

Teaching-Related Paperwork: Examining Linkage to Occupational Stress of Public School Teachers in Primary Education

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Abstract

The multi-related print paperwork of teachers is insurmountable even with the integration of technologies and state-of-the-art devices. Electronic form of paperwork is also voluminous that contributes to the experienced stress of teachers. Hence, teachers desire for a degree of liberation from numerous printed-related tasks or electronic related paperwork. This study aimed to examine the links between teaching-related paperwork and occupational stress of the teachers. This study employed correlation research design. It involved all 106 teachers, but only 77 questionnaires were retrieved. Following the survey method, self-constructed and adapted questionnaires were used to gather the needed data. Frequency distribution, weighted mean, and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient served as Statistical treatments applied for this study. Results showed that the teachers exhibit very great extent teaching-related paperwork and low level of occupational stress. The analysis further revealed that there was a significant relationship between the variables. Hence, this study concluded that teachers' teaching-related paperwork contributes to their level of occupational stress. It is generally recommended that policy makers should evaluate and review the school teaching related-paperwork to lessen or reduce their requirements, conceptualize the paperwork according to the primary records on the Division Level, and set systematic schedules for submission of the paperwork requirements in sequential time frame.

Keywords: teaching-related paperwork, occupational stress, teachers, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

The multi-related print paperwork of teachers is insurmountable even with the integration of technologies and state-of-the-art devices. Teaching-related paperwork should be completed daily, with teachers devoting their personal time to it. That is why teaching is ranked as the most demanding career.

Presently, the teachers are now bombarded by massive module reproduction as reported by Malipot (2020) of Manila Bulletin, fifty-nine percent (59%) of the 22 million enrollees in public schools had chosen modular distance delivery as mode of their learning. At the same time, it was found in the study of Nemenzo (2018) that base on the results of teachers' Individual Performance and Evaluation Form (IPCRF), one of the problems in teaching and learning process is the difficulty of lesson planning preparation because of its time allocation, subject matter, lack of sleep, exhaustion and the learning of the learners. According to TRTEhe

Committee on Teachers' Work Final Report (2006), among the top 10 administrative tasks done by teachers, paperwork topped the list. Planning, grading, and recording are the different teaching-related paperwork done by the teachers (Jonson, Cappelloni, & Niesyn, 2013; Lane, Menzies, Bruhn & Crnobori, 2011). Teachers spend 36 minutes in grading, recording, analyzing student work and 30 minutes for lesson planning during school days and some teachers continue working until late nights and during weekend (Mayer & Phillips, 2012).

The current or relevant topics related to excessive paper workload of the teachers are teaching and nonteaching-related paperwork. The former includes planning, grading and recording (Lane et al. 2011) while the latter includes writing of reports (Shou, 2019), module reproduction, documents compilation, accomplish forms, photograph every move and demonstrations reports (Tomacruz, 2018). Added by Jonson et al (2013) that nonteaching-related paperwork are district forms, cumulative record cards, memos, and meeting agendas and minutes.

Occupational stress is the stress experienced by the teachers in work. Kaur (2011) exposed that teaching is one of the most stressful occupations in the world nowadays. The Health and Safety Executive revealed that 41.5% teachers claimed that they are 'highly stressed', while 58.5% were in 'low stressed' category, and 36% of teachers had felt the effects of stress all or most of the time.

Despite the researchers' interest in teachers' teaching-related paperwork, there are still gaps or deficiencies in understanding it. Many of past researches are about paperwork and stress, but they focus on other aspect such as Work-Related Stress and Teaching Performance of Teachers (Sarabia & Collantes, 2020), How the paperwork affects teachers (Rasmussen, 2003) and Paperwork in Special Education (PSeNCE, 2000). There is no research yet on the relationship between the extent of teaching-related paperwork and level of occupational stress. Though there are findings of some studies resulting that paperwork causes stress to the teachers (Thompson, Kootsikis & Shellenberger, 2014; Ingvarson, Kleinhenz, Beavis, Barwick, Carthy, & Wilkinson, 2005; Leithwood, 2006; Roxas, 2009).

Teachers suffered stress in their workplace due to some factors like dealing with paperwork. The reasons why teachers usually suffering stress could be explained through Person-Environment Fit Theory, proposed by French, Rodgers, and Cobb. The PE Fit model or theory explains that if the persons' ability, characteristics, and learning do not correspond with the demands of their working environment, the higher stress level they will experience (Kyriacou, 2000).

Thus, it is important to examine to what extent does teaching-related paperwork that influencing teachers' job and how it can affect to the occupational stress level experience by the teachers. Mountains of paperwork especially planning, grading and recording are done every day even nonteaching times and days are sacrificed to comply those paperwork. This study aimed to find out the link of paperwork and occupational stress of the public school teachers. It also determined the significant relationship between teaching-related paperwork and the occupational stress of the teachers.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed correlation research design. It involved all one hundred six (106) teachers in Romana C. Acharon Central Elementary School last 2016 but only seventy-seven (77) were retrieved. Following the survey method, self-constructed and adapted questionnaires were used to gather the needed data.

Context

The teaching-related paperwork of the teachers in Romana C. Acharon Central Elementary School in Calumpang, General Santos City was considered as a prevailing issue especially in lower grades. Instead of 35 learners every room, the classes of the school had an average class size of 58 learners. Teachers spent time checking, grading, and assessing learners' works aside from office tasks that they need to achieve.

Instrument

This study distributed two survey questionnaires, the tailored and adapted questionnaire. The tailored questionnaire is about the extent of teaching-related paperwork of the teachers with a reliability of 0.973 and validated by three master teachers with expertise relevant to the study. On the other hand, the other questionnaire was adapted from Roxas (2009) in her study "Stress Among Public Elementary School Teachers" which was used to measure the occupational stress that the teachers experienced in public schools.

Data Collection

This involved seventy-seven (77) teachers of Romana C. Acharon Central Elementary School at Calumpang, General Santos City in academic year 2015-2016. This was done through administering tailored and adapted questionnaire to gather data for this study.

Before the data gathering procedure, the researcher requested permission from the Principal of Upper Tumbler Elementary School II to pilot test the tailored questionnaire to thirty (30) employed teachers in the school. Upon approval of the principal, the researcher administered the questionnaires. The teachers were given enough completion time for the questionnaires.

After that, the researcher requested permission from the Principal of Romana Central Elementary School to conduct this study to all one hundred six (106) employed teachers in the school. Upon approval of the principal, the researcher administered the tailored and adapted questionnaires room to room during their nonteaching time such as vacant time, recess, noon break and timed them to 20 minutes. However, teachers requested to extend the allotted time in answering and retrieving the questionnaires at their convenience to avoid disturbances while some of the teachers gave certain time for their answers. The researcher spent four days in conducting the study to give enough time for the teachers to answer the questionnaires as they requested. However, out of one hundred six (106) teachers, only seventy-seven (77) papers were retrieved.

After the administration and retrieval of the questionnaires, the data had been computed, analyzed, and interpreted.

Analysis

After the administration and retrieval of the questionnaires, the data had been computed, analyzed, and interpreted. The statistical tools employed in the analysis were weighted mean and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The hypothesis was tested at 0.004 level of significance.

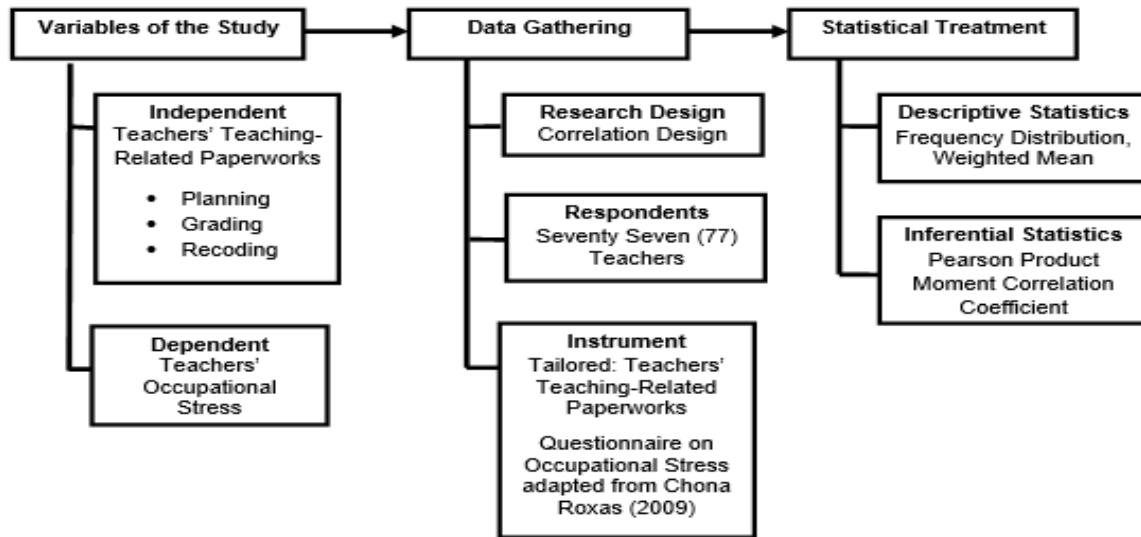


Figure 1. Research Design

RESULTS

Table 1 presents the extent of teachers' teaching-related paperwork in terms of planning, grading, and recording. The extent of teachers' teaching-related paperwork is presented in table 1. Relative to planning, the teachers always consider learning competencies of the learners in writing lesson plans ($M=4.58$) and write a well-organized lesson plan every day or weekly ($M=4.52$). Overall, the teaching-related paperwork in terms of planning obtained a mean of 4.44 described as always.

Table 1. Teaching-Related Paperwork of Public Elementary School Teachers

Indicator	WM	SD	Description	Verbal Interpretation
A. Planning				
1. I follow educational goals and objectives that best fit to the lesson plan.	4.48	.718	Always	Very Great Extent
2. I prepare instructional materials to create clarity of the lessons.	4.36	.724	Always	Very Great Extent
3. I write a well-organized lesson plan every day or weekly.	4.52	.736	Always	Very Great Extent

4. I consider learning competencies of the learners in writing lesson plans.	4.58	.656	Always	Very Great Extent
5. I submit lesson plans in advance to check it by the principal and/or instructional supervisor.	4.26	.801	Always	Very Great Extent
Mean	4.44	.605	Always	Very Great Extent
B. Grading				
6. I evaluate learners' written works.	4.60	.654	Always	Very Great Extent
7. I evaluate learners' quarterly assessments.	4.53	.718	Always	Very Great Extent
8. I define numerical grades to the learners, parents, principals, co-teachers and other constituents.	4.49	.719	Always	Very Great Extent
9. I spend personal time in evaluating learners' work (e.g. vacant times, weekends, holidays, etc.).	4.43	.696	Always	Very Great Extent
10. I set criteria or rubrics in giving grades that are consistent with curriculum standards.	4.45	.660	Always	Very Great Extent
11. I give immediate feedback or appreciation to the learners' progress.	4.53	.575	Always	Very Great Extent
Mean	4.51	.559	Always	Very Great Extent
C. Recording				
12. I record and keep attendance every day.	4.79	.439	Always	Very Great Extent
13. I record learners' written works.	4.66	.476	Always	Very Great Extent
14. I record learners' performance tasks.	4.66	.528	Always	Very Great Extent
15. I record learners' quarterly assessments.	4.77	.426	Always	Very Great Extent
16. I record learners' conduct and behavior (in a class record or anecdotal notes).	4.49	.620	Always	Very Great Extent
17. I record learners' co-curricular activities.	4.40	.862	Always	Very Great Extent
Mean	4.63	.408	Always	Very Great Extent
Over-all Mean	4.53	.451	Always	Very Great Extent

N=77

With regards to grading, the teachers always evaluate learners' written works ($M=4.60$), quarterly assessments ($M=4.53$), and give immediate feedback or appreciation to the learners' progress ($M=4.53$). Overall, they have a very great extent of teaching-related paperwork in terms of grading obtained a mean of 4.51 described as always.

Moreover, in recording, the teachers always record and keep attendance every day ($M=4.79$) and record learners' quarterly assessments ($M=4.77$). As a whole, teachers' recording task obtained a mean of 4.63 described as always. This means that the teachers have very great extent of keeping the records of the learners.

The reason behind the recording is required and mandated by DepEd Orders and for transparency purposes. At the same time, teachers record scores as bases for any grade computation. This is

affirmed by Mayer and Phillips (2012) that teachers spend 36 minutes in grading, recording, analyzing student work and some teacher continue working until late nights. Furthermore, it is mandated in DepEd Order No. 8, s. 2015 to record the three components of grade.

In summary, the teachers have very great extent of performing their teaching-related paperwork with overall mean of 4.53 described as always. They have numerous teaching-related paperwork particularly in planning, recording and grading. They have more paperwork especially on recording pupils' attendance, assessment written works and performance task. At the same time, they spend six to eight hours of teaching not considering the overtimes, extra-curricular activities and other factors.

The study also determined the level of teachers' occupational stress that was presented in table 2. The results reveal that the teachers strongly disagree that they blame their family and they have to stay in this job and location ($M=4.40$) and have ruined their relationships with fellow teachers whom they feel they compete against ($M=4.35$). However, they are uncertain if they even eat lunch and do it at their desk while working ($M=3.36$) and hear every piece of information or question as criticism of their work ($M=3.26$). Overall, the teachers have low level of occupational stress with a mean of 3.84 described as disagree.

Table 2. Teachers' Level of Occupational Stress

Indicator	WM	SD	Description	Verbal Interpretation
1. Even for minor problems, I lose my temper and do embarrassing things like yell or kick garbage can.	3.84	1.189	Disagree	Low Level
2. I hear every piece of information or question as criticism of my work.	3.26	1.083	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Moderate Level
3. If someone criticizes my work, I take it as a personal attack.	3.74	1.154	Disagree	Low Level
4. My emotions seem flat whether I'm told good news or bad news about my performance.	3.42	1.057	Disagree	Low Level
5. To avoid going to work I'd even call I'm sick when I'm feeling fine.	4.19	1.078	Disagree	Low Level
6. I feel powerless to lighten my work load or schedule, even though I've always got too far too much to do.	3.79	.879	Disagree	Low Level
7. I respond irritably to any request from my fellow teachers.	4.08	.873	Disagree	Low Level
8. On the job and off, I get highly emotional over minor accidents.	3.92	.902	Disagree	Low Level
9. I tell people about sports or hobbies that I'd like to do but I say I never had time because of the hours I spend at work.	3.70	1.077	Disagree	Low Level
10. I work overtime consistently, yet I cannot catch up with the requirements.	3.60	1.141	Disagree	Low Level
11. If I even eat lunch, I do it at my desk while working.	3.36	1.240	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Moderate Level

12. I see time as my enemy.	3.96	1.141	Disagree	Low Level
13. I can't tell the difference between work and play: it feels like one more things to be done.	3.66	1.165	Disagree	Low Level
14. Everything I do feels like a drain on my energy.	4.04	.968	Disagree	Low Level
15. I feel like I want to pull the covers over my head and hide.	3.86	1.050	Disagree	Low Level
16. I blame my family- because of them, I have to stay in this job and location.	4.40	.853	Strongly Disagree	Very Low Level
17. I have ruined my relationship with fellow teachers whom I feel I compete against.	4.35	.924	Strongly Disagree	Very Low Level
Mean	3.84	.78019	Disagree	Low Level

N=77

The top two items that obtained the highest mean are items number 16 and 17. The data show that teachers strongly disagree that they blame their family because they have to stay in this job and location as reflected on item number 16 where it obtained the highest mean and interpreted as very low level. Indeed, their family is the reason why they teach because their family serves as their inspiration and motivation, at the same time they have the choice to shift to other work if they want to.

On the other hand, the teachers strongly disagree that they ruined their relationship with their fellow teachers whom they feel they compete against as reflected on item number 17 where it obtained the second highest means and interpreted as very low level. Instead of ruining their relationship, they rather build it strongly since their peers are their company every day.

The top two items that obtained the lowest mean are items number 2 and 11. The teachers are uncertain that they hear every piece of information or question as criticism of their work as reflected on item number 2 where it obtained the lowest mean and interpreted as moderate level. It simply means they can manage their stress since they act professionally and the teachers are concerned with their co-teachers' attitude or doings and the master teachers in the school also offer constructive criticism and assistance to them.

Moreover, the teachers are uncertain that they even eat lunch or do it at their desk while working as reflected on item number 11 which obtained the second lowest mean and interpreted as moderate level. It simply means that they are not sure, whether they might be stressed or not because teachers have to comply many requirements that perhaps even their vacant time like lunch breaks are sacrificed.

In summary, the teachers have low level of occupational stress with a mean of 3.84 described as disagree. It can be inferred from the result that the reason teachers have low level of stress since they have already adjusted and familiar with the demands of their working environment and their ability, characteristics and learning corresponds to it.

The study also aimed to relate the Teaching-Related Paperwork and Occupational Stress of the Teachers.

Table 3 presents the result of the correlation analysis. The analysis indicates a moderate positive correlation between teaching-related paperwork and the occupational stress of the teachers. This implies that teaching-related paperwork influence occupational stress. The positive value of the correlation coefficient indicates that the higher the degree of paperwork the more the teachers are stressful.

Table 3. Relationship between Teaching-Related Paperwork and Occupational Stress of the Teachers

Variables Correlated	R	r²	p-value	Extent of Relationship	Remark
Teaching-Related Paperwork and Occupational Stress	.325	.105	.004	Moderate relationship	Significant

Furthermore, it could be inferred from the data that the reason for the low relationship is because most of the teachers are more than 2 years in service. Out of 77, 71 or 92 % of the teachers are already teaching for more than 2 years and the other 6 teachers have teaching experience for not less 2 years. As what mandated on DepEd Order 70, s. 2012 or the Guidelines on the Preparation of Daily Lessons, the teachers who have been in the service for more than two (2) years, shall not be required to prepare detailed lesson plans (DLPs). Additionally, DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2016 stated that teachers could now integrate technology in lesson planning, delivery, and assessment of instruction.

Thus, though teachers have very great extent of teaching-related paperwork, but then they have low level of occupational stress. This paperwork is a stressor but does not highly influence their level of stress. There are other variables influencing the occupational stress level of the teachers. It simply means that the teachers could respond to the demands of teaching-related paperwork.

DISCUSSION

In terms of paperwork, lesson planning is part of the daily lives of the teachers because it serves as their backbone for teaching. Lesson planning is a meticulous task since there are many things needed to be considered thus it requires time, effort, energy and intelligence. Mayer and Phillips (2012) reported that teachers spend 30 minutes for lesson planning during school days and some teachers continue working until late nights. In addition, Green (2010) stated that writing a well-organized lesson plan takes time, idea, effort, attention, and focus.

Moreover, the reason for the very great extent of paperwork in terms of grading is because teachers evaluate the learners' progress every day that is done through different assessment tools to identify the weaknesses of the learners in a classroom and these could help them to strategize for better learning outcomes. Affirmed by Santrock (2001) that 28.4% of teachers setting homework either every day or 4 times in a week while others done it weekly and be marked later on. Grading the works of the learners takes 4.6 hours in a week and other 50% of teachers done grading during class sessions. At the same time, it is mandated DepEd Order No. 8, s. 2015 or the Policy Guidelines on Classroom Assessment for the K to 12 Basic Education

Program to evaluate three components- written work, performance task and quarterly assessment.

Fitzgerald et al. (2018) conducted an interview to the teachers and recorded that the latter have lots of responsibilities that is why they are working for a very long period of hours, mostly in complying paperwork. Taharim et al. (2017) stressed that one of the most critical activities for teachers are student module grading, lesson and course planning. Even with technological advancements, these activities are always done manually, and it is the responsibility of the teachers to ensure that these records are updated on a regular basis. The same result with the United Federation of Teachers (2014) survey revealed that 46% of teachers allocated more time in doing paperwork than working together with their colleagues and 45% allocated more time in doing paperwork than communicating with parents.

Some paperwork are pushed to the extremities of days or on weekends just to comply them. The paperwork also increases rapidly in number after just few days especially if these are not done immediately because lesson planning, grading, and recording should be done daily. Babbage (2011) supported that it does not mean teachers do lesser paperwork with the integration of educational technologies in the classrooms or at home but rather, it just turned into an electronic form of paperwork.

Relative to occupational stress, teachers have low level experiences. The researchers observed that the teachers of Romana C. Acharon Central Elementary School learned how to live with their occupation as teachers. At the same time, the school has many teachers employed that could accommodate all the pupils, and some of them have school obligations just like sport coaches, academic advisers, program organizers, advisers of different school organizations and like, the academic and non-academic task are also divided. Due to their population, they could respond to the demand of their work through collaboration and cooperation among teachers.

Roxas (2009) argued that a person with multiple roles are less stressful because they are more exposed to social support, enhanced skills and boasted self-confidence. At the same time Gore and Mangione (1983) as cited by Roxas (2009) added that the teachers with family or have been married are healthier than those who had not been married. Additionally, Baruch and Barnett (1996) also confirmed women with multiple roles such as being a mother, wife or employee were more confident and less stressed than person with less roles in life. Elfering (2005) elaborated that based on socio-emotional selectivity theory, forming partnerships is a major focus to counter stress. The result of the study of Roxas (2009) concluded that the teachers have normal level of stress and they do not take it personally if someone criticize their work. Realistically, Roxas (2009) admitted in her findings that due to teaching requirements, teachers sometimes cannot eat lunch and spend their vacant times for complying. Teachers are bothered about their working performance in teaching where they spending longer time in working. Some teachers work for 60 hours each week and spending 20 hours in a week for extra-curricular activities.

Nevertheless, teachers experience low level of occupational stress because of their proper mindset to adjust to their workload. Rodrigues et al. (2020) stated that the stress and depression in public school, most teachers have a low stress percentage. The same result with the study (Mohta and Sharma, 2018) stated that the teachers experienced low degree of occupational stress. Ellis (2013) stated that half of the teachers out of 42 primary schools with diagnosed or suspected ADD/ADHD students in South Mississippi reported a low-moderate level of stress.

Similarly, Kaur (2011) revealed that 58.5% of teachers were in 'low stressed' category. These are due to other factors where Avery et al. (1990) stressed out that occupational stress has many sources including the demanding work, excessive overtime, and shiftwork and meeting deadlines.

As a support for the influence of paperwork to stress, Mingoa (2017) confirmed that among the top five sources of occupational stress listed, doing too much paperwork (52%) topped the list, followed by high cost of living (51%), low wage and other financial issues (46%), oversized classes (43%), and being too busy (including concurrent activities such as education, work, parenting, community service, and so on) (32%). The same result with Feltoe (2016) that lack of time and paperwork were reported as major sources of stress. Supported by Roxas (2009) that out of 30 sources of Occupational Stress among Public Elementary School Teachers in Baguio City, excessive paperwork or documentation is in rank 2 followed by rank 1 which is the large class sizes. At the same time, backed up by Ingvarson et al. (2005) that paperwork is one of the stressors for teachers.

However, this contradicts the findings in the study of Rasmussen (2003) that paperwork was not an issue since for them it is part of their profession and supported by Bush (2010) that other teachers learned to live with paperwork and saw it as part of their job. Eleven percent (11%) of the variations affects the occupational stress of the teachers. This implies that the other 89% of the variations in occupational stress are due to other variables. The teaching-related paperwork and the occupational stress of the teachers have low relationship since paperwork are not the only stressors of the teachers based on the findings of Mearns and Chain (2003) as cited Antoniou, Ploumpi and Ntalla (2013) but also school activities, lack of professional recognition, disciplinary problems, bureaucracy, lack of support, workload, time pressure, and lack of benefits.

CONCLUSION

Teachers do really have a great extent of paperwork since lesson planning, grading and recording are the tasks they have to consider from time to time. With the integration of computers, paperwork just become in an electronic but it does not mean that it would lessen the task. Based on the findings of this study, the teachers have very great extent of teaching-related paperwork and have a low level of occupational stress. Teaching related paperwork significantly influence the level of occupational stress of teachers. Recommendations included for the policy makers to evaluate and review the school teaching related-paperwork that are given to the teachers to lessen or reduce their requirements and conceptualize the paperwork according to the primary records at the DepEd Division Level and set deadlines or schedules for passing of the paperwork requirements in sequential time frame. Likewise, the administrators should praise and give rewards to teachers' achievements to encourage excellent performance in the school. Future research is highly recommended by considering other variables that are related to occupational stress with large class sizes, school activities, lack of professional recognition, disciplinary problems, bureaucracy, lack of support, workload, time pressure, and lack of benefits to measure the variation of teachers' occupational stress.

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