem raw handed in improving their schools. Similarly, [Kamla \(2009\)](#) says, "Much research has demonstrated that the quality of education depend primarily on the way schools are managed, more than on the abundance of the available resources, and the capacity of the schools to improve teaching and learning is strongly influenced by the quality of leadership provided by the head teachers".

Now, the leaders play very crucial role in driving innovative changes in the organization but this tendency seems minimal in the developing countries including Pakistan. [Oplatka \(2004\)](#) says that the school heads in western countries struggle hard for innovative changes, while the school heads in developing countries adopt conservative stances that make them less inclined to initiate innovations.

The right kind of decision making requires sound information and data to provide a base for meaningful decisions, involving choice of the best action from a number of alternatives. These responsibilities include the

quality problems which are being faced by the higher secondary schools, i.e. physical environment, infrastructure, curricula and provision of relevant teaching aids to enhance the teaching / learning process. All of the above problems ultimately affect the product- students' achievement both morally as well as academically, which is considered as an asset for nation.

The work in the field of management and its evaluation is still lagging behind in Pakistan. A thorough analysis of data base of higher education commission (HEC) of Pakistan indicates that among 154 HEC recognized institutions only seven institutions (three private and four public sector institutions) offer programmes in management and administration. But the quality of services and skills provided by these institutions is not up to the mark. Being the administrator of educational organization, the researcher is aware of the fact that the government is spending a reasonable amount on education but there seems no significant outcome. After analyzing the effects of the qualitative management techniques of decision making used in educational institutions, it is essential to see, the consequences of the techniques being used. Some researches in this sector have been already conducted but little has been investigated about the behavioral techniques (qualitative techniques).

Although the importance and impact of using these techniques for enhancing decision process in industrial process and other types of organizations such as educational institutions have been emphasized in the literature, but definite research on the use and application of qualitative decision-making techniques is nonexistent or of less volume relative to other management aspects. The literature review and existing practices in our educational institutions indicate that management techniques used in our educational institutions are usually based on judgmental basis or rational thinking but not on sound reasoning. So, Chapman (2000) in his study found that the administrators in developing countries neither understand the meaning of efficiency nor know about how to maintain it and they have deficiency of strong decisive powers to make positive changes.

So, it is the need of time that management techniques used in our educational institutions should be assessed for better out comes. So, suggesting the remedy of the above situation, Dejeaghre, William and Keyeyune (2008) pointed out that one major rationale of focusing head teachers training like other strategies for improving educational quality is that the training has potential effects and make it convenient to use the available resources in an efficient manner.

In this way this kind of research activity is new one particularly in Pakistan. So, the researcher decided to find the familiarity and application of qualitative techniques of management in administrative and academic decision making at higher secondary level in Pakistan.

Statement of the Problem

This study was carried out to find the degree of familiarity and application of qualitative techniques of management in administrative and academic decision making at higher secondary level. These qualitative techniques were selected from the related literature. These include; brain storming; check list; job enrichment /enhancement; management by objectives; management information system; Nominal group technique; theory X &Y and time management.

It is the need of hour that in order to cope with the complex organizational process the administrators/managers must know the modern management techniques for appropriate and right kind of decision making. The art of dealing effectively with other people has been and will remain the basic managerial function in management process. No doubt that human relation skill is also very important but, they are not only sufficient for handling the complex organizations like educational organization. In addition, technical competence is also essential to deal with the complex nature of problems. It is assumed that these complex nature problems can be handled effectively by successful use of modern management techniques. If limited resources are available, then managerial techniques can play a crucial role in handling the information required to execute an effective and successful administrative system by planning, directing, reporting and controlling which is very vital need of today for our educational institutions.

Objectives of the Study

The underneath objectives were formulated for the present study;

- i. To find the degree of familiarity of principals for using qualitative management techniques at higher secondary level.
- ii. To find out the extent to which principals of schools at higher secondary level use qualitative management techniques in planning, organizing, directing and controlling activities at higher secondary level.
- iii. To find the extent to which principals of schools at higher secondary level use qualitative management techniques in administrative and academic decision making at higher secondary level.
- iv. To explore the difficulties faced by the principals of schools at higher secondary level in using qualitative management decision making techniques.

Research Hypotheses

Based upon the objectives formulated, the following hypotheses had been formed.

- i. H₁: There is no significant difference between male and female Principals’ degree of familiarity of using qualitative decision-making techniques at higher secondary level.
- ii. H₂: There is no significance difference between male and female principals’ extent of use of qualitative management decision making techniques in planning process at higher secondary level.
- iii. H₃: There is no significance difference between male and female principals’ extent of use of qualitative management decision making techniques in organizing process at higher secondary level.
- iv. H₄: There is no significance difference between male and female principals’ extent of use of qualitative management decision making techniques in directing process at higher secondary level.
- v. H₅: There is no significance difference between male and female principals’ extent of use of qualitative management decision making techniques in controlling process at higher secondary level.
- vi. H₆: There is no significance difference between male and female principals’ extent of use of qualitative management techniques in administrative and academic decision-making process at higher secondary level.

Research Methodology

The stratified random sampling technique was used for the selection of representative sample for the present study. There were nine Administrative Divisions in the Punjab province. Each division was taken as one stratum. From each stratum (administrative division), 30% higher secondary schools were selected through random sampling. Out of 30% selected schools, 50% were male government higher secondary schools and 50% were female government higher secondary schools. So, the (197) Govt. higher schools’ principals (male& female) were selected by stratified random sampling technique from the target population of (670) higher secondary schools (male & female). The researcher self-developed questionnaire having variety of questions like; tabular form; likert scale items and open-ended questions format was used to collect data. The questionnaire face and content validity were established by the panel of experts in the relevant field area. A Cronbach’s alpha reliability of 0.78 was obtained for the questionnaire during pilot study on 35 principals. The questionnaire was self-administered by the researcher through direct contact with the sampled population. The return rate was encouraging recorded to be 80%.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

The data regarding the hypothesis was analyzed using independent sample t-test. The detail is given below;

Table 1. Degree of Familiarity’ of Using Qualitative Decision-Making Techniques

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Dev	T – Value	Significance
Male	85	2.9373	0.33309	0.834	0.180
Female	77	2.8889	0.40425		

The above table shows that the t-value = 0.834 is no significant as p-value = 0.180 > $\alpha = 0.05$. It means the null hypothesis “There is no significant difference between male and female Principals’ degree of familiarity of using qualitative decision-making techniques at higher secondary level” is accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference between male and female Principals’ degree of familiarity with using qualitative decision-making techniques at higher secondary level. Furthermore, this table represents that Mean score of male principals’ regarding degree of familiarity, using qualitative decision-making techniques (2.94) is better than female principals’ regarding degree of familiarity, using qualitative decision-making techniques (2.89).

Table 2. Extent of Use of Qualitative Management Decision Making Techniques in Planning Process

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Dev	T – Value	Significance
Male	85	2.8183	0.38751	0.120	0.749
Female	77	2.8110	0.38912		

The above table shows that the t-value = 0.120 is no significant as p-value = 0.749 > $\alpha = 0.05$. It means the null hypothesis “There is no significant difference between male and female Principals’ extent of using qualitative decision-making techniques in planning process at higher secondary level” is accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference between male and female Principals’ extent of using qualitative decision-making techniques in planning process at higher secondary level. Furthermore, this table represents that Mean score of male principals’ regarding extent of using qualitative decision-making techniques in planning process (2.82) is better than female principals’ extent of using qualitative decision-making techniques in planning process (2.81).

Table 3: Extent of Use of Qualitative Management Decision Making Techniques in Organizing Process

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Dev	T – Value	Significance
Male	85	3.0680	0.40175	3.329	0.066
Female	77	2.8369	0.47401		

The above table shows that the t-value = 3.329 is no significant as p-value = 0.066 > $\alpha = 0.05$. It means the null hypothesis “There is no significant difference between male and female Principals’ extent of using qualitative decision-making techniques in directing process at higher secondary level” is accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference between male and female Principals’ extent of using qualitative decision-making techniques in directing process at higher secondary level. Furthermore, this table represents that Mean score of male principals’ regarding extent of using qualitative decision-making techniques in directing process (3.07) is better than female principals’ extent of using qualitative decision-making techniques in directing process (2.81).

Table 4: Extent of Use of Qualitative Management Decision Making Techniques in Directing Process

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Dev	T – Value	Significance
Male	85	2.9307	0.40680	-2.567	0.740
Female	77	3.0866	0.36614		

The above table shows that the t-value = -2.567 is no significant as p-value = 0.740 > $\alpha = 0.05$. It means the null hypothesis “There is no significant difference between male and female Principals’ extent of using qualitative decision-making techniques in reporting process at higher secondary level” is accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference between male and female Principals’ extent of using qualitative decision-making techniques in reporting process at higher secondary level. Furthermore, this table represents that Mean score of male principals’ regarding extent of using qualitative decision-making techniques in reporting process (2.93) is lower than female principals’ extent of using qualitative decision-making techniques in reporting process (3.09).

Table 5. Extent of Use of Qualitative Management Decision Making Techniques in Controlling Process

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Dev	T – Value	Significance
Male	85	2.9830	0.31915	0.690	0.684
Female	77	2.9466	0.34933		

The above table shows that the t-value = 0.690 is no significant as p-value = 0.684 > $\alpha = 0.05$. It means the null hypothesis “There is no significant difference between male and female Principals’ extent of using qualitative decision-making techniques in controlling process at higher secondary level” is accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference between male and female Principals’ extent of using qualitative decision-making techniques in controlling process at higher secondary level. Furthermore, this table represents that Mean score of male principals’ regarding extent of using qualitative decision-making techniques in controlling process (2.98) is better than female principals’ extent of using qualitative decision-making techniques in controlling process (2.95).

Table 6: Extent of Use of Qualitative Management Techniques in Administrative and Academic Decision-Making Process

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Dev	T – Value	Significance
Male	85	2.8956	0.26802	-0.904	0.815
Female	77	2.8571	0.27240		

The above table shows that the t-value = -0.904 is no significant as p-value = 0.815 > $\alpha = 0.05$. It means the null hypothesis “There is no significant difference between male and female Principals’ extent of using qualitative and quantitative management techniques in academic and administrative decision making at higher secondary level” is accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference between male and female Principals’ extent of using qualitative and quantitative management techniques in academic and administrative decision making at higher secondary level. Furthermore this table represents that Mean score of male principals’ regarding extent of using qualitative and quantitative management techniques in academic and administrative decision making at higher secondary level (2.90) is greater to the mean score of female principals’ extent of using qualitative and quantitative management techniques in academic and administrative decision making at higher secondary level (2.88).

Conclusions

It was concluded that majority of the principals were somewhat familiar with ‘Brain storming’, ‘Management Information System and Check List. Also, it was reported by the principals that they were vaguely familiar with ‘Nominal group Techniques’, ‘Management by Objectives and Theory X&Y. Furthermore, there found to be no significant difference between male and female Principals’ degree of familiarity with qualitative decision-making techniques. Also, there found no significant difference between overall male and female Principals’ degree of familiarity of using qualitative decision-making techniques.

The results of the study showed that majority of the principals ‘usually use’ ‘Brain storming’, ‘Management Information system and Check List in their planning, organizing, directing, controlling and as well as in administrative and academic decision-making activities. Also, it was reported by the principals that they ‘rarely use’ ‘Nominal group Techniques’, ‘Management by Objectives and Theory X&Y in their planning, organizing, directing, controlling and as well as in administrative and academic decision-making activities. Furthermore, there found to be no significant difference between male and female Principals’ extent of using qualitative decision-making techniques, in planning, organizing, directing, controlling and as well as in administrative and academic decision-making process. Moreover, there found no significant difference between overall male and female Principals’ extent of use qualitative decision-making techniques, in planning, directing and as well as in administrative and academic decision-making process. However, there found difference

between overall male and female Principals' extent of use of qualitative decision-making techniques in organizing process.

Findings of this study indicate that majority of the principals reported that it was difficult for them to understand the decision-making techniques and apply them in decision making; lack of training in decision making techniques is difficulty in using management decision making techniques and they have paucity of time to analyze the real problems. Moreover, the other difficulties faced by the respondents in using qualitative management techniques in their decision making were; Political influence in implementing the decisions; Bureaucratic culture; interference of employee's union; Lack of efficient personnel; Group politics within the institution; Limitation of powers conferred to the heads of institutions.

The training should be launched to improve the use of decision making techniques; there should be compulsory management courses for the personnel involved in management process; to avoid political interference for top management posts, rule of law be followed; Islamic values be followed; there should be system of check and balance; there should be sufficient physical resources and human resources; there should be separate management cadre and to avoid the unnecessary transfer of the management personnel.

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