

Stability of value orientations of participants in international academic mobility programmes

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ABSTRACT

The development of the higher education system definitely involves the development of the values and meanings of an individual. Academic mobility programmes are the means of achieving this, which enable all participants of the educational process to learn the experience of other educational institutions and countries. Identify the value orientations of participants in international academic mobility programmes. The research employed method questionnaires. Descriptive analysis, dispersion analysis, and regression analysis were used for statistical processing of the results. It was found that students who participated in international academic mobility programmes are characterized by a qualitative change in value priorities, they consider the expansion of their worldview the main motivation of mobility, and the cultural and educational value as the main one. It was proved that the term of mobility, the country of residence, and motivation do not affect the students' life values. The obtained research results can be used to expand the possibilities of academic mobility programmes, develop true European values in students, and enrich the experience. Further research may focus on identifying the competencies that can be formed or improved in the participants of international academic mobility programmes and the related means.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The basis of modern democratic society is the development and preservation of humane values of each individual and society as a whole. Value orientations are a system of a person's attitude to social reality [1], which determines his/her behavioural motivation [2], the necessities, the meaningful content of the personality [3]. An important aspect is the formation of participants' value orientations in the educational

process, in particular in the field of higher education. The value orientations of student youth are expressed in their attitude to actual material and spiritual needs, which serve as a guide for them in life and are the basis for self-evaluation [4].

Academic mobility programmes are being actively implemented in order to expand the system of value orientations among participants of higher education institutions (HEIs). Academic mobility is a vector of integration of an individual into the international educational space [4]. According to the joint declaration of the European Ministers of Education, the European Higher Education Area, academic mobility is the final result of the creation of a single European space in the field of higher education [5]. Academic mobility is aimed at ensuring equal access to educational opportunities for all participants in the educational process [6] and involves improving the quality of higher education [7].

The relevance of research interest in the concept of academic mobility is determined by the rapid spread of this phenomenon in the educational space of European countries [8]. Considering current challenges, students' access to academic mobility is a condition for creating a single international educational space [9]. The main advantage of academic mobility for teachers and scientists is the possibility of conducting scientific research, professional internship, and exchange of experience in different countries [10]. One of the important aspects of academic mobility is student mobility, which is a component of higher education and ensures the integration of HEIs into the international educational space [11]. Moreover, the humanistic orientation of the modern system of higher education provides for the comprehensive harmonious development of an academically mobile personality [12], which is able to adapt to different educational programmes [13], assimilate advanced international experience [14], build a new system of value orientations [15]. Today, each student is an individual, with his/her own preferences, needs, value orientations. Taking into account an individual approach in academic mobility programmes can ensure the sustainability of the values of the entire higher education system [16].

The aim of the study is to identify the value orientations of the participants of academic mobility programmes. The following hypothesis was advanced on the basis of the set aim: academic mobility of students has a positive effect on the formation of their value orientations. The aim and hypothesis involve the fulfilment of the following research objectives: i) conduct a student survey to study attitudes toward international academic mobility; ii) identify the prevailing life values of students who participated in academic mobility programmes; iii) compare the life values of students with different motivational direction of participation in academic mobility programmes; and iv) identify whether the terms of academic mobility, the country of residence and motivation affect the stability of students' values.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The development of a competitive Ukrainian economy based on innovations is possible only provided effective functioning of HEIs [7]. This, in turn, involves internationalization, which includes academic mobility as the main pillar of the development of higher education. The Sorbonne Declaration of May 25, 1998 emphasized that the creation of a single European higher education area is a key point in achieving the mobility of its participants and developing the socio-cultural dimension [17]. So, the content of academic mobility has two important characteristics. On the one hand, it contributes to the professional development and growth of participants, introduces them to advanced world practices [18]. On the other hand, it provokes an irreversible outflow of qualified specialists. Therefore, the effective implementation of the academic mobility strategy involves the creation of a regulatory and legal framework [19]. In the context of the internationalization of higher education, international student mobility is considered as a means of increasing students' intercultural competence [20]. Today, academic mobility has reached a level that enables participants in the educational process to fully realize their abilities and knowledge [21].

The introduction of academic mobility into the higher education system of Ukraine began with the Bologna process, which Ukraine joined in 2005. The resolution "on approval of the procedure for the realization of the right to academic mobility" [22] indicates that the main tasks of academic mobility are: i) integration of Ukraine into the European educational space; ii) exchange of best practices; iii) modernization and digitalization of the education system; iv) improving the quality of education; v) development of students' basic skills and competencies; vi) deepening of international cooperation; and vii) improving the level of foreign language skills [23].

In modern conditions, there is a rapid development of academic mobility programmes. The most successful and well-known include Erasmus, Tempus, German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), Fulbright, Horizon 2020. The Erasmus programme appeared in 1987 and attracted more than 4.5 million students during its existence. Participation in this programme is currently available for most countries. The Tempus programme enables cooperation with HEIs in the Western Balkans, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia, as well as Mediterranean countries. The main value orientation of the programme is the modernization of higher education. The Erasmus + programme has been in operation since 2014. The main value goal of the

programme is personal and educational development of participants, strengthening of European identity, and active citizenship [24]. Updating the programme in the project from 2021 to 2027 sets inclusive education, digitization of education, and ecological development as an additional value prerogative.

The German programme DAAD introduces the direction of academic mobility in the field of culture, science, and education. The basis of the exchange is the possibility of training and conducting research on the territory of Germany [25]. The Fulbright programme is the world's largest academic mobility programme, which enables graduates of HEIs and scientists to undergo internships at United States universities. The programme covers tuition and includes a monthly scholarship, health insurance, and transport fees [26]. Horizon 2020 is one of the largest European Union (EU) programmes for research and innovation. The goal of the programme is to deepen innovative developments and discoveries in education and industry. Horizon Europe was launched in 2020 [27].

The considered programmes have a single common goal—the development of science and education, the attraction of promising specialists to a single educational space, which makes it possible to expand the capabilities of an individual and the university as a whole [8]. In addition to the positive aspects of academic mobility, the negative aspects should be indicated as well. These include, first of all, the low level of students' awareness of the possibilities of academic mobility. The lack of information about the conditions of academic mobility reduces the number of those willing to participate, so there is a need to intensify students' informational support [28]. The second problem is the low level of student motivation. Academic mobility implies a double workload, which requires additional personal resources [29]. Not all students are ready to take such a risk. Therefore, it is necessary to additionally stimulate and motivate them. The third problem is the low financial capacity of students. Academic mobility requires significant costs, so additional funding, discounts, and scholarships should be created for students to encourage them to participate in academic mobility programmes [9].

The source of value orientations is the life activity of an individual, which is determined by needs and interests and forms the level of the individual's pursuits, as well as his/her orientation towards achieving specific goals 2021 [30]. Education today is almost the greatest value for a person, a means of self-development and successful professionalization. Expanding educational opportunities is the main task of modern HEIs. Therefore, participation in academic mobility programmes provides an opportunity for the students to supplement their personal potential, improve their abilities and skills, deepen their knowledge of foreign languages, as well as expand their experience and outlook.

3. METHOD

3.1. Research design

A prospective descriptive study was conducted, which was conducted from October 2023 to April 2024 in several stages. The first stage involved the selection of the research methods and the study of the problem field. The second stage provided for collecting information based on the developed questionnaire. A quantitative and qualitative analysis of the obtained data was carried out during the third stage. The fourth stage involved substantiation of the conclusions and outlining research prospects.

3.2. Sampling

The study involved 210 students aged 19 to 21 who participated in academic mobility programmes. Among them, 110 are female and 100 are male. The number of respondents ensures representativeness of the sample. The participants are students of Borys Grinchenko Kyiv Metropolitan University (50 people), Interregional Academy of Personnel Management (60 people), Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv (60 people), Donbas State Pedagogical University (40 people).

3.3. Methods

The questionnaire attitudes to academic mobility consisting of 15 open-ended questions was used for the study. The questions were aimed at studying the general impression of mobility, the attitude towards its results, the formation of values as a result of participation in the academic mobility programme. The morphological test of life values is designed to study the motivational and value structure of the individual and was used in this research to diagnose the main life values of students participating in academic mobility programmes [31]. This test contains six spheres of life, each defining the following values: self-development, spiritual satisfaction, creativity, active social contacts, own prestige, high financial status, achievements, and preservation of one's own individuality. Given the aim and objectives of the research, we used only values in the field of education.

3.4. Statistical methods

Quantitative analysis was used to present the percentage of respondents' answers. Descriptive statistics are used to present average values of results and standard deviations. One-way analysis of variance (one-way ANOVA) were used to compare the values of students with different life values and values of academic mobility. The influencing factors of participation in academic mobility programmes on manifestations of life values were identified using linear regression analysis.

3.5. Ethical criteria of the research

In order to comply with the ethics of the research, the respondents gave their informed consent for conducting the questionnaire survey. They were informed about the aim of the research, the objectives and the guarantee of confidentiality of the obtained results. Not a single refusal to perform diagnostics was received, all participants agreed to the study.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The conducted research showed that the majority of students from the sample took part in the academic mobility programme for the first time (80%). This makes it possible to claim that they have the first relevant experience that reflects the established values. This shows the involvement of students in academic mobility in general. Mostly, students participated in academic mobility programmes after February 24, 2022, and a larger proportion-from July 2023 (60%). This shows that the largest share of academic mobility occurs in the period after the start of the war in Ukraine. That is, from 2023 academic mobility has increased significantly. The majority of studied students underwent academic mobility programmes in HEIs of Western Europe, almost the same number in Eastern Europe and Asia, the least in the Baltic countries, as seen in Figure 1. This means that Western Europe is the most popular in implementing academic mobility. The Baltic countries were the least in demand. Cultural and educational value is the dominant value of student academic mobility, followed by educational and cultural. Subsequently, educational and organizational values were examined. The respondents indicate that the least value of academic mobility is the creation of employment prospects, as in Figure 2.

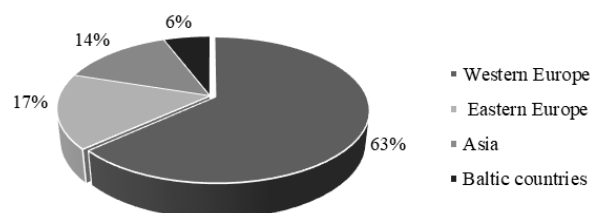


Figure 1. In which regional higher education institution did you exercise your right to academic mobility (N=210)

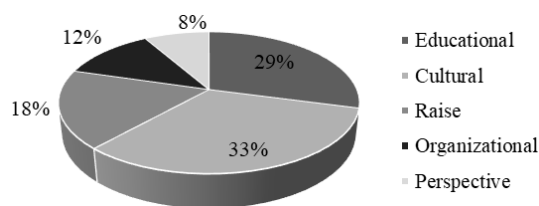


Figure 2. The answer to the question “In your opinion, what is the dominant value of outgoing student academic mobility?” (N=210)

The majority of students answered “yes” to the question “Does academic mobility contribute to the popularization of the country?” as in Figure 3. This proves that academic mobility is an indicator of sustainable development of the country and its citizens. This indicator proves the prospects of academic mobility at the national level. The main interests of students' participation in the academic mobility were the expansion of worldview and language learning as in Figure 4. Freedom and socialization are also important values, but in a smaller number of students. The least number of students were interested in financial motivation for participating in mobility.

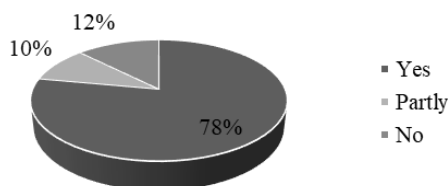


Figure 3. The answer to the question “Does academic mobility contribute to the popularization of the country?” (N=210)

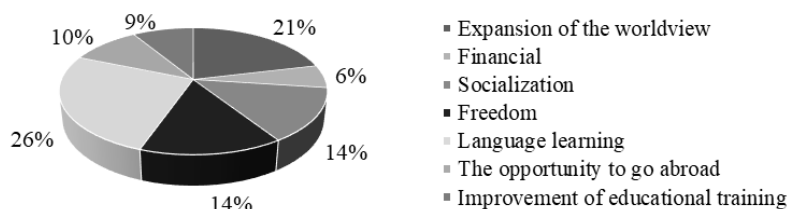


Figure 4. The main interests of participation in the academic mobility programme (N=210)

After returning to Ukraine, the overwhelming majority of students experienced changes in their worldview and educational sphere, as in Figure 5. Cultural and motivational, professional, moral, and ethical spheres have also partially developed. This shows the effectiveness of the development of students' educational opportunities.

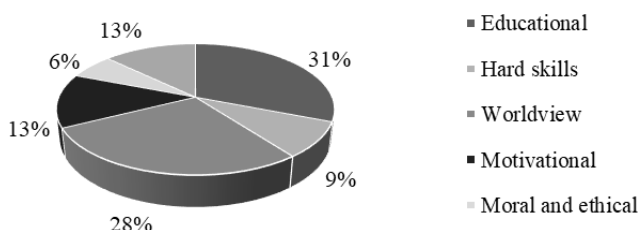


Figure 5. The answer to the question “In which area have you seen the main changes since returning to Ukraine?” (N=210)

The study also showed that the majority of students believe that the understanding of value orientations and goals of modern higher education differ in Ukraine and in the host country (78%). Such a comparison makes it possible to determine the main priorities of academic mobility, its value for higher education. At the same time, such a difference contributes to the expansion and improvement of Ukrainian academic mobility. According to students, the internationalization of higher education contributes most to the high quality of education as the main United Nations (UN) sustainable development goal, as displayed in Table 1. The focus on creating a unified educational environment is the primary task of every HEI. It will contribute to the effectiveness of the training of specialists.

Table 1. Goals of sustainable development of the UN

Goals	Percent (%)	Goals	Percent (%)
Quality education	32	Equality, respect for every person	10
Social justice	9	Partnership	2
Reducing inequality	12	Cooperation between universities	2
Innovation and technology	13	Expand opportunities for students	1
Help to find a job	18	Exchange of technological knowledge	1

The study of the values of students who participated in academic mobility showed different levels of life values as in Figure 6. We see that self-development and preservation of individuality are the main values

in the field of education for students [32]. This indicates that they seek to improve the level of their education for the sake of their personal self-development. Such students are directed to such an educational process that would correspond to their personal characteristics as much as possible. They express a desire to be original and demonstrate their abilities. At the same time, the average values of own prestige and material well-being remain low, which shows the predominance of self-development over material needs.

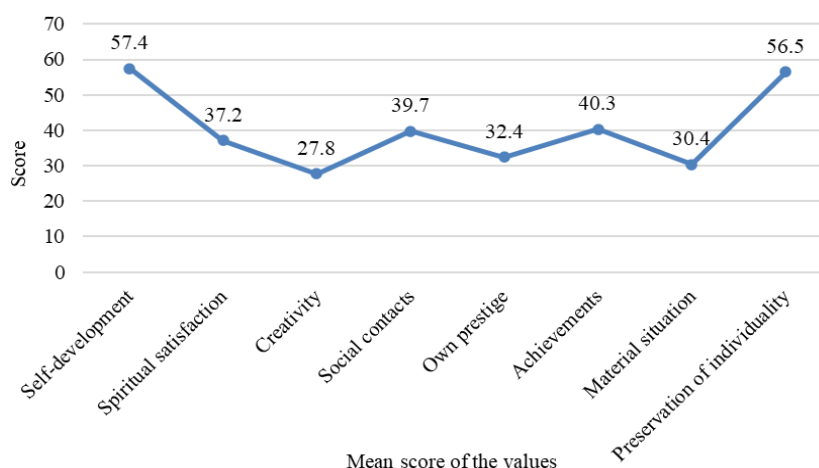


Figure 6. Indicators of life values of students who participated in academic mobility programmes (N=210)

The survey of students revealed that they have developed values of self-development and a desire to expand their worldview and cultural enrichment. At the same time, material well-being receded into the background. This shows that academic mobility contributes to the formation of students' value orientations, which contribute to their personal self-development. Despite the different level of manifestation of value spheres, nevertheless, with purposeful influence, it is possible to achieve the maximum effect in all the manifestations we pursue: motivational, educational, cultural, worldview, professional. Certain differences were found after an assessment of the life values of students with different dominant values of initial academic mobility conducted with the help of dispersion analysis, as in Table 2. The reliability was found at the level of significance $p \leq 0.05$ and $p \leq 0.01$. This proves a significant difference in the values of the students.

Table 2. Comparison of indicators of students' life values with different dominant values of initial academic mobility (N=210)

Values	Educational Mean±SD	Cultural Mean± SD	Raise Mean± SD	Organizational Mean± SD	Perspective Mean± SD	F
Self-development	58.5±24.3	35.1±14.5	55.8±27.1	48.4±19.6	31.2±15.4	28.35*
Spiritual satisfaction	45.1±16.2	46.7±14.8	51.3±13.5	25.4±10.8	21.7±6.4	39.44**
Creativity	29.8±11.5	26.7±10.1	19.2±7.4	39.8±13.7	25.8±7.3	27.35*
Active social contacts	25.3±9.8	57.5±24.8	32.5±11.6	55.6±14.8	45.1±12.8	43.55**
Own prestige	22.4±7.4	26.8±11.2	21.4±8.3	32.9±12.5	52.6±13.9	38.26**
Achievements	31.6±9.8	33.6±9.8	39.6±10.2	51.7±9.8	58.9±28.3	28.19*
High financial status	18.5±6.5	23.5±9.2	20.7±9.6	38.5±11.9	55.1±26.5	37.54**
Preservation of one's own individuality	56.7±26.1	59.4±25.9	42.8±18.9	37.1±25.4	26.7±13.3	44.35**

Note: * - $p \leq 0.05$, ** - $p \leq 0.01$

It was found that life values such as self-development and preservation of individuality prevail among students who participated in academic mobility programmes and consider the educational function to be their main value. For students who consider the main value of academic mobility to be the cultural function, the vital values of social contacts and preservation of individuality prevail. Self-development and spiritual satisfaction are life values for students with a predominant educational function. Life values of achievements and active social contacts prevail among students who consider the dominant organizational function of academic mobility. For students who consider employment prospects in any country in the world as the main value of academic mobility, the dominant life values are own prestige, achievements, and high financial status.

Regression analysis revealed whether there is an influence of the term of participation in academic mobility, the motivation for participation, and the country of participation on the students' value orientations as in Table 3. It was established that this effect is statistically significant ($p \leq 0.05$). As $p \geq 0.05$, we can say that the term of participation in academic mobility programmes, as well as the country of participation, and the motivation for participation in the programme do not affect the students' value orientations. This proves that academic mobility programmes contribute to the stability of the value orientations of their participants regardless of other factors.

Table 3. Regression analysis of the influence of the term, motivation and country of participation in academic mobility on the students' value orientations (N=210)

Scale	β	SD	t	p-value	R	R ²
Term of participation	-0.022	0.02	-0.27	0.533		
Motivation	0.048	0.03	0.16	0.390	-0.025	0.011
Country	-0.017	0.06	-0.24	0.267		

In this study, we investigated the impact of academic mobility on the stability of value orientations of young people. Although previous studies have examined the impact of academic mobility on the development of the value sphere, they have not considered its effect on the development of value competences and the stability of the value sphere in the context of war [13]. We found that value orientations are highly correlated with academic mobility. The majority of students participated in academic mobility for the first time, most of them from July 2023 and mainly in Western European countries. Cultural and educational values are the predominant value of academic mobility for students. The majority of students noted that academic mobility contributes to the popularization of the country. The more students participate in academic mobility programmes, the more popular the country becomes.

A characteristic difference of this study is the study of various aspects of student development in the process of academic mobility. Even those values that are not formed at a high level can be developed in longer academic mobility. The main interests of participating in the programmes include expanding one's worldview and learning a language [33]. So, the majority of students were motivated by these values when participating in the programmes. At the same time, after returning to Ukraine, their outlook and views on the educational sphere expanded. This proves the positive impact of academic mobility on students' value orientations. This proves that the results of personal value development of academic mobility participants are promising and dynamic. Contrary to the limitations offered by some academic mobility programs [12], greater involvement in them will contribute to greater value development and competence formation [16].

We agree with the opinion that academic mobility contributes to the expansion of students' educational horizons, their values and competencies [20]. At the same time, students participating in mobility programmes are motivated, have a stable value sphere, develop and enrich their experience and outlook in the process of academic mobility [28]. In addition to the research conducted by us, it is worth adding other results that confirm that the extended process of permanent academic mobility affects students' educational level, their value principles and motivation for achievements [6]. After participating in the programmes, students demonstrate an increase in self-confidence and experience of personal maturity [28].

Research has also proven that European countries are the most popular for academic mobility, which is also consistent with our research [9]. However, in addition to this, we also discovered that distinctive feature of Ukrainian mobility is the low awareness of students, their lack of motivation to participate in projects, and the low financial capacity. This broadens the prospects for further improvement of academic mobility programmes, expansion of informational access of all categories of students to these programmes. Our research demonstrates that academic mobility does not depend on term, country, and motivation, which proves its value orientation contrary to these factors, which is confirmed in other manuscripts [4]. Students who participated in mobility programmes showed improvement in their knowledge, skills, and experience [30]. At the same time, the variety of cultural value orientations that students learn during mobility programmes expand their employment opportunities [15].

Recent observations show that some scholars deny the general availability of mobility and cite many inequalities in mobility opportunities and outcomes [30]. It is indicated that the mobility time and duration are important for the student's success [14]. It is also noted that there is inequality in mobility programmes between scientific fields and countries [12], while there is no gender inequality [22]. In their study, Nikunen and Lempinen [25] proved the opposite, indicating that age, gender, and level of training motivate academic mobility in different ways. Our findings provide strong evidence that academic mobility is related to each individual student's values and development opportunities, rather than to their motivation for participating in the program or the period of mobility.

Future research can further expand the range of possibilities of the influence of academic mobility on the stability of value orientations of participants. However, we proved that today academic mobility is a means of improving the space of higher education, creating a unified system of training specialists who could constantly exchange experience and improve their skills and knowledge. HEI can achieve an effective level of training of specialists, regardless of political, social or economic influences through joint cooperation only.

5. CONCLUSION

The study proved the importance of academic mobility in ensuring the sustainability of value orientations of participants of international academic mobility. Academic mobility contributes to the formation of professional skills, comprehensive development of the personality, raising the educational level, expanding experience. The results make a significant contribution to expanding the process of internalization of education, contribute to increasing the competitiveness of HEIs and future specialists. It was proved that students who participated in international academic mobility programmes are aimed at self-development and expansion of competencies while preserving their own life principles. This is in line with the United Nations's sustainable development goals and ensures partnership for sustainable development.

The limitation of the study is the number of participants in academic mobility, which is a dynamic figure and constantly changes. Therefore, conducting a longitudinal section of the formation of values is complicated by the possibility of changing educational interests or emergency interruption of mobility for personal reasons. A significant limitation in acquiring the experience of academic mobility is the low level of foreign language proficiency of Ukrainian students, which is an obstacle in their assimilation of new educational and cultural experience. The research prospects include studying the level of students' competencies before and after the start of participation in academic mobility programmes in order to determine its effectiveness in the preparation of specialists of different majors. It is also advisable to study the gender aspect of the problem, and to establish which gender students adapt better to academic mobility.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS STATEMENT

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C : **C**onceptualization

M : **M**ethodology

So : **S**oftware

Va : **V**alidation

Fo : **F**ormal analysis

I : **I**nvestigation

R : **R**esources

D : **D**ata Curation

O : Writing - **O**riginal Draft

E : Writing - Review & **E**editing

Vi : **V**isualization

Su : **S**upervision

P : **P**roject administration

Fu : **F**unding acquisition

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest related to this research. They have no personal financial interests or relationships that could influence the outcomes of the study. All authors have disclosed that they have no competing interests to report regarding the research and its publication.

INFORMED CONSENT

We have obtained informed consent from all individuals included in this study.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

The research related to human use has been complied with all the relevant national regulations and institutional policies in accordance with the tenets of the Helsinki Declaration and has been approved by the authors' institutional review board.

DATA AVAILABILITY

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author, [TK], upon reasonable request.




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