

Preferred Styles of Conflict Management by the Faculty Members of Various Educational Institutions of Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh

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ABSTRACT

Societies as a whole and school education have been undergoing a traumatic rate of change. Such change automatically brings more conflict into organizational life, conflict between our values and attitudes and what we find happening around us, conflict by the tremendous increase of information and people to whom we are exposed, conflict because of the complexity of changing organizations and resulting strain on ability to mesh personal goals with organizational requirements.

Modern educational managers have been forced to admit that conflict does exist and will continue to do so. To manage conflicts and develop co-operation effectively in institutions it is necessary to understand the nature and dynamics of conflict.

This study employs an empirical research design to examine the possible causes of conflict in schools, identify suitable conflict resolution strategies, and provide suggestions for a more innovative approach to conflict resolution that will improve school performance.

Key Words: *Organizational Conflict, Conflict Management, Conflict Resolution Measures, Educational Institutions, Preferred Styles of Conflict Management, Bhopal, India.*

INTRODUCTION

Every workplace experiences a variety of conflicts. However, a lot of people are blind to the internal conflicts that exist within the company. The definition of conflict is the difference in viewpoints between two people or groups. Today's organizations deal with more conflict as a result of globalization and growing competition. People's differences in personality, values, attitudes, perceptions, and backgrounds are amplified by these forces.

Arguments will inevitably arise and are a normal part of doing business. Teams therefore need to be able to methodically settle disputes so that the positive

effects are as great as possible and the negative ones are as small as possible. In the same way, management can foster conflict by encouraging a culture that welcomes healthy disagreements. Effective conflict management eventually results in a high-performing organization. When handled properly, conflicts do not have to be negative to be beneficial. In light of this, the management and the team must cooperate in order to take advantage of the possible advantages of conflict in order to enhance both the caliber of their interactions and performances.

In groups and organizations, conflict is an inevitable part of existence. It is an essential component of organization. Conflict will inevitably arise because of the very structure of organizations. Individuals in the first organization have different attitudes, perceptions, and personalities. Second, those individuals are given different jobs that often promote competition, impart unequal degrees of status, and have contrasting characteristics. Lastly, organizations frequently contain groups with divergent opinions. To accomplish their objectives, people compete for limited resources. As a result, conflict is an unavoidable feature of social interactions and a natural byproduct of the relationships and dependencies among members of an organization.

Organizational conflict can originate from a variety of sources and take many different forms. Effective conflict management is a crucial prerequisite for healthy interpersonal relationships. It is important to try to settle disputes in a way that advances each of their individual and organizational goals.

Individuals with high need for results and excellence fight the battle alone. They tend to avoid situations of conflict or if conflict arises, they arbitrate to impose the best solution according to their wisdom.

To manage conflict effectively and exploiting the situation for the healthy growth and development of organisation, it is necessary to understand and analyze the nature and dynamics of conflict. This study is aimed to find out the various styles of conflict management being preferred by the faculty members. Study is also aimed to suggest the appropriate mode in different situation to manage conflicts effectively and promote co-operation.

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

Perceived incompatibilities that usually arise from interference or opposition are referred to as conflicts. Therefore, using techniques to constructively address these perceived differences is conflict management. Managers had been trained for many years to see conflict as a bad thing. On the other hand, conflict can be

dysfunctional or functional. Functional conflict has the potential to boost work effort and improve task performance, whereas dysfunctional conflict is harmful and reduces productivity. "We have come to recognize and acknowledge the benefits dealing with conflict affords," note Borisoff and Victor (1998). Our differences inspire us to communicate, challenge one another, and come up with original solutions to issues."

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT'S EVOLUTION

Early approaches to conflict management operated under the presumption that all conflicts were harmful and would eventually serve organizational objectives poorly. Thus, avoiding conflicts and managing them were interchangeable terms. There was basically only one possible outcome left for the parties involved in the conflict: a win-lose situation. Such situations would make the loser feel deceived, which would then fuel further hostility. Thus, conflict was seen by most managers as something that needed to be removed from their workplace. Throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century and up until the mid-1940s, this avoidance-based approach to conflict management was popular.

Nevertheless, most conflicts cannot be resolved by conflict avoidance. The common result of conflict avoidance is that the people being avoided feel as though they are being ignored. Furthermore, avoiding conflict usually doesn't resolve the perceived disagreements that sparked it in the first place. As a result, the conflict's initial cause persists unchecked and is only momentarily contained until another altercation occurs and the same unresolved issues resurface. As a result, conflict avoidance techniques are not very helpful over time.

In conflict management, the human relations perspective predominated from the late 1940s until the mid-1970s. According to this point of view, conflict will inevitably arise in any organizational setting. Since conflict was seen as inevitable, the human relations approach advocated learning to live with conflict. Stated differently, conflict is unavoidable and could even be advantageous to the organization. Nurmi and Darling claim that this is the time when the term "conflict management" was first used.

A new perspective on organizational conflict has surfaced since the middle of the 1970s. The interactionist approach is this theoretical stance. Shelton and Darling, for instance, contend that conflict is a prerequisite for advancement on both an individual and organizational level. Administrators are urged to "embrace conflict and use it for continuous transformation."

Organizational conflict can be caused by several things, including a lack of resources, conflicts between personalities, disparities in power and status, divergent goals, and poor communication.

RECOGNIZING THE TYPE OF CONFLICT

No two people are the same. Conflicts over personal values are likely to arise between people due to the baggage of experiences, beliefs, and perceptions. The workplace is not an exception to the rule that conflict is inevitable (Baskerville, 2002).

Individual differences in opinion can give rise to a variety of conflicts within an organization. While some conflicts might not be good for the organization, others might be because they bring about changes that could be accepted. Constructive disagreements known as functional conflicts can enhance an individual's or group's performance (Sims, 2002). They raise people's awareness of issues, which improves the development of employee-friendly solutions.

They also strengthen working relationships because it feels good for both parties to resolve conflicts between them. Just letting go of the tensions and cooperating to solve the issues raises everyone's morale, one of the key determinants for functional conflict is that it arises from someone who challenges old policies or thinking with new ways of solving the problems.

Conversely, a damaging argument between two individuals is known as dysfunctional conflict. It emphasizes the conflict itself above the tasks at hand. Conflicts of this nature also lead to skewed perceptions, stereotyping, inadequate communication, and a decline in productivity. When this conflict has an emotional or behavioral root, it can be easily recognized. Disagreements stemming from personal animosity and bitterness are unhealthy (Sims, 2002). People who are involved in dysfunctional conflicts usually lose more in the conflict than they win. As a result, managers ought to encourage constructive disagreements and settle destructive ones. This is the secret to handling conflicts well.

RESOLVING THE CONFLICT

Many people view conflict as something bad. Conflict is not always bad, though. When handled skillfully, conflict can give rise to productive and positive communication. In order to prevent dysfunctional conflicts from occurring, proper conflict management is crucial. To manage conflict, one can use Thomas's (1976) conflict-resolution approach. The degree of assertiveness and cooperativeness are the two factors to be taken into account in this approach.

These two indicate the extent to which each party is prepared to meet the needs of the other.

The manager can use any one of the following five conflict resolution strategies by combining these elements: avoiding, competing, compromising, collaborating, and accommodating. Since collaborative methods satisfy the needs of all parties involved, they are thought to be the most effective in producing favorable results. In particular, this can be used to combine the two parties' perspectives and secure commitments by reaching a consensus that takes into account the parties' concerns (Sims, 2002).

CONFLICT RESOLUTION TECHNIQUES

A variety of solutions have been developed and proposed by management theorists to address conflict within organizations. The Conflict Resolution Grid, the product of widely recognized research presented by Thomas and Kilmann, is shown in Figure 1 with its various components.



Figure- 1 Conflict Management Styles with reference to the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument

Based on the two dimensions of assertiveness and cooperativeness, Thomas and Kilmann developed a conflict-handling grid with five conflict management styles. While cooperativeness measures a person's willingness to permit or assist another party in achieving its goals or outcomes, assertiveness measures a person's drive to achieve one's own goals, objectives, and outcomes. Depending on the situational context and the personalities of the parties involved, any one of the five conflict resolution techniques may be suitable.

1. Avoiding Conflict Resolution Style.

Both assertiveness and cooperativeness are low in the avoidance style. Stated differently, the manager exhibits a lack of cooperation in aiding others to attain their objectives, while also not vigorously pursuing their own desired results in the circumstances. There is never a direct discussion or resolution of the initial issue, disagreement, or circumstance. Avoidance tactics, however, might be justified if the manager believes the problem is unimportant. When there is no possibility of winning or when causing a disruption would be extremely expensive, it might also be a suitable strategy to employ.

2. Competing Conflict Resolution Style.

The alternative approach to conflict resolution is commonly referred to as the "win-lose" strategy. With a high assertiveness level and low cooperativeness, this type of manager puts others' needs last in order to achieve their own desired results. This strategy might be useful in situations where prompt, decisive action is required, like in an emergency. Additionally, it can be employed to counteract unpopular measures like sudden cost reductions.

3. Accommodating Conflict Resolution Style.

A high level of cooperation is evident in this style. It's been called obligatory as well. When a manager employs this approach, they subjugate their own objectives, goals, and desired outcomes to facilitate the achievement of others' objectives and goals. When someone realizes they are wrong or when one side of the argument is more important than the other, then this kind of behavior is appropriate. Maintaining the parties' future relationship depends on this method of conflict resolution.

4. Compromising Conflict Resolution Style.

A high level of cooperation is evident in this style. It has been called obligatory as well. When a manager employs this approach, they subjugate their own objectives, goals, and desired outcomes in order to facilitate the achievement of others' objectives and goals. When someone realizes they are wrong or when one side of the argument is more important than the other, then this kind of behavior is appropriate. Maintaining the parties' future relationship depends on this method of conflict resolution.

5. Collaborating Conflict Resolution Style.

This strategy, which scores highly on cooperativeness and assertiveness, is frequently referred to as the win-win situation. The parties involved collaborate creatively to accomplish the objectives and desired results for each other. When complicated issues call for an original or creative synthesis of ideas, the collaboration style is appropriate. The drawback of this strategy is that reaching a consensus may take a long time and requires genuine effort from all parties involved in the collaborative process.

Only the strategy that uses collaboration as a mode of conflict management defies the win-lose paradigm out of the five modes shown in the matrix. Although relying on the win-win solution has almost become second nature, this was not the authors' original intent. They didn't dismiss win-lose arrangements out of hand. Rather, different situations call for different strategic approaches to conflict management. For example, the best option in a dispute between two bidders could be to use competing strategies that have a winner and a loser. Ultimately, the goal in this kind of scenario is to secure the contract for one's own business. Typically, the only way to win the contract is to disadvantage the rival supplier, who consequently ends up losing out.

OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH:

- To ascertain the preferred style of conflict management among educators.
- To provide suggestions based on study for effective conflict management in educational institutions.

METHODOLOGY

Study Plan

The study used a descriptive research design bolstered by documentary analysis to achieve its main goals. To gather the necessary data, the researcher used a survey-opinionnaire as the primary research instrument and gave out checklists to instructors and educational administrators at the different educational institutions.

- Collection of information about Educational Institution.
- Visits: Frequent visits were undertaken to understand the working ethos prevalent there.
- Interaction: Deep interaction was carried out with all levels of persons in the organization.
- Interviews: Informal interview was carried out with a sample of faculties involved in the research study

- Discussion: Many discussions were held with the senior teachers to understand the organisational goals

Study Location

The current research was carried out in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh and the Opinionnaire and other relevant data were then collected and compiled from four schools run by the same society / trust in Bhopal). These are:

- A. State Board Middle School (Co-ed)
- B. Senior Secondary School for Girls
- C. CBSE School for Girls, and
- D. CBSE School for Boys

Universe

The population for this study consisted of sixty-two (62) faculty members as respondents from different Educational Institutions to determine the most common organizational-related conflict and the most preferred styles of Conflict Management.: Respondents ranged from PPRT's (Preprimary Teachers) , TGT's (Trained Graduate Teachers) & PGT's (Post Graduate Teachers) from the identified Schools under study.

Schools identified for study	Distribution of Respondents
A. State Board Middle School (Co-ed)	14
B. Senior Secondary School for Girls	12
C. CBSE School for Girls	15
D. CBSE School for Boys	21

Tools

There were four parts to the opinionnaire. Part – I of the opinionnaire asks about the faculty members' age, gender, duration of service, educational background, and trainings completed. Part -II gathered information on typical organizational conflicts in institutions and Survey the views about managing of conflicts; Part-III included a semi-structured interview schedule with faculty members to find out possible sources of conflict in the classroom, decide on the best methods for resolving conflicts, and provide suggestions, based on the results, for a more innovative approach to conflict management that would improve academic performance.

RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

The questionnaire used in this study is an instrument developed by Udai Pareek which is adopted from the book 'Managing Conflict and Collaboration' of Dr. Udai Pareek. This instrument is Opinionnaire, designed to survey the views about managing of organisational conflicts. This instrument is used in this study effectively to find out the preferred styles of Conflict Management of faculty members.

Dr. Udai Pareek has also developed a model on Conflict Management. In this model he has suggested 8 styles. The instrument contains twenty-four items (statements) out of these 24 items, three items are designed to match with each style of Conflict Management mentioned in Udai Pareek's Model and was approved by six specialists to ensure the instrument's reliability.

DATA INTERPRETATION

Statistical tools for data analysis included using the statistical package for social science, or SPSS, to encode the frequencies in the computer.

RESEARCH FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

Opinion on preferred styles of Conflict Management of Faculty Members of all four schools is analysed below :

Name of the School : State Board Middle School (Co-ed)

Respondents	Total Score for Conflict Management								Dominant Style
	R	W	N	CO	CM	AR	AP	D	
1	7	9	12	7	13	11	10	12	CM
2	10	12	10	6	12	9	11	10	CM
3	5	12	12	11	14	11	10	10	CM
4	3	7	14	7	12	10	9	9	N
5	9	10	14	6	15	14	12	9	CM
6	7	11	13	9	10	11	11	12	N
7	7	9	14	10	11	9	12	9	N
8	12	11	13	8	13	12	10	11	CM / N
9	4	10	13	4	14	12	11	12	CM
10	6	9	13	11	11	12	9	10	N
11	9	12	13	9	10	12	11	9	N
12	6	9	13	8	11	11	9	8	N
13	4	10	15	7	10	10	9	10	N
14	8	10	9	8	11	9	12	9	AP
	97	141	178	111	167	153	146	140	N

R = Resignation ; W = Withdrawal ; N = Negotiation ; CO = Confrontation
CM = Compromise ; AR = Arbitration ; AP = Appeasement ; D = Diffusion

ANALYSIS

In the opinion of the faculty members of State Board Middle School (Co-ed), the preferred styles of Conflict Management are as follows:

1. Negotiation
2. Compromise
3. Arbitration
4. Appeasement
5. Withdrawal
6. Diffusion
7. Confrontation
8. Resignation

Name of the School : Senior Secondary School for Girls

Respondents	Total Score for Conflict Management								Dominant Style
	R	W	N	CO	CM	AR	AP	D	
1	5	10	13	6	11	10	9	5	N/CM
2	6	9	14	9	14	13	9	11	D
3	10	12	9	6	11	8	10	13	N
4	8	12	13	5	12	12	12	12	CM
5	8	11	12	11	13	9	9	6	N
6	9	13	15	12	11	10	10	13	N
7	4	8	12	7	10	8	11	9	N
8	3	9	15	10	11	12	11	8	N
9	4	10	12	10	11	8	9	11	N
10	6	12	14	6	13	11	8	10	N
11	6	11	10	14	11	6	7	10	CO
12	7	11	14	10	11	8	10	11	N
	76	128	139	106	139	115	115	119	N/CM

R = Resignation ; W = Withdrawal ; N = Negotiation ; CO = Confrontation
 CM = Compromise ; AR = Arbitration ; AP = Appeasement ; D = Diffusion

ANALYSIS

In the opinion of faculty members of Senior Secondary School for Girls the preferred styles of Conflict Management are as follows:

1. Negotiation
2. Compromise
3. Withdrawal
4. Arbitration
5. Appeasement
6. Confrontation
7. Diffusion
8. Resignation

Name of the School : CBSE School for Girls

Respondents	Total Score for Conflict Management								Dominant Style
	R	W	N	CO	CM	AR	AP	D	
1	6	5	13	7	14	10	10	7	CM
2	6	7	13	9	10	12	8	11	N
3	4	11	15	8	10	6	10	7	N
4	9	11	14	8	13	11	11	9	N
5	6	7	12	8	8	12	7	6	N / AR
6	7	9	12	10	13	11	10	10	CM
7	9	9	14	9	12	12	10	12	N
8	8	10	9	8	11	9	12	9	AP
9	4	10	15	7	10	10	9	10	N
10	6	9	13	8	11	11	9	8	N
11	9	12	13	9	10	12	11	9	N
12	6	9	13	11	11	12	9	10	N
13	4	10	13	4	14	12	11	12	CM
14	12	11	13	8	13	12	10	11	CM / N
15	7	9	14	10	11	9	12	9	N
	103	131	196	123	171	164	159	139	N

R = Resignation ; W = Withdrawal ; N = Negotiation ; CO = Confrontation
 CM = Compromise ; AR = Arbitration ; AP = Appeasement ; D = Diffusion

ANALYSIS

In the opinion of faculty members of CBSE School for Girls the preferred styles of Conflict Management are as follows”

1. Negotiation
2. Compromise
3. Arbitration
4. Appeasement
5. Diffusion
6. Withdrawal
7. Confrontation
8. Resignation

Respondents	Total Score for Conflict Management								Dominant Style
	R	W	N	CO	CM	AR	AP	D	
1	4	6	15	11	11	12	9	8	N
2	6	7	5	12	10	10	11	8	CO
3	4	6	15	5	15	13	8	5	M / CM
4	7	13	15	9	15	13	10	10	N / CM
5	7	9	12	9	12	10	11	11	N / CM
6	4	11	15	6	11	13	9	10	N
7	5	9	13	9	11	12	6	9	N
8	7	6	15	7	12	13	9	6	N
9	6	10	14	12	8	5	9	11	N
10	10	10	10	11	8	8	10	10	CO
11	12	9	15	7	11	12	10	11	N
12	9	7	14	8	13	12	11	10	N
13	9	12	14	10	12	10	10	7	N
14	7	8	14	7	11	12	9	10	N
15	6	8	14	7	14	14	11	14	N/CM/R/AP
16	9	8	11	7	12	12	12	14	D
17	11	11	12	9	12	12	12	11	N/CM/R/AP
18	9	11	14	10	9	8	11	7	N
19	9	11	13	9	10	8	10	9	N
20	11	11	9	11	13	9	6	10	CM
21	9	9	14	13	10	9	12	13	N
	241	191	273	189	240	227	206	204	N

R = Resignation ; W = Withdrawal ; N = Negotiation ; CO = Confrontation
 CM = Compromise ; AR = Arbitration ; AP = Appeasement ; D = Diffusion

ANALYSIS :

In the opinion of faculty members of CBSE School for Boys, the preferred styles of Conflict Management are as follows:

1. Negotiation
2. Resignation
3. Compromise
4. Arbitration
5. Appeasement
6. Diffusion
7. Withdrawal
8. Confrontation

OPINION ON CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLE

Combined opinion of faculty members of all four schools under study is given in following table –

Name of the School	Total Scores for Conflict Management								Diffusion
	Respondents	Resignation	Withdrawal	Negotiation	Confrontation	Compromise	Arbitration	Appealment	
SBMS	14	97	141	178	111	167	153	146	140
SSSG	12	76	128	139	106	139	115	115	119
CSFG	15	103	121	196	123	171	164	159	139
CSFB	21	241	191	273	189	240	227	206	204

Findings about preferred approach to managing conflicts

- The most favoured method of managing conflicts, according to the faculty members of all the schools involved in the research, is Negotiation.
- According to the opinions of three schools' faculty members, the second most preferred method of managing conflicts is the Compromise style.
- All faculty members from all schools agree that Negotiation is the most preferred method of handling conflicts.

Following a thorough discussion with the faculty, it was determined that interpersonal conflicts accounted for the majority of conflicts. In many cases interpersonal conflicts were converted to inter group conflict, increasing its area and intensity of hostility because it is observed that timely intervention of education managers was missing in some institutions. Otherwise, be female teaching staff in majority, they have avoided entering conflicts.

MAJOR CAUSES OF CONFLICT

Major causes of conflict generation are mainly:

- a) Personality differences and clashes
- b) Power differences and power struggle
- c) Leadership styles
- d) Egoism, dignity and prestige issue
- e) Rigid procedures
- f) Sudden change in procedures and practices
- g) Sharing Resources
- h) Lack of communications
- i) Job dissatisfaction
- j) Status inconsistency
- k) Lack of responsibility
- l) Role ambiguity

CONCLUSION

Preventing negative or dysfunctional conflict while simultaneously promoting conflict that fosters performance and innovation is the primary objective of conflict management. When a dysfunctional dispute cannot be avoided, the objective is to reduce it to the least amount possible.

The primary objective of the management is to redirect the possible dispute in a constructive direction so that it might be advantageous rather than detrimental, as was the case with Honda. There are tested methods for handling disagreement that benefit both the workforce and the company. But a lot relies on the specifics of each case. As a result, the manager needs to be familiar with both the organization's culture and the employees that work for him.

Finally, it's important to understand how organizational culture influences the likelihood of conflicts. While some firms have a culture that discourages people from voicing their disagreements, others don't have as many restrictions. Honda is only one of the several examples of a successful business that profited from highlighting the cultural clash. Based on its experience, one might draw the conclusion that conflict can foster innovation and creativity.

The causes like resource allocations, interdependency, incompressibility of goals, competitive reward systems, communication barriers etc. are not surfaced predominantly in conflicts. The causes related to personal variable are major causes like power Struggle. Personality clashes, egoism. Leadership styles, ideology and Role ambiguity. These causes can simply be removed by appropriate training in areas organizational behaviour and management.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following action plan is suggested to resolve the conflict effectively in Educational institutions –

1. Transfer of one party to conflict is the major strategy and mode of intervention used to resolve or terminate the conflict. But this is not a positive and approach-oriented strategy. Educational Managers should try to bring the confronting parties at negotiation table to elaborate and search for the joint solution for real problems facing institutions in conflicting situation.
2. If negotiation mode or strategy is found deficient to adopt in “Specific situation” then, educational managers should try to adopt “arbitration” or “compromise” mode to attempt to resolve the conflict at initial stage for reducing antagonism between two parties and clearing the obstacles in the path of negotiation and collaboration.

3. Both "collaboration" and "negotiation" are mature modes that require ongoing effort and specialized knowledge. Education managers should hone the following abilities to effectively resolve disagreements.

- Communication abilities;
- Problem-solving abilities;
- Negotiation abilities, etc.

Therefore, training programmes to develop such skills in educational managers must be arranged frequently.

4. A thorough understanding of conflict, its nature, causes, and cure are essential to successful conflict management. Faculty members must have a complete arsenal of conflict resolution strategies, tactics, to make appropriate decision in conflict.

5. Major causes for conflict in educational organizations are related to personality variables; hence training programmes for personality development should be arranged frequently.

6. Educational Managers should be invariably fair while treating both the parties to the conflict equally.

7. Intervention in conflict should be done at appropriate time to defuse the hidden anger or frustration before it is passed on to others.

8. Decision affecting others should be made by participative approach. Culture of participative management should be developed in institute.

9. Effective communication should be promoted.

10. In conflict intervention, the human aspect of parties must be considered.

11. The training needs of faculty members and other staff members should be identified to improve performance.

12. "Performance Appraisal" system should be effectively used in democratic way.

13. Special Team building programme should be conducted in institution to promote team working spirit.

14. The roles and duties of faculty and other staff members should be defined clearly. Responsibility and accountability should be classified.

15. For trivial matters, extreme dominant mode of behaviours should not be used.

16. To optimize the benefits and minimize the drawbacks of diversity, organizations need to be able to manage it effectively. Members must be willing to voice opposing opinions and engage in spirited debate if the potential benefits of diversity are to be acknowledged.

17. Open dialogue and critical analysis regarding the assignments must be promoted. Due to the likelihood that participants will present and evaluate various solutions, performance will improve.

18 To engage in productive debate in a socially acceptable environment, teams need to concentrate on the individual differences in terms of education, work experience, and functional expertise. This encourages high levels of productivity, inventiveness, and effective interaction.

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