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**Quality of Early Childhood Education in Context
of Availability of Learning Facilities and Daily
Routine Activities in Public and Private School
of Bannu Division**

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Quality of Early Childhood Education in Context of Availability of Learning Facilities and Daily Routine Activities in Public and Private School of Bannu Division

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Abstract

The study aimed to investigate Quality of Early Childhood Education in Context of Availability of Learning Facilities and Daily Routine Activities In Public And Private School Of Bannu Division. The researcher used survey design. The objectives of the study: To analyze the learning facilities available for ECE in public and private schools of Bannu Division. To assess daily routine activities exhibited for ECE in public and private schools of Bannu Division To give recommendations by creating suitable learning facilities and daily routine activities regarding the quality of early childhood education in public and private schools of Bannu Division. The research questions included: Are there learning facilities available for ECE in public and private schools of Bannu Division? What are the daily routine activities of ECE in public and private schools of Bannu Division? The population of the study included all Playgroup, Nursery, Kachi, Prep, and Pakki classes within both public primary and private schools in the Bannu Division. The study covered schools from the three districts within Bannu Division: Bannu, Lakki Marwat, and North Waziristan. The study's sample consisted of 360 classes from Playgroup, Nursery, Kachi, Prep, and Pakki levels across both public and private schools within the Bannu Division. To ensure a balanced representation of different school types, a stratified sampling method was employed. A total of 285 schools were selected from the public primary sector, while 75 schools were drawn from the private sector. The selection process followed the methodology outlined by Gill et al. (2010), which provides a structured framework for determining

an appropriate sample size in educational research. Self-developed Learning Environment Observational Checklist (LEOC), designed as a data collection tool to address key research questions. The LEOC utilized a five- point rating scale to assess the extent to which various factors were present in the learning environment. The scale categories were as follows: 1. N = Not at all 2. V = Very little 3. SW = Somewhat 4. TS = To some extent 5. TG = To a great extent. The validity of the Learning Environment Observational Checklist (LEOC) was established through expert evaluation. A panel of eight experts reviewed the instrument to ensure its appropriateness for assessing the ECE learning environment. To determine the reliability of the LEOC, the researcher conducted a pilot study in 30 selected schools. During school visits, observations were made in Playgroup, Nursery, Kachi, Prep, and Pakki classes. The researcher paid visits to ECE classrooms to observe the learning environment, including available learning facilities and the daily routine activities of children. To ensure a comprehensive assessment, the researcher also asked specific questions listed in the Learning Environment Observational Checklist (LEOC) and recorded responses by marking (✓) in the relevant columns. The researcher used mean and standard deviation as statistical tool to analyze the collected data. Findings showed efforts were made to encourage reading habits and creativity, there was a significant lack of materials to support mathematical concept development and vocabulary building. Overall, daily routine activities were somewhat implemented in the schools. While children showed partial understanding of greetings, group activities, singing, and the national anthem, the daily routine remained inconsistent across schools.

Key words: ECE Quality, Learning Facilities, Daily Routine Activities, Public & Private Schools Bannu, KP Pakistan.

INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Education (ECE) is pivotal in laying the foundation for lifelong learning and development. It encompasses the period from birth to eight years and focuses on holistic development, including cognitive, emotional, social, and physical growth (UNESCO, 2023). Quality ECE is recognized globally for its potential to enhance children's readiness for formal

schooling and overall academic achievement (OECD, 2022). However, the quality of ECE varies significantly depending on the availability of learning facilities and the structure of daily routine activities (Barnett & Nores, 2022).

In Pakistan, the significance of ECE has been acknowledged in various educational policies, including the National Education Policy 2017, emphasizing equitable access to quality early education (Government of Pakistan, 2017). Despite these initiatives, disparities remain in the provision of ECE between public and private institutions, particularly in rural regions such as Bannu Division (Ali et al., 2023). Public schools often face challenges like inadequate infrastructure, lack of trained teachers, and insufficient learning materials, whereas private schools, despite better facilities, may not necessarily adhere to developmental-appropriate practices (Khan & Asad, 2023).

Daily routine activities in ECE settings play a crucial role in children's learning experiences. Structured routines that integrate play-based learning, creative activities, and social interaction are essential for nurturing cognitive and social skills (Mustafa et al., 2022). However, in Bannu Division, variations in daily routines between public and private schools may impact the overall quality of early childhood education provided (Rahman & Shah, 2023).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The quality of Early Childhood Education (ECE) in the Bannu Division remains a critical concern, particularly in the context of the availability of learning facilities and the design of daily routine activities in public and private schools. While government initiatives have aimed at improving ECE, significant disparities persist between public and private educational institutions, affecting children's learning outcomes (Zafar & Ahmed, 2023). Public schools in Bannu Division often grapple with limited resources, overcrowded classrooms, and untrained teachers, hindering the provision of quality ECE (Hassan & Malik, 2023). Conversely, private schools, although better resourced, may not emphasize child-centered approaches, leading to rote learning and limited developmental benefits (Fatima & Khan, 2023).

This study aims to investigate the quality of early childhood education in the context of the availability of learning facilities and daily routine activities in public and private schools of Bannu Division. By examining these factors, the study seeks to identify gaps and propose strategies to enhance the quality of ECE in the region.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following were the research objectives of the study:

- i. To analyze the learning facilities available for ECE in public and private schools of Bannu Division.
- ii. To assess daily routine activities exhibited for ECE in public and private schools of Bannu Division
- iii. To give recommendations by creating suitable learning facilities and daily routine activities regarding the quality of early childhood education in public and private schools of Bannu Division

RESEARCH QUESTION

The following were the research questions of the study:

- i. Are there learning facilities available for ECE in public and private schools of Bannu Division?
- ii. What are the daily routine activities of ECE in public and private schools of Bannu Division?

SIGNIFICANCE F THE STUDY REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

High-quality early childhood education (ECE) plays a fundamental role in shaping children's cognitive, emotional, and social development (OECD, 2024). Studies reveal that children who receive a strong early education tend to perform better academically, develop stronger social skills, and enhance their problem-solving abilities in later years (UNESCO, 2023). The early years, particularly the first five, are crucial as they establish the groundwork for lifelong learning and overall well-being (World Bank, 2024).

Comparative research suggests that nations prioritizing quality ECE achieve superior educational outcomes and foster economic growth (Khan et al., 2023). A well-structured learning environment not only enhances literacy and numeracy but also nurtures creativity and curiosity in young children (UNICEF, 2023). In many developing regions, attention to ECE is increasing, yet significant disparities persist between public and private institutions, affecting equitable access to quality education (Haque & Aslam, 2023).

Rehman and Ali (2024) highlight that early childhood development is greatly influenced by a well-structured curriculum, qualified educators, and enriched learning environments. However, resource limitations in many public schools hinder their capacity to provide comprehensive educational experiences, often placing them at a disadvantage compared to private institutions (Shah & Zaman, 2023). Bridging these gaps is crucial to ensuring equitable access to quality education for all children.

AVAILABILITY OF LEARNING FACILITIES IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS

The quality of education is strongly influenced by the availability of sufficient learning facilities (World Bank, 2024). Yousaf & Ali, (2024). suggests that well-equipped classrooms, libraries, and access to technological resources enhance the learning experience, fostering greater student engagement and improved academic outcomes. Khan & Rehman, (2023) argued that Private schools, often benefiting from superior funding, tend to offer more advanced learning environments compared to public institutions

In many developing regions, including Pakistan, public schools frequently struggle with overcrowded classrooms and insufficient infrastructure (Shah & Aslam, 2023). These challenges hinder effective teaching and reduce student engagement, ultimately leading to lower academic performance (UNESCO, 2023). Zaman & Rehman, (2024) predicts that private schools typically invest in modern educational tools, digital technologies, and well-maintained facilities to create a more conducive learning atmosphere.

Government intervention and policymaker initiatives play a crucial role in addressing resource disparities (OECD, 2024). Ahmad & Khan, (2024) further said Enhancing public school infrastructure, increasing access to digital learning resources, and strengthening teacher training programs can help bridge the gap in early childhood education quality. Furthermore,

collaboration between the public and private sectors can contribute to creating more equitable educational opportunities for all children

DAILY ROUTINE ACTIVITIES

Ahmad & Shah, (2023) suggest that a well-structured daily routine is fundamental to early childhood education. Research indicates that an optimal balance between instructional activities, play-based learning, and social interactions greatly enhances children's cognitive and social development (UNICEF, 2023). A thoughtfully organized schedule not only fosters discipline and time management skills but also contributes to emotional stability and overall well-being (World Bank, 2024).

Khan & Asghar, (2023) proclaim that Private schools often implement diverse and structured daily routines that blend academic instruction with extracurricular activities. These institutions typically incorporate interactive play, storytelling, and group-based tasks, promoting a holistic approach to child development (Rehman & Ali, 2024). hah & Zaman, (2023) state that many public schools rely heavily on rigid, lecture-based teaching methods, which restrict opportunities for hands-on and interactive learning experiences.

Haque & Aslam, (2023) suggest that integrating more structured playtime and experiential learning opportunities in public schools can significantly enhance student engagement and overall learning outcomes. Strengthening teacher training programs and introducing greater curriculum flexibility are essential measures to optimize daily learning schedules and improve the effectiveness of early childhood education (OECD, 2024).

A comparative analysis of public and private early childhood education (ECE) institutions highlights notable differences in educational quality (UNESCO, 2023). Shah & Aslam, (2023). State about private sectors that private schools typically benefit from well-trained educators, modern infrastructure, and carefully structured curricula, resulting in better academic performance among students. In contrast, public schools often face financial constraints, a shortage of learning resources, and reliance on outdated teaching methodologies, which hinder effective learning (World Bank, 2024).

Yousaf and Ali (2024) underscore the importance of parental perceptions in school selection. Many parents opt for private institutions due to their reputation for delivering high-quality education, even though these schools come with higher tuition fees (Khan & Rehman, 2023). A study conducted by Zaman & Rehman, (2024) argues that private education further exacerbates inequalities, leaving economically disadvantaged children in under-resourced public schools with limited learning opportunities.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Policymakers play a vital role in enhancing the quality of early childhood education (ECE) by implementing strategic reforms and targeted investments (World Bank, 2024). Shah & Zaman, (2023) state that allocating resources toward infrastructure development, curriculum enhancement, and comprehensive teacher training programs can significantly elevate learning standards in public institutions. OECD, (2024) insists to bridge the gap between public and

private ECE institutions, evidence-based policies that prioritize equity and accessibility are essential.

Ahmad & Shah, (2023) indicate that adopting standardized learning frameworks, upgrading classroom facilities, and increasing government investment in early education can lead to substantial improvements in educational quality. Khan & Asghar, (2023) argue that fostering strong public-private partnerships can create sustainable models that provide better learning opportunities for children from various socio-economic backgrounds.

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

The researcher employed a descriptive survey design to examine the quality of early childhood education (ECE) in public and private schools within the Bannu Division. This research design is particularly suitable for studies aiming to systematically describe current conditions, opinions, or practices within a given population. According to Creswell (2015), quantitative research methods play a crucial role in studies, where identifying trends and drawing explanations is necessary.

POPULATION

The population of the study included all Playgroup, Nursery, Kachi, Prep, and Pakki classes within both public primary and private schools in the Bannu Division. The study covered schools from the three districts within Bannu Division: Bannu, Lakki Marwat, and North Waziristan. To obtain representative data, the researcher observed the children studying in Playgroup, Nursery, Kachi, Prep, or Pakki level, was selected.

Table 3.1 Shows District-Wise Population

Table 3.1

Districts	No. of Public Schools	No. of Private Schools	Total
Bannu	1186	368	1554
Lakki Marwat	808	260	1068
North Waziristan	804	103	907
Total	2798	731	3529

Source; (DMO Office: Bannu, Lakki Marwat, North Waziristan)

SAMPLE

The study's sample consisted of 360 classes from Playgroup, Nursery, Kachi, Prep, and Pakki levels across both public and private schools within the Bannu Division. To ensure a balanced representation of different school types, a stratified sampling method was employed. A total of 285 schools were selected from the public primary sector, while 75 schools were drawn from the private sector. The selection process followed the methodology outlined by Gill et al. (2010), which provides a structured framework for determining an appropriate sample size in educational research, as Table No. 3.2 illustrates

Table No. 3.2

Districts	Sample of Public Schools	Sample of Private Schools	Total
Bannu	121	37	158
Lakki Marwat	82	27	109
North Waziristan	82	11	93
Total	285	75	360

INSTRUMENTATION

The study adopted a descriptive survey design, which is widely regarded as an effective approach for data collection in educational research. Self-developed Learning Environment Observational Checklist (LEOC), designed as a data collection tool to address key research questions. 1. “Are there learning facilities available for ECE in public and private schools of Bannu Division?”, a Learning Facilities facet was included in the LEOC, consisting of six statements. 2. “What are the daily routine activities of ECE in public schools of Bannu Division?”, a Daily Routine Activities facet was incorporated into the LEOC, comprising ten statements. The LEOC utilized a five-point rating scale to assess the extent to which various factors were present in the learning environment. The scale categories were as follows: 1. N = Not at all 2. V = Very little 3. SW = Somewhat 4. TS = To some extent 5. TG = To a great extent.

VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

In alignment with the research objectives, the validity of the Learning Environment Observational Checklist (LEOC) was established through expert evaluation. A panel of eight experts reviewed the instrument to ensure its appropriateness for assessing the ECE learning environment. To determine the reliability of the LEOC, the researcher conducted a pilot study in 30 selected schools. During school visits, observations were made in Playgroup, Nursery, Kachi, Prep, and Pakki classes. The researcher directly assessed the learning environment, interacted with children, and sought clarification through targeted questions, marking the relevant checklist columns accordingly. The Cronbach’s alpha value for the LEOC was calculated to be 0.73, indicating a satisfactory level of internal consistency and reliability for the instrument

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

The researcher conducted visits to ECE classrooms to observe the learning environment, including available learning facilities and the daily routine activities of children. To ensure a comprehensive assessment, the researcher also asked specific questions listed in the Learning Environment Observational Checklist (LEOC) and recorded responses by marking (✓) in the relevant columns.

DATA ANALYSIS

The researcher used mean and standard deviation as statistical toll to analyze the collected data.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS OF DATA

This part deals with the analysis and interpretation of data regarding learning facilities and daily routine activities at the Early Childhood Education (ECE) level.

Research Question 1: Are there learning facilities available for ECE in public and private schools of Bannu Division?

Table 4.32: Rank order of Availability of Learning Facilities Regarding ECE

S. No	Statement	M	SD
1.	Age appropriate big and small colourful books are set up to promote the reading habit.	3.90	0.81
2.	Children are provided opportunities for observation and experimentation in order to understand the world around them	2.56	0.93
3.	Teachers have provided children with opportunities for creative expression in form of some art work.	2.52	1.21
4.	Appropriate materials are set up to help children grasp basic Mathematical concepts of size, shape, width, classification and number through direct experimentation.	2.26	1.04
5.	ECE classroom (s) are equipped with material related to increasing vocabulary and learning reading skills.	2.11	1.05
6.	Home related activities are practised by children.	1.47	0.88
Overall		2.47	0.54

Table 4.32 predicts that the statement “Age appropriate big and small colourful books are set up to promote the reading habit” has the highest mean score (M=3.90) with standard deviation (SD=0.81) which indicates that the said statement falls in the category/range (3.51-4.50) “To some extent”. The second highest mean score (M=2.56) with standard deviation (SD=0.93) of the statement “Children are provided opportunities for observation and experimentation in order to understand the world around them” reveals that the said statement falls in range (2.51-3.50) ‘somewhat’. Similarly the third highest mean score (M=2.52) with standard deviation (SD=1.21) of the statement “Teachers have provided children with opportunities for creative expression in form of some art work” denotes that the said statement falls in range (2.51-3.50) “somewhat” “The fourth highest mean score (M=2.26) with standard deviation

(SD=1.04) of the statement “Appropriate materials are set up to help children grasp basic Mathematical concepts of size, shape, width, classification and number through direct experimentation” shows that the said statement falls in range (1.51-2.50) “very little”. The statement “ECE classroom(s) are equipped with material related to increasing vocabulary and learning reading skills” has next to lowest mean score (M=2.11) with standard deviation (SD=1.05) which directs that the said statement falls in range (1.51-2.50) “very little”. The statement “Home related activities are practised by children” has lowest mean scores (M=1.47) with standard deviation (SD=0.88) which indicates that the said statement falls in range (1.00-1.50) “not at all”. The overall mean score (M=2.47) with standard deviation (SD=0.54) expresses the range of “very little” which means that “Very little” learning facilities are provided.

Sub Research Question 2: What are the daily routine activities of ECE in public and private schools of Bannu Division?

Table 4.33: Rank Order of Daily Routine Activities

S.NO	Statements	M	SD
1	Children know when and how to say ‘Assalam-u- Alaikum’, ‘Good morning.	3.53	0.84
2	Children are encouraged for group work.	3.42	0.84
3	Children are given time for storytelling and for songs and poems to present with actions.	3.34	1.01
4	Children know that the National Anthem is a part of daily activities.	3.12	1.18
5	Playing-environment is safe and inviting	3.10	0.87
6	The equipment and resources provided are appropriate and well organized to optimize learning	2.96	0.85
7	Playing environment provides opportunities for learning.	2.89	0.88
8	The ECE environment is kept in a clean and tidy manner	2.79	1.02
9	Health and safety activities are ensured throughout the day, in different segments of daily routine.	2.69	1.05
Overall		2.99	0.50

The highest mean score (M=3.53) with standard deviation (SD=0.84) in the above table of the statement “Children know when and how to say ‘Assalam-u-Alaikum’ or ‘Good morning” shows that the said statement falls in the category/range (3.51-4.50) “to some extent”. The second highest mean score (M=3.42) with standard deviation (SD=0.84), of the statement; Children are encouraged for group work” which indicates that the said statement falls in the category/range (2.51-3.50) “Somewhat”. The third highest mean score (M= 3.34) with standard deviation (SD=1.01) of the statement “Children are given time for storytelling and for songs and poems to present with actions” indicates that the said statement falls in the category/range (2.51-3.50) “Somewhat. Mean score (M=3.12) with standard deviation (SD=1.18), of the statement

“Children know that the national anthem is a part of daily activities” which indicates that the said statement falls in the category/range (2.51-3.50) “Somewhat” Mean score (M= 3.10) with respective standard deviation (SD=0.87) of the statement “Playing environment is safe and inviting” indicates that the aforesaid statement falls in the category/range (2.51-3.50) “Somewhat”. Mean score (M= 2.96) with standard deviation (SD= 0.85) of the statement “The equipment and resources provided are appropriate and well organized to optimize learning” indicates that the said statement falls in the category/range (2.51-3.50) “Somewhat”. The statement “Playing environment provides opportunities for learning” with mean score (M= 2.89) and standard deviation (SD=0.88) shows that the said statement falls in the category/range (2.51-3.50) “Somewhat”. Mean score (M=2.79) with standard deviation (SD=1.02) of the statement “ECE environment is kept in a clean and tidy manner” denotes that the said statement falls in the category/range (2.51-3.50) “Somewhat”. The statement “Health and safety activities are ensured throughout the day, in different segments of daily routine” with mean score (M= 2.69) and standard deviation (SD=1.05) indicates that it was observed that the said statement falls in the category/range (2.51-3.50) “Somewhat”. In the same way the statement “All children are directed to demonstrate ECE prescribed daily routine of class” has got the lowest mean score (M=2.05) with standard deviation, (SD=1.12), which reveals that it was observed that the said statement falls in the category/range (1.51-2.50) “very little”. The overall mean score (M=2.99) with standard deviation (SD=0.50) shows that the facet was observed that the said statement falls in the category/range (2.51-3.50) “Somewhat” range which means that “daily routine activities” are somewhat implemented in public and private schools.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: Are there learning facilities available for ECE in public and private schools of Bannu Division?

Observations revealed that age-appropriate colorful books were available to promote reading habits to some extent. Similarly, children were provided with somewhat adequate opportunities for observation, experimentation, and creative expression through limited artwork activities. However, materials designed to help children grasp basic mathematical concepts—such as size, shape, width, classification, and numbers—were very limited. Likewise, classrooms lacked sufficient resources to enhance vocabulary development and reading skills. Additionally, home- related activities were not practiced at all.

In conclusion, while efforts were made to encourage reading habits and creativity, there was a significant lack of materials to support mathematical concept development and vocabulary building.

Research Question 2: What are the daily routine activities of ECE in public and private schools of Bannu division?

Observations indicated that children knew when and how to say "Assalam-u-Alaikum" or "Good Morning" to some extent. They were also somewhat encouraged to engage in group work, given time for singing and poetry, and were aware that the national anthem was part of

their daily routine. Additionally, they were to some extent provided with a safe, inviting learning and playing environment, along with learning resources and safety measures. However, children were very little directed to follow the prescribed daily class routine. Overall, daily routine activities were somewhat implemented in the schools. While children showed partial understanding of greetings, group activities, singing, and the national anthem, the daily routine remained inconsistent across schools.

DISCUSSION

This study highlights various classroom practices designed to support early childhood education while also revealing critical gaps in fostering a rich learning environment for young children. The findings both align with and deviate from existing literature, offering valuable insights into areas that require enhancement within early education settings.

Efforts to cultivate reading habits were evident through the use of age-appropriate and visually engaging books, reinforcing research that underscores the role of visual materials in early literacy development (Neuman & Celano, 2021). However, these efforts were only "to some extent" effective, underscoring the need for greater consistency and a broader range of resources. Additionally, limited opportunities for observation and experimentation restricted children's ability to explore their surroundings, reflecting a lack of inquiry-based learning approaches—an essential component in fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Harlen & Qualter, 2018). The study also found inadequate availability of materials to support early mathematical concepts, such as size, shape, and classification, aligning with Clements and Sarama's (2020) research on the significance of hands-on, manipulative tools in developing foundational numeracy skills. Similarly, the scarcity of vocabulary-building resources and the minimal integration of home-related activities represent missed opportunities for holistic child development. Snow et al. (2017) emphasize the importance of strengthening home-school connections and incorporating family-centered activities to reinforce classroom learning.

Findings further indicate that children demonstrated only a "partial understanding" of social greetings and daily routines, including saying "Assalam-u-Alaikum" or "Good morning," participating in group activities, singing, and reciting the national anthem. This is consistent with Vygotsky's (1978) social development theory, which highlights the role of guided participation in social and cultural learning. However, inconsistencies in implementing daily routines and limited engagement with structured classroom activities suggest a need for well-defined yet adaptable frameworks to support children's socialization and routine adherence. Rimm-Kaufman et al. (2019) emphasize that structured daily routines contribute to children's socio-emotional well-being and foster a sense of stability in the classroom.

Moreover, while schools provided a "safe, inviting, learning and playing environment" to "some extent," significant improvements are needed to ensure consistent safety measures and access to diverse learning resources. These findings align with research by Sanders et al. (2020), which underscores the importance of a secure, well-resourced setting in fostering cognitive and emotional development. Additionally, inconsistencies in implementing daily routines raise concerns about teacher preparedness and adherence to curriculum standards. Darling-

Hammond et al. (2020) highlight the crucial role of comprehensive teacher training and ongoing professional development in ensuring high-quality early education practices.

CONCLUSIONS

It was concluded that daily routine activities and assessment processes were implemented to some extent in both public and private ECE classrooms. However, learning facilities were minimally provided in both types of schools. As a result, the overall learning environment was somewhat adequate, though essential materials for early childhood education were largely lacking. There were very few resources in ECE classrooms to support children in grasping fundamental mathematical concepts such as size, shape, width, classification, and numbers through hands-on experimentation. Additionally, necessary kits for vocabulary building and reading skills were limited, and children were not encouraged to engage in home-related learning activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Schools should expand learning resources by incorporating age-appropriate materials to support math and literacy skills.
- Inquiry-based and creative learning through hands-on activities should be encouraged
- Structured daily routines should be developed to enhance classroom stability and participation.
- Classroom environment should be enhanced and prioritize safety measures to ensure a secure and stimulating space for young learners.

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