

## **Job demand, Family Supportive Organizational Culture and Positive Spillover from Work-to-family among Employees in the Information Technology Enabled Services in India**

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### **Abstract**

With the economic reforms instituted since 1991, India has emerged as the preferred destination for Information Technology enabled Services in the global offshore Business Process Outsourcing market. In this exploratory study, the author examines the role of job demand, job control, support at the workplace (co-worker support, organizational support, supervisor support for work related issues, supervisor support for family related issues) and one's own coping resources on positive spillover from work-to-family among employees in the Information Technology enabled Services. Surveys were used to collect data and regression analyses indicated that high job control, supervisor support for family-related issues and one's own coping resources were significantly related to positive spillover from work-to-family and the direction of the relationships were positive. These results are discussed with respect to implications for policy and future research.

**Key words:** Job demand, Job control, Co-worker support, Supervisor support, Organizational support, Coping, Family supportive work culture.

### **1. Introduction**

In recent times, there has been a renewed interest in work and family research in India recently due to the sweeping economic changes along with the concomitant social and demographic changes in the family. With increased employment opportunities, more and more women are entering the workforce in large numbers (Department of Women and Child Development, Government of India, 2007). This increased labor force participation outside the home among women led to dual-earner/career families trying to balance their work and family responsibilities. Work-family balance has implications not only for individuals and families but for organizations and society as a whole (MacDermid, 2005; Rajadhyaksha, 2009).

The work-family interface is characterized by various mechanisms that link the domain of work and the domain of the family such as spillover, compensation, segmentation, resource drain, congruence and conflict (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000) as also work-family facilitation (Grzywacz & Marks, 2000) and work-family enrichment (Greenhaus & Powell, 2002). This paper focuses on the positive spillover from work-to-family among employees in the Information technology enabled Services (ITeS) for two reasons. First, research on ITeS sector is in its infancy and more research is needed to understand how employees in ITeS sector manage their work and family demands. Second, research in this area has focused on the negative spillover and stress experienced by employees in the ITeS sector (Subramanian & Vinothkumar, 2009; Suri & Rizvi, 2008), leading to high attrition rates (Budhwar, Varma, Singh & Dhar, 2006; Mehta, Armenakis, Mehta, & Irani, 2006). Another unique aspect of this paper is that most researchers have studied the effect of resources in the workplace by examining only one or two aspects of support in the workplace.

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In this paper, not only is an attempt made to study each of the three supports available in the workplace, viz., organizational support, supervisor support and co-worker support but a further attempt is made to delineate the supervisor's support for work-related and family-related aspects as the frontline supervisor plays a very crucial role in the subordinate's life; the supervisor's decisions about the subordinate's workload and work-related stressors has a direct impact on his/her family life (Hopkins, 2005).

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Job demand**

Jobs in the ITeS sector are very demanding with daily and monthly targets that need to be met. Moreover, pay and benefits are linked to performance – employees' own performance and that of their team's. One such incentive is performance based incentive scheme. The parameters for calculation of performance-based monetary benefit are process performance, that is, speed, accuracy and productivity of each process. Also, when people in India work with clients in other countries such as US, UK, Germany they are engaged in a new kind of shift work; employees work evening and/or graveyard shift because of the time difference between India, US, UK and Europe (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2005). In an exploratory study of employees in the ITeS sector, 79% reported that the call center job is a physically draining one, 76% reported that call center job affected their health in some way or other (Budhwar, Varma, Malhotra & Mukherjee 2009). Furthermore, Mehta, Armenakis, Mehta, and Irani (2006) in a qualitative study of HR managers reported that jobs in ITeS are very stressful and this leads to high burnout and attrition.

#### **2.2.1 Role Theory**

Role theory has been widely used in trying to understand how individuals manage the varying demands of the different roles that they perform and originally was discussed from a conflict perspective. When a person experienced competing demands within a particular role (role conflict) or when a person was unsure of the type of behavior that was expected in a particular role (role ambiguity), it could lead to conflict between work and other life roles. Later the scarcity hypothesis and the enhancement hypothesis were expounded to better explain the possible outcomes of inter-role conflict.

#### **2.2.2 The Scarcity Hypothesis**

According to the scarcity hypothesis, initially discussed by Goode (1960), individuals have a limited amount of time, energy and attention. Consequently people with greater number of roles deplete their resources and experience role overload as has been suggested in the literature for the high attrition rates among employees in the ITeS sector - assuming pseudo-identities, learning a foreign accent, high burnout due to the long work hours, shift work, a mis-match between work and social life, and lack of work-family balance for employees (Singh, 2005; Sushmul, 2005 as cited in Budhwar, Varma, Singh & Dhar, 2006). From the above literature, it is hypothesized that,

*Hypothesis 1: Job demand will be negatively related to positive spillover from work-to-family.*

#### **2.2.3 The Enhancement Hypothesis**

The enhancement approach, on the other hand, suggests that employees involved in multiple roles gain role privileges, overall status security, resources for status enhancement and enrichment of the personality and ego gratification. The benefits of role accumulation would far outweigh any stress that an employee experienced resulting in net gratification (Barnett & Baruch, 1986; Marks, 1977; Sieber, 1974). Greenhaus and Powell (2006) further elaborated this model to offer five categories of resources – skills and perspectives (coping skills, interpersonal skills), psychological and physical resources (optimism, self-efficacy), social-capital resources (information, networking skills), flexibility, and material resources; these resources enabled an individual to improve performance in the other role either directly or indirectly. It is important to study positive spillover from work-to-family as it has consequences for employees' work (job satisfaction, turnover intention), non-work (life satisfaction) and health (both physical and mental).

### **2.3 Job Control**

The concept of job control (such as autonomy, workgroup control, task and routine control) relates to how workers can reduce or cope with exposure to occupational stressors.

There is some evidence that job control (particularly, task and routine control) is significantly related to work-family conflict and the direction of the relationship is negative (Ramadoss, 2008). Tausing and Fenwick (2001) observed that alternate work schedule (such as shift work) does not necessarily lead to work-family conflict. They reported that “being a parent” was the most consistent characteristic among the family-related variables that was associated with alternate work schedules and stress. They also reported that perceived control of work schedules increased work-family balance, net of work and family characteristics. It is hypothesized that,

*Hypothesis 2: Job control will be positively related to positive spillover from work-to-family.*

#### **2.4.1 Organizational Support**

Support in the workplace for employees to manage their work and family demands include organizational support, supervisor support and co-worker support (Jones, Flynn & Kelloway, 1995). Organizational support includes both formal family-supportive policies and benefits, such as those administered through Human Resources departments, and informal family-supportive work cultures. In a study of dual-earner couples in the sandwich generation, Colton (2004) reported that organizational support was significantly related to positive spillover from work-to-family and the direction as positive. Specifically with respect to India, organizations in the ITeS sector offer various work-life benefits such as job sharing, schedule flexibility, services such as gymnasiums, day-care facilities, cafeteria, laundry facilities and rest area with futons to sleep on during breaks (Uma Devi, 2002) in order to help their employees balance their work and non-work lives. There is some concern among experts, however, that organizational support for employees’ work-family issues has not been very successful in helping employees in the ITeS sector in India balance their work-life demands (Rajadhyaksha, 2009) but this needs to be researched. It is therefore hypothesized that,

*Hypothesis 3: Organizational support will be positively related to positive spillover from work-to-family.*

#### **2.4.2 Co-worker Support**

A perusal of literature reveals that there is more research on organizational support and supervisor support than there is on co-worker support. Co-worker support has been found to be associated with organizational outcomes such as turnover intentions (AbuAlRub, 2010; Glass & Riley, 1998; Jonas & Butler, 1980), job satisfaction (Ducharme & Martin, 2000; Roxburgh, 1999). For the individual, co-worker support has been found to be associated with increased psychological well-being (Beehr, Jex, Stacy, & Murray, 1997), decreased role conflict (Jones & Butler, 1980) and increased positive spillover from work-to-family (Colton, 2004). It is therefore hypothesized that,

*Hypothesis 4: Co-worker support will be positively related to positive spillover from work-to-family.*

#### **2.4.3 Supervisor Support**

While organizational support for employees’ work-family issues is important, evidence from the research literature suggests that adoption of family-friendly policies at the organizational level alone does not necessarily equate to corresponding practices (Allen, 2001; Kossek, 2005). Hopkins (2005) observed that frontline supervisors have direct influence on subordinates’ workload and work-related stressors, which has an impact on the extent to which a subordinate’s work role interferes with his/her family role(s). Family-supportive organizational initiatives such as flexibility with respect to work hours, schedules and timing are contingent on the discretion of the supervisor. Family-supportive supervisors help to reduce their subordinates’ work-related concerns which then help the subordinate to fully participate in family activities (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000).

Although there is ample research evidence that supervisor support is very important for subordinates’ work-family issues, not all supervisors are supportive of their subordinates at all times. As agents of the organization, supervisors communicate the organization’s goals and values to subordinates and evaluate subordinates’ performance. Subordinates’ organizational rewards (merit pay, skill training) and working conditions (greater autonomy, recognition from upper-level management) are contingent upon supervisor appraisals. Supervisors may provide support either by the presence of supportive behaviors (eg., provide information, instrumental aid, mentoring) or by the absence of non-supportive behaviors (eg., prevent use of family friendly programs and benefits by employees or favor employees that do not use these programs).

Supervisor support has been found to be associated with lower work-family conflict (Anderson et al., 2002; Goff et al., 1990), lower level of stress at work (Frone, Yardley, & Markel, 1997), higher organizational commitment (Thompson et al., 2004) and higher job satisfaction (Thomas & Ganster, 1995).

Supervisor support is critical for the subordinate and comprises of two aspects – support for work-related issues and support for family-related issues. Ideally, one would expect that supervisors are supportive of their subordinates' work- and family-related issues but this may or may not be the case and needs to be investigated independently. A perusal of the literature reveals that researchers have used a global measure of supervisor support that typically includes both aspects of supervisor support, that is, work-related and family-related support. In this paper an attempt is made to delineate the two and it is therefore hypothesized that:

*Hypothesis 5a: Supervisor support for work-related issues will be positively related to positive spillover from work-to-family.*

*Hypothesis 5b: Supervisor support for family-related issues will be positively related to positive spillover from work-to-family.*

## **2.5 Coping Ability**

French, Caplan and Van Harrison (1982) defined effective coping as the quality of the fit between the environmental demands and the person. This notion was further elaborated by adding on a dynamic component to it; coping was defined as a process that depended on the shifting work demands and settings and a personal outlook (Lazarus, 2000). Employees working in the ITeS sector in India typically work long hours and/or non-normative work schedules. But not all employees are stressed out all the time as individuals find ways to cope with the stress. The subjective experience of stress is further exacerbated (or decreased) depending on one's coping strategy which then has a domino effect on the spillover from work to family. It is hypothesized that:

*Hypothesis 6: Coping ability will be positively related to positive spillover from work-to-family.*

## **3. Methodology**

### **3.1 Sample and Procedure**

Human resources managers of various ITeS centers in south and western India were contacted and permission to recruit participants was obtained. Due to heightened security in these centers, the investigator was allowed access to the reception area and cafeteria. Research participants were recruited from the cafeteria when they were there for their break periods. Snowball technique was also used to recruit participants for the study. A total of 774 respondents participated in the study and research participants were from 54 organizations from three cities in western India and one city in south India. Participants had the option to use the survey in either electronic format or paper-pencil format.

A majority of the sample of employees surveyed in the ITeS centers were predominantly male (79 %); seventy-six percent of the respondents reported as being single, 23% reported as being married and 1% included divorced, separated and widowed. Nineteen percent of the sample reported as living in extended family and 76% of the respondents reported as living in nuclear family, that is, living with parents and siblings if one was single and living with spouse and/or children if one was married. This was a relatively young sample; the mean age of the respondents was 25.46 years. These findings are similar to those reported in the literature (Budhwar, Varma, Malhotra, & Mukherjee, 2009; Mehta, Armenakis, Mehta, & Irani, 2006; Poster & Prasad, 2005) wherein employees in the Information Technology enabled Service sector in India tend to be relatively young in age. Total work experience reported was 3 years on average and tenure on the current job was 1.9 years on average. Employees were engaged in various types of services such as customer care and customer services, financial services, administrative services, health services such as medical transcription and content development services and worked in organizations that were both captive units and third-party service providers.

### **3.2 Measures**

The measure for job demand included items drawn from Fenwick & Olsen's (1986) scale and Karasek's (Karasek & Theorell, 1990) skill discretion scale. These items related to the degree to which a worker has to work hard, challenges in job about learning new skills, etc.

Factor analysis was done and a single factor was extracted using the criteria of eigenvalue greater than 1.00. Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ( $p < 0.01$ ) and all factor loadings were above 0.30. The measure for job control combined items from Fenwick and Olsen's (1986) scale related to decision latitude and items from Schat & Kelloway's (2000) scale related to predictability in the job and work environment, Factor analysis was done and a single factor was extracted using the criteria of eigenvalue greater than 1.00. Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ( $p < 0.01$ ) and all factor loadings were above 0.30. The measures for organizational support, co-worker support, supervisor support for work-related issues, supervisor support for family related issues, and positive spillover from work-to-family included items from the National Study of the Changing Workforce (2002). Coping was measured using items related to how one dealt with stress in the past weeks and included items such as finding comfort in one's religion or spirituality, talking to a counselor and following the guidance of elders, parents and/or older relatives.

### 3.3. Method of Analysis

Hierarchical regression analysis was done to test the hypothesis that low job demands, high co-worker support, high organizational support, high supervisor support for work-related issues, high supervisor support for family-related issues, and high coping resources will be associated with positive spillover from work-to-family.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Means, Standard Deviations, Reliabilities and Correlations of the Study Variables

Descriptive statistics such as the means, standard deviations, reliabilities and correlations of the variables included in the study are reported in table 1.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics, Correlations and Reliabilities of Study Variables**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Positive spillover	1							
2. Job demand	.03	1						
3. Job control	.10**	.35**	1					
4. Coworker support	.05	.14**	.24**	1				
5. Organizational support	.04	.11**	.17**	.24**	1			
6. Supervisor support for work issues	.07*	.15**	.19**	.27**	.50**	1		
7. Supervisor support for family issues	.19**	.17**	.23**	.22**	.40**	.59**	1	
8. Coping	.12**	.05	.15**	.13**	.11**	.08*	.11**	1
Mean	2.75	3.63	3.42	3.44	3.19	3.33	3.26	3.23
Standard deviation	1.28	.83	.63	.86	.62	.97	.89	1.07
Alpha	.71	.65	.63	.77	.76	.72	.70	.70

Note. \*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ .

As seen in table 1, on average, employees working in the information technology enabled services in India reported moderately high job demand (mean = 3.63, standard deviation = 0.83), co-worker support (mean = 3.44, standard deviation = 0.86), job control (mean = 3.42, standard deviation = 0.63), supervisor support for work-related issues (mean = 3.33, standard deviation = 0.97), followed by supervisor support for family-related issues (mean = 3.26, standard deviation = 0.89), coping (mean = 3.23, standard deviation = 1.07), organizational support (mean = 3.19, standard deviation = 0.62), and moderate level of positive spillover from work-to-family (mean = 2.75, standard deviation = 1.28). The reliability coefficients of the variables included in the study ranged from 0.63 to 0.77 which meets the minimum acceptable criterion of 0.60 for exploratory research as recommended by Hair et al (2006). Similarly, twenty-two out of twenty-eight correlations between the variables included in the study were found to be significant ( $p < 0.01$ ), two were found to be significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) and four had no significant correlations.

### 4.2 Regression results

Results of the hierarchical regression with the outcome variable positive spillover from work-to-family are reported in table 2. In the first step, job demand and job control were entered into the model. There was no significant relationship between job demands and positive spillover from work-to-family (Estimate = .01,  $SE = .05$ ); there was no support for hypothesis 1.

Job control was significantly related to positive spillover from work-to-family (Estimate = .24, *SE* = .07, *p* < .01) and the direction of the relation was positive. Hypothesis 2 was supported. *R*<sup>2</sup> change = 0.02 and *F* change = 7.38, *p* < 0.01 for step 1.

**Table 2: Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analyses**

	Positive spillover from Work-to-family ( <i>B</i> )
<u>Step 1:</u>	
Job demands	.01(.05)
Job control	.24**(.07)
$\Delta R^2$	.02**
<u>Step 2:</u>	
Job demands	-.03(.05)
Job control	.21**(.07)
Co-worker support	.03(.05)
Supervisor support for work issues	-.07(.05)
Supervisor support for family issues	.22**(.06)
Organizational support	-.02(.05)
$\Delta R^2$	.03**
<u>Step 3:</u>	
Job demands	-.03(.05)
Job control	.19**(.07)
Co-worker support	.02(.05)
Supervisor support for work issues	-.07(.05)
Supervisor support for family issues	.21**(.06)
Organizational support	-.04(.05)
Coping	.11**(.04)
$\Delta R^2$	.01**

Note. \* *p* < .05. \*\* *p* < .01.

In the next step the support variables were included into the model. There was no significant relationship between organizational support and positive spillover from work-to-family (Estimate = -.02, *SE* = .05). The relationship was not in the hypothesized direction and there was no support for hypothesis 3. There was no significant relationship between co-worker support and positive spillover from work-to-family (Estimate = .03, *SE* = .05). The relationship was in the hypothesized direction but there was no support for hypothesis 4. There was no significant relationship between supervisor support for work-related issues and positive spillover from work-to-family (Estimate = -.07, *SE* = .05). The relationship was not in the hypothesized direction and there was no support for hypothesis 5a. However, supervisor support for family-related issues was significantly related to positive spillover from work-to-family (Estimate = .22, *SE* = .06, *p* < .01) and the direction of the relation was positive. Hypothesis 5b was supported. *R*<sup>2</sup> change = 0.03 and *F* change = 4.47, *p* < 0.01 for step 2.

In the last step, coping was introduced into the model. Coping ability was found to be significantly related to positive spillover from work-to-family (Estimate = .11, *SE* = .04, *p* < .01) and the direction of the relation was positive. Hypothesis 6 was supported. *R*<sup>2</sup> change = 0.01 and *F* change = 7.88, *p* < 0.01 for step 3. The overall model predicted 6% of the variance in positive spillover from work-to-family (*R*<sup>2</sup> = .06) as reported by employees working in the information technology enabled services in India.

### **5. Discussion, Implications and Limitations**

The phenomenal growth of the ITeS sector put India on the global map and India is seen as one of the emerging economies. In a knowledge based sector such as ITeS sector, employees are a valuable resource.

A perusal of the literature shows that research in this area is scarce and what little research has been done has focused on the negative aspects such as long hours leading to high burnout and attrition (Budhwar, Varma, Singh & Dhar, 2006; Mehta, Armenakis, Mehta, & Irani, 2006). This paper makes an attempt to look at whether there is positive spillover from work-to-family for employees working in the information technology enabled services in India. Another unique aspect of this paper is that most researchers studying the effect of resources in the workplace look at only one or two aspects of support in the workplace. In this paper, not only is an attempt made to study each of the three supports available in the workplace, viz., organizational support, supervisor support and co-worker support but a further attempt is made to delineate the supervisor's support for work-related and family-related aspects as the frontline supervisor plays a very crucial role in the organization.

There was no support for hypothesis 1. Regression analysis revealed that high job demands were significantly associated with less positive spillover from work-to-family and the relationship was not significant. Jobs in the ITeS sector are very demanding with daily and monthly targets that need to be met. Moreover, pay and benefits are linked to performance – employees' own performance and that of their team's. One such incentive is performance based incentive scheme. The parameters for calculation of performance-based monetary benefit are process performance, that is, speed, accuracy and productivity of each process.

Hypothesis 2 was supported. Job control was significantly related to positive spillover from work-to-family. Previous research by Budhwar, Varma, Malhotra and Mukerjee (2009) reported that unlike ITeS jobs in the West, those in India are characterized by low job control which was one of the salient reasons for the high attrition in ITeS centers in India. In this study it was found that high job control is positively associated with positive spillover from work-to-family. For example, it was found that in one organization job control and productivity were tied together as follows: an individual working the evening shift 3.30 pm – 1.00 am could either work the entire shift (making 0 to less than 3 sales) or else go home as soon as he/she made 3 sales/day. In other instances, one is able to choose one's shift or start time and these aspects of job control contribute to positive spillover from work-to-family. Moreover, most people working in the ITeS sector in India work long hours or are engaged in shift work because they are working for clients in the US and UK. Tausig and Fenwick (2001) observed that alternate work schedules such as shift work does not necessarily lead to work-family conflict; perceived control of work schedules, in fact, increases work-family balance.

Among the support variables, supervisor support for family-related issues was significantly related to positive spillover from work-to-family whereas organizational support, co-worker support and supervisor support for work-related aspects were not related to positive spillover from work-to-family. There was no support for hypotheses 3, 4, and 5a but hypothesis 5b was supported. Similarly there was support for hypothesis 6. One's own coping ability was significantly related to positive-spillover from work-to-family. In the ITeS sector, organizations provide a wide range of work-life policies and benefits (Uma Devi, 2002). But adoption of family-friendly policies at the organizational level alone does not necessarily equate to corresponding practices (Allen, 2001; Kossek, 2005). Hopkins (2005) observed that frontline supervisors have direct influence on subordinates' workload and work-related stressors, which has an impact on the extent to which a subordinate's work role interferes with his/her family role(s). Moreover, Blair-Loy and Wharton (2002) reported that employees availed of family-friendly benefits only when they perceived their supervisors to be supportive. There is research evidence that stress can be alleviated by both support and one's own coping to stress (Subramanian & Vinothkumar, 2009; Suri & Rizvi, 2008). In this study it was found that individuals with high coping resources to combat stress (such as finding comfort in one's religion or spirituality, talking to a counselor and following the guidance of elders, parents and/or older relatives) reported more positive spillover from work-to-family.

From the overall model, it is seen that high job control, high supervisor support for family-related issues and high coping resources were significantly associated with positive spillover from work-to-family whereas job demand, organizational support, supervisor support for work-related issues and co-worker support were not significantly related to positive spillover from work-to-family. This model explained 6% of the variance in the incidence positive spillover from work-to-family among employees working in the ITeS sector. This paper extends our understanding of the situation of employees in the ITeS sector in India as most research in this area has focused on the negative spillover and stress experienced by employees in the ITeS sector (Subramanian & Vinothkumar, 2009; Suri & Rizvi, 2008), leading to high attrition rates (Budhwar, Varma, Singh & Dhar, 2006; Mehta, Armenakis, Mehta, & Irani, 2006).

Organizational support and co-worker support were not significantly associated with employees' self-reported health. Organizational support theory postulates that employees develop perceived organizational support to determine the organization's readiness to reward increased efforts made on its behalf, as also to meet their own socioemotional needs (Shanock & Eisenberger, 2006). Employees, therefore, trade effort and dedication to their organization for incentives such as pay, fringe benefits, esteem, approval and caring. In the ITeS sector, 'poaching of employees' by competitive firms leads to less identification with one's own organization as one is constantly looking for 'greener pastures' (Budhwar, Varma, Malhotra, & Mukherjee, 2009). Moreover, the primacy of supervisor support clearly triumphs over organizational support. It is not unknown for some supervisors to take their subordinates with them when they move from one organization to the next in search of better employment prospects. In this study, employees reported to have overall job tenure of 3 years on average but tenure on current job was 1.9 years. Similarly one can be supportive of co-workers only to the extent that it does not affect one's own pay and benefits and may be the reason why co-worker support was not significant.

As for limitations, the focus of this study was positive spillover from work-to-family; future studies need to focus on both positive and negative spillover from work-to-family and from family to work. Future research needs to look at how positive and negative spillover from work-to-family impact physical and psychological health outcomes for the individual and whether these are linked to turnover intentions. Majority of the respondents in this study were male and single. Future studies need to include more women and married people, particularly parents in the study. This survey used a cross-sectional research design; consequently causal statements cannot be made. Data was collected from single informants, namely, employees working in the ITeS sector. Data from multiple informants such as colleagues and supervisors will enrich the data quality in future studies. Also, surveys need to be complemented with other methods such as daily diary method. The type and nature of the job should be taken into consideration in future studies as job demands may vary depending on the type of work done. For example a customer service representative needs to be constantly available and work with customers whereas someone working in process development has more control over their work day.

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