

Case Study

Factors Contributing to Job Dissatisfaction among BPO Employees: A Case Study of a Team Leader in Tamil Nadu

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ABSTRACT

This case study examines the factors contributing to job dissatisfaction among employees in the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) industry in India, with a specific focus on a 27-year-old team leader from Tamil Nadu. The BPO sector in India has witnessed significant growth in recent decades, employing millions of individuals; however, concerns regarding employee job satisfaction and retention remain prevalent. This study investigates the case of Mr. A.K., who has experienced persistent job dissatisfaction despite attaining a leadership position and switching between multiple organizations. The research utilized job satisfaction and job motivation assessment tools to evaluate the subject's workplace experiences and attitudes. Results indicate that Mr. A.K. demonstrates dissatisfaction with both intrinsic and extrinsic job factors while paradoxically maintaining motivation for job objectives, responsibilities, and new challenges. The primary factors contributing to his dissatisfaction include inconsistent working hours including night shifts and weekends, high-pressure target-based performance metrics, limited career advancement opportunities, inadequate compensation relative to workload, and misalignment between professional aspirations and current role. The case highlights how educational background, financial constraints, and lack of industry-specific qualifications can trap individuals in unfulfilling career paths. This study contributes to the understanding of job satisfaction dynamics in the Indian BPO sector and suggests potential interventions for career redirection, skills development, and workplace policy improvements to address employee dissatisfaction. The findings have implications for BPO industry practices, career counselling approaches, and organizational psychology in the Indian workplace context.

Keywords: *Job satisfaction, BPO industry, Career misalignment, Occupational stress, Rotational shifts, Work-life balance, Team leadership, Career development, Organizational psychology, Indian workplace*

The Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) sector in India has emerged as a significant employer over the past two decades, offering employment opportunities to individuals with diverse educational backgrounds (Budhwar et al., 2018). While the industry has created numerous job opportunities, particularly for young graduates, it also faces substantial challenges related to employee retention, job satisfaction, and career

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Factors Contributing to Job Dissatisfaction among BPO Employees: A Case Study of a Team Leader in Tamil Nadu

progression (Thite & Russell, 2010). Studies indicate that the BPO sector in India experiences turnover rates between 25-40% annually, significantly higher than many other industries (Sengupta & Gupta, 2012).

Job satisfaction, defined as the pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job experiences, plays a crucial role in employee retention, productivity, and overall psychological well-being (Locke, 1976). In the context of the BPO industry, several factors have been identified as potential contributors to job dissatisfaction, including high work pressure, irregular working hours, routine tasks, limited career growth, and inadequate compensation (Valk & Srinivasan, 2011).

This case study examines the professional experience of Mr. A.K., a 27-year-old male working as a team leader in a BPO in Tamil Nadu, who reports persistent job dissatisfaction despite having achieved a supervisory position. His case presents a valuable opportunity to explore how educational background, financial constraints, work environment characteristics, and personal career aspirations interact to influence job satisfaction in the Indian BPO context.

The study aims to address the following research questions:

1. What specific organizational and personal factors contribute to job dissatisfaction in this case?
2. What is the relationship between job motivation and job satisfaction in the subject's work experience?
3. How do educational background and financial constraints influence career choices and subsequent job satisfaction?
4. What interventions might effectively address the subject's job dissatisfaction?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Job satisfaction has been extensively studied across various industries and cultural contexts. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (Herzberg et al., 1959) distinguishes between motivational factors (achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, advancement) and hygiene factors (company policy, supervision, working conditions, interpersonal relations, salary) in determining job satisfaction. In the Indian BPO context, research by Jyothi and Ravindran (2012) found that work-life balance, career development opportunities, and compensation were significant predictors of job satisfaction.

The BPO industry in India presents unique challenges to employee satisfaction. Thite and Russell (2010) identified several industry-specific issues, including high-pressure environments, monotonous tasks, night shifts disrupting circadian rhythms, and limited career progression paths. Additionally, Das et al. (2013) found that educational background-job mismatch significantly predicted job dissatisfaction among BPO employees in India.

Career misalignment occurs when individuals work in fields unrelated to their educational background or career aspirations. Research by Saraf and Banerjee (2017) demonstrated that such misalignment negatively impacts job satisfaction and increases turnover intention. This is particularly relevant in the Indian context, where economic necessities often drive career choices (Singh, 2016).

Factors Contributing to Job Dissatisfaction among BPO Employees: A Case Study of a Team Leader in Tamil Nadu

Shift work, especially night shifts, has been associated with various negative outcomes for employees. A study by Kantermann et al. (2010) found that irregular shift patterns disrupt sleep quality, impair cognitive performance, and negatively affect psychological well-being. In the Indian BPO context, Kesavachandran et al. (2012) documented associations between night shift work and increased stress, sleep disorders, and reduced job satisfaction.

CASE PRESENTATION

Demographic and Background Information

Table 1 summarizes the key demographic and background information of the subject.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of the Subject

Parameter	Information
Initials	A.K.
Age	27 years
Gender	Male
Siblings	None
Place of Birth	Urban (Tamil Nadu)
Place of Living	Urban
Family Type	Nuclear
Religion	Hindu
Mother Tongue	Tamil
Education	Bachelor of Commerce (B.Com)
Marital Status	Unmarried
Current Occupation	Team Leader
Organization Type	Private (BPO)
Working Experience	6 years
Working Hours	8 hours (including night shifts)
Monthly Income	₹25,000 (approximately \$335 USD)
Primary Complaint	Job Dissatisfaction

Family and Educational Background

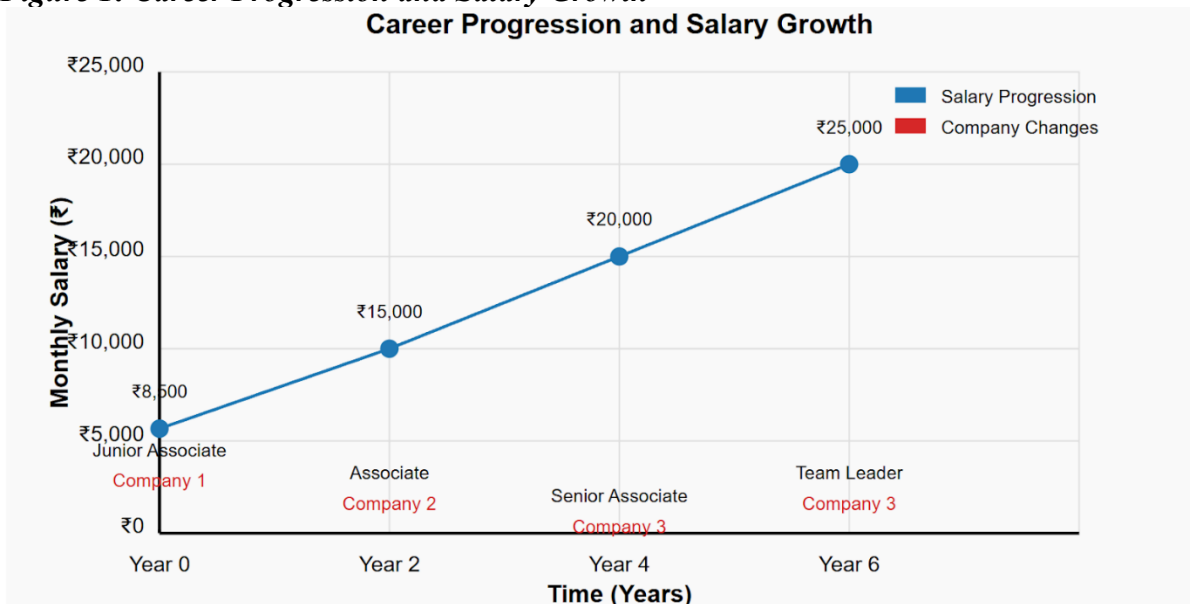
Mr. A.K. comes from a nuclear family where his father runs a business and his mother is a housewife. He pursued his education through bank loans and lived in a hostel during his undergraduate studies. Financial constraints prevented him from pursuing postgraduate education in his field, despite his aspiration to become an accountant.

Occupational History

Figure 1 illustrates Mr. A.K.'s career progression and salary growth over the past six years.

Factors Contributing to Job Dissatisfaction among BPO Employees: A Case Study of a Team Leader in Tamil Nadu

Figure 1: Career Progression and Salary Growth



After completing his undergraduate degree in Commerce, Mr. A.K. began working at a call centre in Chennai. During this six-year period, he has changed employers three times seeking better compensation. His current role involves team leadership responsibilities, meeting daily targets, and maintaining monthly productivity metrics. He reports satisfactory relationships with colleagues and supervisors.

Presenting Problem

Mr. A.K. reports persistent job dissatisfaction despite attaining a leadership position. His primary complaints include:

- Lack of interest in his current role and the BPO sector generally
- Stress related to the corporate environment
- Dissatisfaction with the compensation structure relative to workload
- Challenges adapting to rotational shifts, including night work and weekend obligations
- Pressure from performance targets and productivity metrics
- Unfulfilled career aspirations in accountancy
- Feeling trapped in his current career path due to financial necessities

METHODOLOGY

Assessment Tools

Two standardized assessment tools were administered to evaluate Mr. A.K.'s workplace experiences:

1. **Job Satisfaction Scale:** This instrument assesses satisfaction with various aspects of employment, including both intrinsic factors (achievement, recognition, autonomy) and extrinsic factors (compensation, working conditions, organizational policies).
2. **Job Motivation Inventory:** This tool evaluates motivation related to job objectives, responsibilities, and response to challenges.

Assessment Findings

Table 2 summarizes the assessment results for Mr. A.K.

Factors Contributing to Job Dissatisfaction among BPO Employees: A Case Study of a Team Leader in Tamil Nadu

Table 2. Summary of Assessment Results

Assessment Dimension	Finding	Interpretation
Job Satisfaction		
Intrinsic Factors	Low	Dissatisfied with the nature of work, opportunities for achievement, and personal growth
Extrinsic Factors	Low	Dissatisfied with compensation, work conditions, and organizational policies
Overall Job Satisfaction	Low	Generally dissatisfied with current job situation
Job Motivation		
Job Objectives	High	Motivated to achieve work-related goals and targets
Responsibility	High	Willing to take on demanding responsibilities
Challenge Response	High	Interested in and responsive to new challenges
Overall Job Motivation	High	Maintains professional motivation despite job dissatisfaction

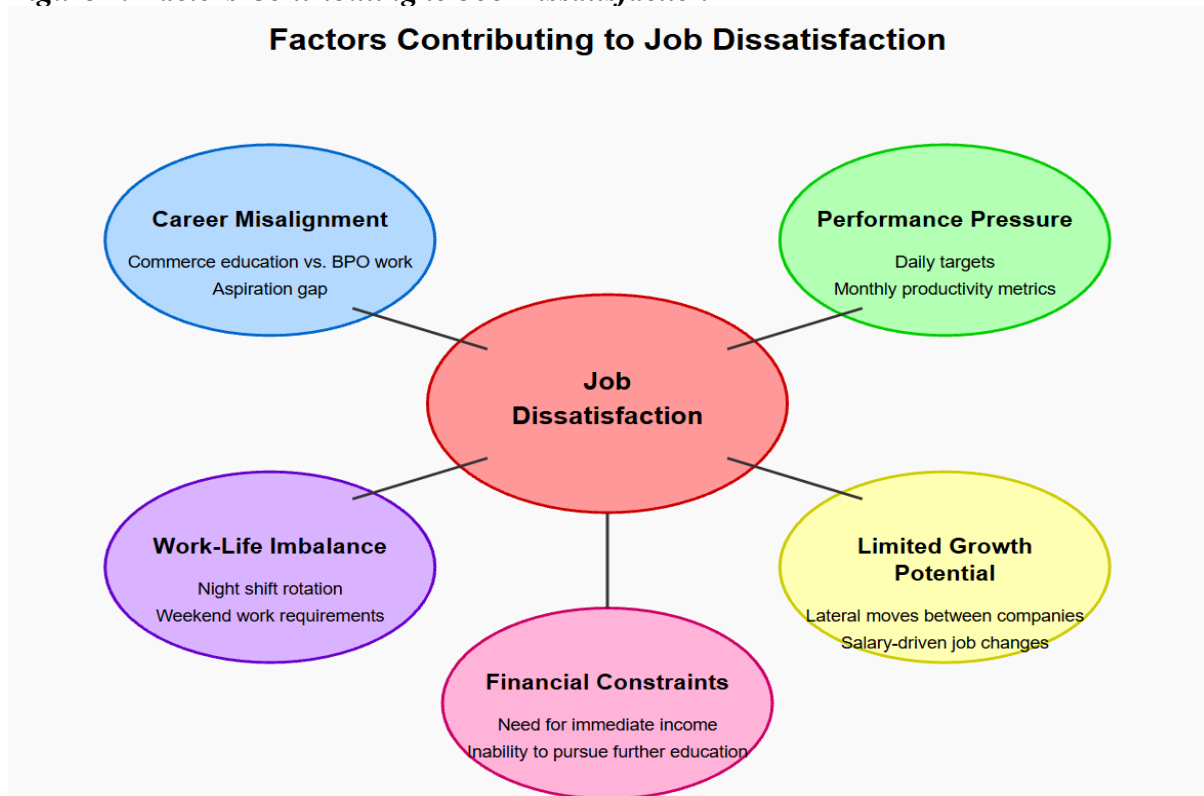
This apparent contradiction between low job satisfaction and preserved job motivation suggests that Mr. A.K. maintains a professional work ethic and sense of responsibility despite his dissatisfaction with his current role and industry.

DISCUSSION

Analysis of Contributing Factors

Figure 2 illustrates the interrelated factors contributing to Mr. A.K.'s job dissatisfaction.

Figure 2. Factors Contributing to Job Dissatisfaction



Factors Contributing to Job Dissatisfaction among BPO Employees: A Case Study of a Team Leader in Tamil Nadu

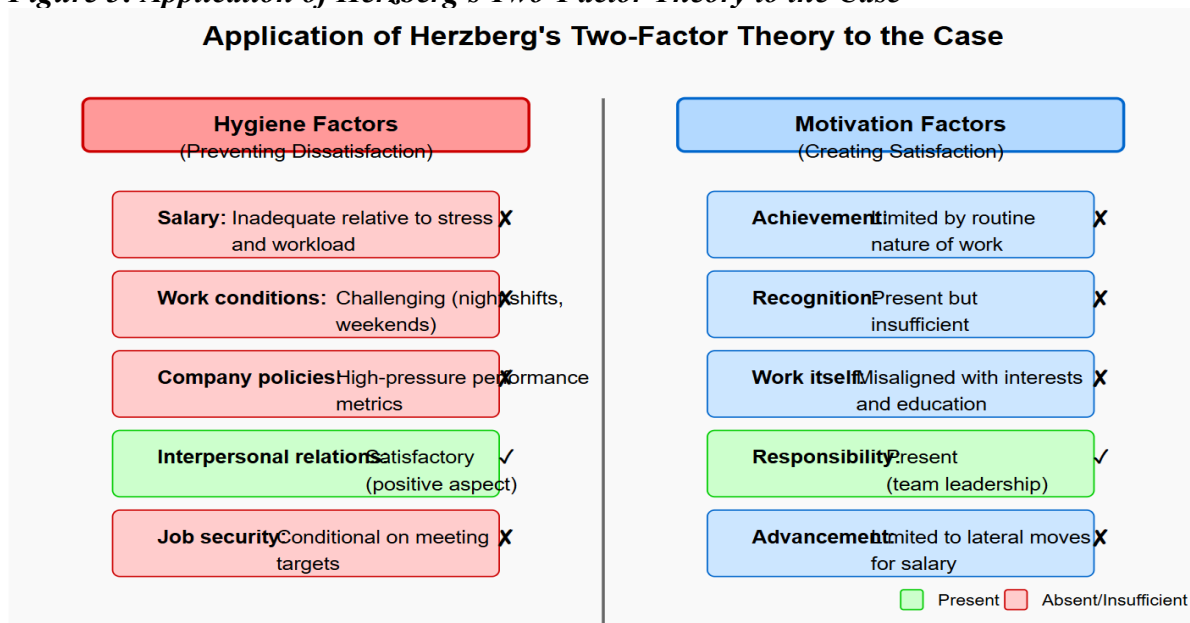
1. **Career Misalignment:** Although educated in commerce with aspirations to become an accountant, financial necessities led Mr. A.K. to the BPO sector. This misalignment between educational background, career aspirations, and current role appears to be a significant contributor to his job dissatisfaction, consistent with findings by Saraf and Banerjee (2017).
2. **Work Schedule Disruptions:** The requirement to work night shifts on a rotational basis and weekend work likely contributes to dissatisfaction by disrupting work-life balance and circadian rhythms. This aligns with research by Kantermann et al. (2010) on the negative impacts of shift work.
3. **Performance Pressure:** The emphasis on daily targets and monthly productivity metrics creates a high-pressure environment known to contribute to stress and reduced job satisfaction in the BPO sector (Thite & Russell, 2010).
4. **Limited Career Growth:** Despite six years in the industry and attaining a team leader position, Mr. A.K.'s career progression appears to have plateaued, with job changes primarily motivated by seeking salary increases rather than role advancement.
5. **Financial Constraints:** His initial career choice and continued employment in the BPO sector appear driven primarily by financial necessity rather than intrinsic interest, creating a cycle where immediate financial needs prevent pursuit of more satisfying long-term career options.

Theoretical Context

Mr. A.K.'s case illustrates Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, with deficiencies in both motivational factors (meaningful work aligned with career aspirations) and hygiene factors (work schedule, compensation relative to stress). The preservation of job motivation despite dissatisfaction suggests the operation of extrinsic motivators, as described in Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), where financial necessity drives continued engagement despite limited intrinsic satisfaction.

Figure 3 illustrates how Mr. A.K.'s situation aligns with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory.

Figure 3: Application of Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory to the Case



Factors Contributing to Job Dissatisfaction among BPO Employees: A Case Study of a Team Leader in Tamil Nadu

Recommendations

Based on the case analysis, Table 3 presents recommended interventions organized by timeframe and domain.

Table 3. Recommended Interventions by Timeframe and Domain

Timeframe	Career Development	Financial Planning	Work-Life Balance	Skill Development
Short-term (1-3 months)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-assessment of talents and interests • Exploration of commerce-related roles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed budget analysis • Expense reduction plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sleep hygiene practices • Stress management techniques 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic accounting software training • Leadership skill enhancement
Medium-term (3-12 months)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online accounting certification • Networking in accounting field 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency fund establishment • Education savings account 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiation for consistent shifts • Establishing work boundaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced Excel/data analysis • Financial management courses
Long-term (1-3 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition plan to accounting field • Part-time accounting positions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment portfolio development • Career transition fund 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career path with regular hours • Sustainable work pattern 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional accounting certification • Industry-specific training

Specific recommendations include:

1. Career Reassessment and Planning:

- Conduct a comprehensive self-assessment to clarify talents, interests, and values
- Establish short-term and long-term career goals with actionable steps
- Explore opportunities that better align with his commerce background

2. Skill Development:

- Pursue part-time or online courses in accounting to build credentials in his field of interest
- Leverage transferable skills from his BPO leadership experience (team management, performance metrics) for potential transitions to finance-related roles

3. Financial Planning:

- Develop a structured financial plan to create savings that could support further education or a potential career transition
- Explore educational scholarship or employer tuition assistance opportunities

4. Work-Life Balance Strategies:

- Negotiate for more consistent shift scheduling if possible
- Implement stress management techniques including mindfulness practices
- Establish clear boundaries between work and personal time

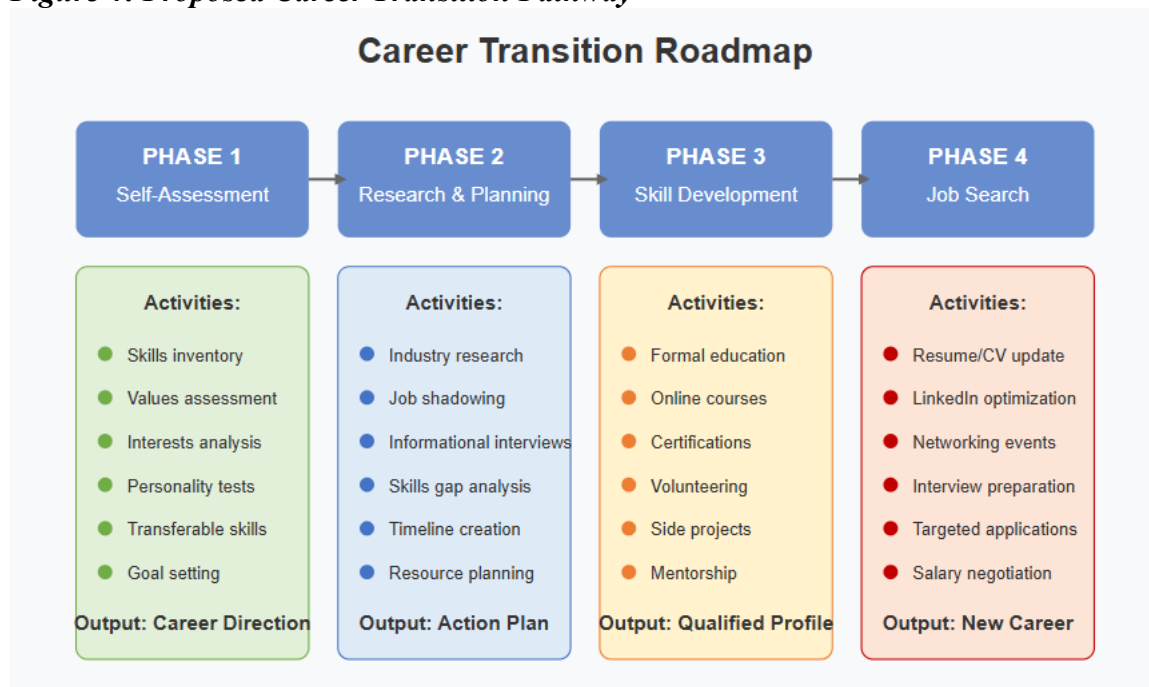
5. Workplace Adjustments:

- Discuss possibilities for lateral movement within the organization to roles requiring accounting knowledge
- Seek involvement in projects that utilize his commerce background

Factors Contributing to Job Dissatisfaction among BPO Employees: A Case Study of a Team Leader in Tamil Nadu

Figure 4 presents a visual pathway for potential career transition.

Figure 4: Proposed Career Transition Pathway



CONCLUSION

This case study highlights how educational background-career misalignment, financial constraints, and industry-specific challenges contribute to job dissatisfaction in the Indian BPO sector. Despite these challenges, the subject maintains job motivation, suggesting resilience and professional commitment. The case underscores the importance of considering both individual factors (career aspirations, educational background) and organizational elements (work schedules, compensation, career development opportunities) when addressing job satisfaction.

The findings have implications for BPO industry practices, suggesting that retention efforts should address not only compensation but also career development paths and work-life balance. Additionally, the case highlights the need for accessible continuing education opportunities that allow working professionals to pursue career realignment without sacrificing financial stability.

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Factors Contributing to Job Dissatisfaction among BPO Employees: A Case Study of a Team Leader in Tamil Nadu

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

Ethical Considerations

Informed written consent was obtained from the patient and his legal guardian for the publication of this case report. All identifying information has been anonymized.

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Data Availability Statement

The de-identified data that support the findings of this case report are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request and with appropriate ethical approvals.

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