

ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

THE PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY MOTIVATION AND PLANNING COMPETENCE

Andra Fernāte

Latvian Academy of Sport Education
Address: 333 Brivibas Street, Riga LV-1006, Latvia
Phone: +371 67543373, Fax: +371 67543480
E-mail: Andra.Fernate@lspa.lv

Abstract

Physical education teacher will need to understand him/herself, including values, beliefs or “philosophies”, and be able to reflect on how these influence teaching and students` learning. The main aim of the study is to investigate the relationship between physical education teacher`s professional activity motivation and planning competence. Material and methods: 276 physical education teachers (118 males; 158 females) from all regions of Latvia were interviewed during the study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted. The questions were as follows: 1) Why do you teach physical education? 2) What are the advantages and disadvantages of a physical education teacher`s work? 3) What do you want to achieve as a result of teaching? 4) What objectives have you put for yourself? The results based on the linkages between meta-codes and sub-codes were constructed and analyzed with AQUAD 6 software and validated with SPSS 17 software. Results have shown that most of the people who have chosen physical education as a career mostly have positive experience in sports, they like sports (60%) or they like sports and work together with children (17%). 33% consider that the career choice was determined by combination of different factors. Physical education teachers have put such objectives for themselves: to work creatively and use different methods (22%), to maintain their physical condition (16%), to improve their knowledge and skills (20%). There is a relationship between physical education teachers` (female) beliefs about disadvantages and expectations to achievements as a result of teaching.

Key words: *physical education teachers, professional activity motivation, planning competence.*

Introduction

Changes in contemporary situation are common and stable part of our lives. In Latvia the implementation of innovative philosophy in pedagogy is rooted in physical education (PE) teacher personality characteristics, motivations and changes in competence. Physical education teacher motivation to be active in the situation of change and take advantage of the use of new approaches in the pedagogical process depends on the PE teacher internal readiness to change and the level of professional competences. For PE teacher it should be necessary to understand themselves, their values, their beliefs or "philosophy" and it should be necessary to consider how these aspects affect the study process and student learning.

Studies on the PE teacher education clearly show that researchers have only begun to explore this issue or the issues related to PE teacher psychology (Graber, 2001; Kirk, Macdonald & O'Sullivan, 2006; Carson & Chase, 2009, etc.). Little attention is paid to the motivation of PE teachers (Moreira, Fox, and Sparkes 2002, etc). PE teachers are driven by other motivation sources, not by intrinsic interest in teaching; therefore intrinsic motivation is not of main importance (Lapeniene, Bruneckiene, 2010). The principle of intrinsic motivation (Amabile, 1996) is defined as correspondence between people interests and the requirements of the work.

Empirical investigations have shown that PE teacher profession mostly is chosen by people, who have been successful in PE lessons or in sport (Stroot, 1996; Edmonds, Lee, 2002; Younger et al., 2004), because they have positive experience in sport, which, in turn influences their understanding of the image of PE teacher. The reasons why people are willing to become PE teachers mostly are connected with loving or liking sport or PE classes; PE teacher positive influence, willingness to transfer their knowledge, enthusiasm and love of others; and willingness to work with youngsters (Evans, Williams, 1989; Mawer, 1995; Capel, 2005).

Competence becomes the main weapon, produced and sold by new market of education (Jarvis, 2007). Competence can be viewed as an ability to act successfully in authentic and complicated context, integrating and using adequate knowledge, abilities, skills and attitudes (Gento, Medina & Domínguez, 2008). Such competences can be tested in their real expressions, working in the given position and practically implementing values, attitudes, motivation and abilities.

Already Englund (1997) has emphasized the importance of teacher didactic competence, i.e., an ability to reflect on the aspects of how to choose the content and methods of learning in connection with state study program. Didactic competence is an ability to choose the correct solution in

the variety of situations in the general system of differentiated and integrated solutions (Cartelli, 2006). Didactically competent teachers will carefully consider and substantiate the choice of the contents, methods and study literature. Pušnik and Zorman (2004) indicate eight main teacher competences (1) knowledge about study program, (2) knowledge about the branch of study subject, (3) planning, (4) resourcefulness in class organization, (5) student progress monitoring, (6) assessment, (7) personal professional development and (8) the use of information technologies.

In Slovenia the investigators have defined 34 different PE teacher competences, which are topical nowadays. All competences are divided into three groups (Kovac, Sloan, Starc, 2008): disciplinary (analysis and planning; assessment, evaluation and grading; classroom management; cross-curricular teaching; demonstration of curricular sports; demonstration of non-curricular sports; didactics of curricular sports; didactics of non-curricular sports; general PE didactics; organizing sport activities; physical and motor development; use general pedagogic strategies; use of educational technologies; work with students with special needs; work with talented students), sub-disciplinary (biomechanics of sport; developmental psychology; educational research; financing in sport; functioning of educational system; informational literacy; kinesiological foundations of sport; medical aspects of sport; organizational and managerial skills; philosophy and history of sport; physiology of sport; school legislation; sociology of sport and PE; sport and media, sport training theory) and general competencies (mentoring; teamwork; use of foreign language; use of theory in practice)

In the Standard of Teacher profession in Latvia as mutual skills in the branch are outlined the skills to plan teacher and student work, to organize study and upbringing work in compliance with the objectives and tasks, set forward, the skill to evaluate and promote student development and study achievements, as well as the efficiency of teacher work. These skills refer also to PE teacher didactic competences, which include three essential aspects of PE teacher activity: planning, organization and assessment.

Planning competence is ability to model behavior in longer time period. Planning is a complicated process (Lauder, 2001) and in PE lesson it is based on the answers to three questions: 1. What children expect from physical education experience? 2. How children learn the best? 3. What competences children need in physical education? Good PE teacher planning competence is manifested in different ways (Lauder, 2001). PE teachers plan and implement different study strategies corresponding to

child development in order to promote the development of physically educated students, as it is foreseen in state standards.

Daniel Pink (Pink, 2011) in his book "Drive" characterizes three features, driving people in the 21st century: autonomy – willingness to direct one's life; mastery - willingness to achieve progress to make things better; and goals – desire to do something in order to serve something greater than us. But in the 21st century the opinion about motivation is in contrast with the way how we organize things we do, how we think about things we do, and how we do what we do. We need innovations (Pink, 2011, 205).

The contribution of this paper to the existent PE literature is to fill the theoretical gap regarding how a PE teacher beliefs influence their judgments which affect their teaching practice, because teachers hold many untested beliefs which influence their response to particular PE teaching and learning situation.

In order to promote PE teacher professional growth through improving teacher professional and continuing education programs, it is essential to understand PE teacher professional motivation and their beliefs about the purposes of the PE and nature of their work.

The goal of the research is to investigate the realm of problems, connected with PE teacher professional motivation and their planning competence, as well as to consider the possible ways of overcoming them.

Material and Methods

To achieve the goal of the research was performed explanatory case investigation, embracing the schools of all Latvian regions. With the help of structured interviews were obtained data from 276 PE teachers (118 men, 158 women) from all Latvian regions (Riga (8.6%); Kurzeme (21.2%), Latgale (34.6%), Vidzeme (25.7%) and Zemgale (9.9%)) in the form of statements suitable for data processing. Respondents answered the following questions: 1. Why do you teach PE? 2. What are the advantages and restrictions in PE teacher work? 3) What are learning outcomes, which you want to achieve in the result of teaching? 4) What are the objectives you set for yourself?

In the research were used the following methods: 1) the analysis of scientific literature, 2) semi structured interviews, 3) open and axial coding, 4) methods of mathematical statistics (*One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test, Spearman rank correlation, Mann-Whitney U, Kruskal-Wallis H, etc.*). Considering data obtaining and processing methods, was performed qualitatively-quantitative investigation, which was carried out in three phases: 1) semi structured interviews for obtaining qualitative data

(statements); 2) data qualitative and quantitative primary and secondary processing; 3) data analysis and interpretation.

Statements are coded, considering respondent gender, age and work experience. Considering that teachers obtain experience in their teaching practice, they professionally develop in different ways. Huberman (1993) describes these experience stages, calling them time periods in teacher work: 1) 1-3 years of work: period of entering career; 2) 4-6 years of work: stabilization period; 3) 7-18 years of work: period of experimenting and active position; 4) 19-30 years of work: period of conservatism; 5) 31 and more years of work: retirement from work. The range of respondent work experience was very wide: from one to even fifty-two years. PE teacher distribution according to their periods of professional career: period of entering career: 1-3 years of work (5.5%), period of stabilization: 4-6 years of work (6.2%), experimenting and active position: 7-18 years of work (40.9%), conservatism: 19-30 years of work (27%), retirement: 30-40 years of work (19.4%).

Qualitative data processing – coding, meta coding and interpretation – were carried out with AQUAD 6 program. Statements about PE teacher professional motivation were coded in relation with individual motivation theoretical model – self-determination theory (SDT) (Ryan and Deci, 2002), in which dominate three different directions: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation and amotivation, extending them from the standpoint of teacher professional motivation. Data quantitative processing was performed in SPSS 17 environment. For data primary processing was used descriptive statistics, but for secondary processing were employed methods of non-parametric statistics, considering non-parametric character of research sample.

Results

Respondent opinion on the reasons why they teach physical education

PE teacher survey about the reasons why they teach physical education found the main reasons for choosing PE teacher career (Fig. 1). The reasons why people were willing to be PE teachers were liking sports (60%), liking sports and willingness to work with youth (17%), obtained education (13%), situation when there was no one to teach PE, (5%), or situation when „something must be done for living” (5%), as well as willingness to teach all subjects (0.5%).

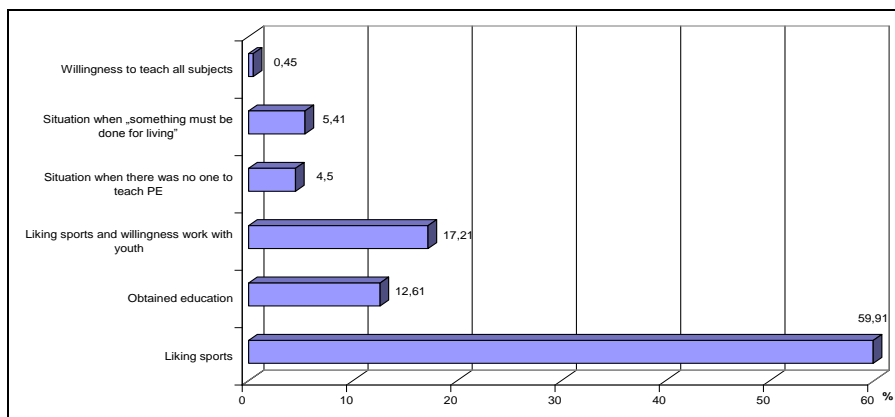


Figure 1. The reasons for choosing PE teacher career (%)

In different periods of PE teacher career there exist differences as to the reasons why they had started to teach PE ($p=.049$). Respondents, who have worked only from no 1 to 3 years, most frequently had embarked on their careers rather due to different coincidences, than because they like sports or work with children.

Advantages and disadvantages in PE teacher work

PE teachers consider that most essential advantage in their work (Fig. 2) is the opportunity to keep themselves in physical condition and to be in movement (45%), work in positive environment in friendly atmosphere (11%), work in fresh air (7%), work with children (6%), advantages regarding workload (6%), for example, long vacation and not having to correct homework (5%).

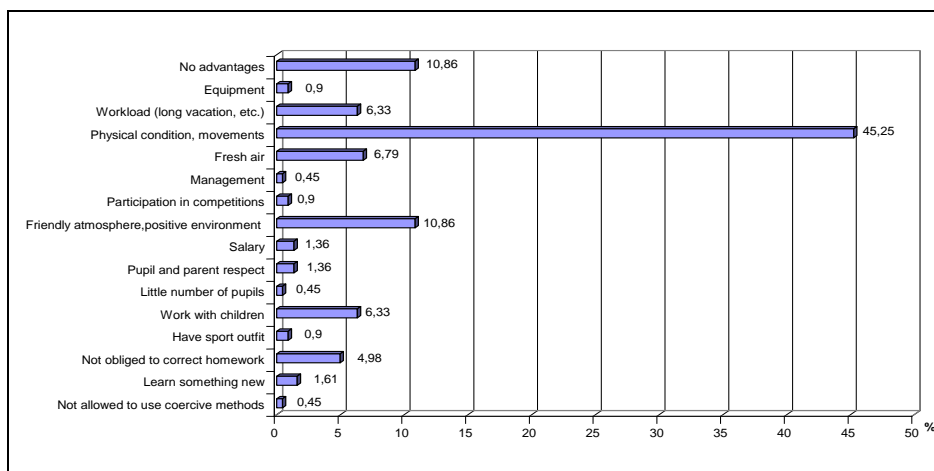


Figure 2. Respondent views on advantages in PE teacher work (%)

However, 11% of respondents consider that in PE teacher profession there are no advantages.

PE teachers (men) more often think that there are no advantages in PE teacher work ($r_s = -.18$, $p = .009$).

As one of the most essential disadvantage (Fig. 3) in PE teacher work is mentioned lack of equipment (10%) and workload (8%). PE teachers, for who it is difficult to be in good physical condition and be able to demonstrate to students the movements to be taught, consider physical condition (9%) as a disadvantage.

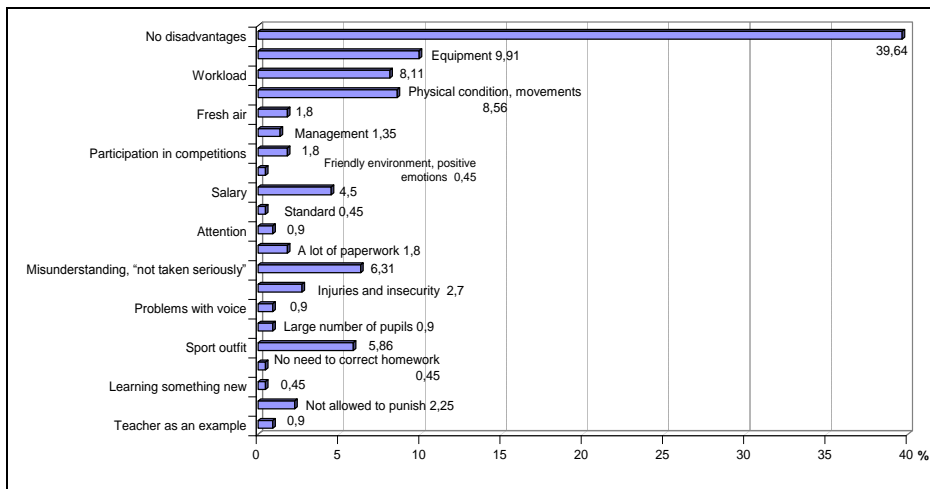


Figure 3. Respondent views on disadvantages of PE teacher work

As disadvantages PE teachers consider also other colleague misunderstanding of the essence of PE lessons and their importance (6%), for example, there is expressed a view that colleagues “do not take PE lessons seriously or take them light”. However, 40% of respondents, in their turn, consider that there are no disadvantages in PE teacher work.

PE teacher view on learning outcomes to be achieved

Answering the question, what PE teachers are willing to achieve as learning outcomes (Fig. 4), most frequently was mentioned student understanding of the importance of physical activities in their lives (23%). PE teachers consider that important goal is the promotion of the formation of student healthy lifestyle habits: healthy students (18%) with active lifestyle (21%), who need physical activities, students perform physical activities themselves and involve others (7%).

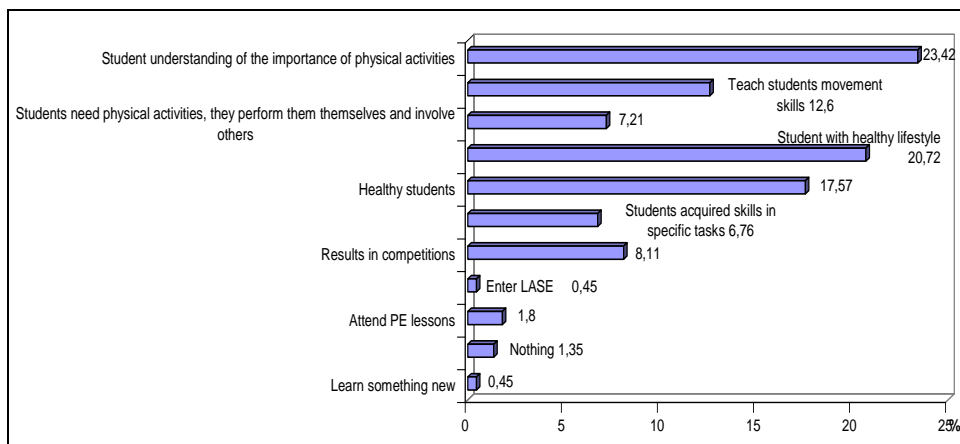


Figure 4. Respondent view on learning outcomes to be achieved

Goal is to teach students movement skills (12%) and promote student skill acquisition in specific tasks (7%). In their turn, 8% of respondents consider that teaching aim is gaining high results in competitions, which, in turn, is a goal in competitive sports, not in physical education.

There exists mutual correlation between PE teacher (female) views on disadvantages (*lack of colleague understanding, injuries, problems with voice, large number of students, necessity to retire faster*) in PE teacher work and views, what they are willing to achieve as learning outcomes (*students have acquired movement skills in specific tasks*) ($r_s=.35$, $p=.04$). The more disadvantages respondents find in PE teacher work, the narrower PE goal they put forward.

Personal goals set by PE teachers

Answering the question, what goals do you set for yourself (Fig. 5), dominates PE teacher willingness to improve their knowledge and skills (20%), improve their physical form (16%) and involve children in sport and increase their interest (16%), so that children are cheerful. 14% of PE teachers are willing to work creatively and use different methods, as well as improve teaching methods (2%). 5% of PE teachers are willing to be in harmony with themselves, bet 3%: be active and needed by school.

11% of PE teachers, in turn, do not want to change anything, 6% want to retire as soon as possible, but 4% do not set any goals. There is a mutual relationship between what teachers want to achieve as teaching outcome and objectives put forward by themselves ($r_s = .12$, $p =.04$).

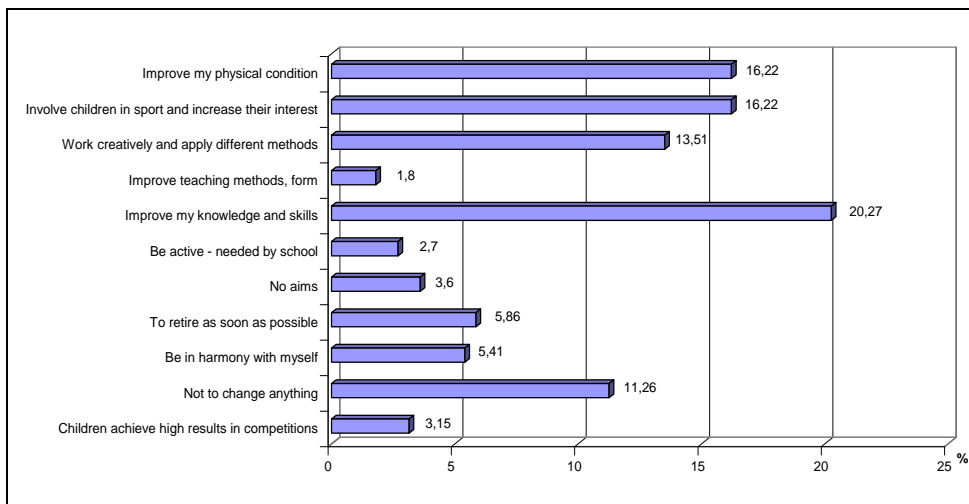


Figure 5. Goals set by PE teachers

Physical education teachers who as teaching outcome aim to enhance and improve student health by encouraging the desire to engage in routine physical activity, set for themselves the objective to improve their knowledge, skills and ability to work creatively.

Discussion

In this research are confirmed the reasons why people want to be physical education teachers, which have been found in other investigations (Evans, Williams, 1989; Mawer, 1995; Capel, 2005). In Latvia the main reason is: respondents like sports (60%). Only for 17% of PE teachers the reason for choosing the profession was willingness to transfer their knowledge, working with youth; this finding confirms Lithuanian scientist investigations (Lapeniene, Bruneckiene, 2010), that teachers are rather driven by other sources of motivation than by intrinsic interest in teaching. Sport teacher choice of profession mostly (77%) is determined by intrinsic motivation, i.e., liking sports and willingness to work with youth. The fulfillment of basic need – autonomy – is evident in the obtained experience in self-determined and enjoyable profession. Therefore 77% of PE teachers are willing to direct their lives. In turn, investigations about extrinsically determined motivation (Ryan, Deci, 2002) in the choice of the profession confirm the views expressed by 23% of respondents: choice of profession was determined by the necessity to make use of the acquired education; there was no one else who could teach PE, „one has to do something for

living". This is an introjection, when respondents have incorporated the views or motives of other people, they do not direct their lives.

PE teacher extrinsic or intrinsic motivation in the choice of profession influences their satisfaction with work and teaching strategies. Respondents, whose choice of profession is intrinsically motivated (40%), consider that there are no disadvantages in PE teacher work. Respondents, whose choice of profession is extrinsically motivated, find a lot of more disadvantages in PE teacher work. As a disadvantage PE teachers consider lack of colleague understanding (6%). This fact gives evidence of PE teacher integration problems: they do not possess the sense of belonging to school collective. PE teacher sense of belonging to school collective is determined by skillful interpersonal relations. To promote PE teacher sense of belonging to school collective it is necessary to develop communicative competence. In turn, the disadvantage – too large number of students – could be associated with the necessity to improve PE teacher didactic competence. The investigation provides evidence: the more disadvantages respondents find in PE teacher work, the narrower is the goal of PE, which they set, for example, the following: students will have acquired movement skills in specific tasks. Therefore the improvement of PE teacher planning competence promotes the sense of professional competence and satisfaction with work, which positively affects the achievement of goals, set for study subject "Sports" in the Standard. For example, Latvian Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No.141 (Appendix 19) of March 3, 2008 reflects the Standard in study subject of "Sports" for Grades 1-9. The goal of study subject "Sports" is to strengthen and improve student health, promote the acquisition of knowledge, develop physical abilities and basic skills in systematic physical activities, not only the acquisition of movement skills in specific tasks.

Intrinsically motivated physical education teachers are more interested in teaching students, but extrinsically motivated sports teachers are affected by external pressure, they think of student competition results (8%), and they more tend to control their students rather than teach them. Intrinsically motivated sports teachers can be described by mastery: desire to achieve progress in order to make something better, they set for themselves the goal to improve their knowledge, skills and ability to work creatively. The study shows that intrinsic motivation is stable during PE teacher's career.

Conclusions

In the choice of PE teacher profession dominates intrinsic motivation (77%), but for others the choice of profession is determined by extrinsic motivation. PE teachers` intrinsic motivation in the choice of profession

positively affects job satisfaction, enjoyment of teaching, further professional competence development and usefulness to the community. Such relationships enabled teachers to concentrate on their work and be capable to perform their tasks well. Results show that in planning competent PE teachers set learning outcomes, which correspond to children development based on standards in the subject of PE.

Respondents who have just started their PE teacher career and work only from 1 to 3 years do not have a sense of autonomy and they lack interest in teaching students, the consequences are related to problems with planning competence. Such a relationship means that practice without analysis and reflection does not lead to professional growth. PE teacher professional growth can be achieved by mentoring of reflective practice which is needed for the PE teacher in the period of starting the career.

There is a gender difference in views on the advantages of PE teacher work ($U = 4053.5$, $p = .01$). PE teachers (males) more frequently think that there are no advantages in PE teacher work ($r_s = -.18$, $p = .009$). Extrinsically determined motivation in the choice of profession involves distinguishing a lot more disadvantages in PE teacher work, which in turn indicates problems with communicative and didactic competence.

The barrier is PE teacher extrinsically determined motivation in the choice of profession and their beliefs about teaching, which do not change over time; this is an obstacle to shift PE teacher further professional development program orientation to PE teacher capability development through reflection and analytical processes in meaningful educational practice.

Physical education teacher professional development can be achieved by reconstructing PE teacher professional further education programs, which are more grounded in school life, through offering a choice in the development of professional competences, thus creating a learning environment, in which PE teachers motivate themselves, thus promoting the development of a sense of professional autonomy. The support of PE teacher sense of autonomy is the key in increasing their interest in teaching students and in choosing appropriate teaching strategies, which is a cornerstone of the development of teacher ability to provide an excellent education to students. Future research is needed to explore how new generation PE teacher professional further education programs can have a greater influence on teacher beliefs, practice and student learning outcomes.

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