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Teachers' Conception, Practices and Attitude to Creative Question: A Study on Some Secondary Schools of Old Dhaka City

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Abstract

The key intention of this study is to investigate teachers' knowledge, practice, and attitude to creative questions of selected Secondary schools located in old Dhaka city area. A cross-sectional survey design was used in this study. Positivist and constructivist views were more prominent here as quantitative and qualitative data were generated to get a better and more credible understanding of the phenomena under investigation. The research was designed based upon a questionnaire survey and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). A total of sixty (60) randomly selected teachers from four (4) purposively selected schools located in old Dhaka city were constituted the sample of this study. The findings from this study indicate that many teachers of old Dhaka city schools do not have clear conception about creative question. Additionally, many of the teachers did not receive any training on creative question yet, albeit they have to prepare creative questions for their school examination. Findings also revealed a gap in teachers' knowledge and understanding of creative question. It is expected that the findings can provide some guidelines for researchers, education experts, and policymakers, which they can recommend to use in future policy formulation on creative question.

Keywords: Creative Question, Bloom's Taxonomy, Mixed Research Approach, Conception, Practice, And Attitude.

Introduction

Mounting attention is visible in creative questioning in recent years in Bangladesh to improve the thinking ability of the learners and the teachers at primary and secondary levels. The significance and value of creative thinking in education has long been recognized. According to Carson (2010), creative thinkers are the asset, and creative thinking is a vital quality and skill in life for the 21st century that support us in socialization as well as to adapt with different circumstances of personal life, education, business, and for the community as a whole. Critical thinking is closely related to problem-solving, communication, and collaboration, as well as creativity and innovation. The students should acquire the

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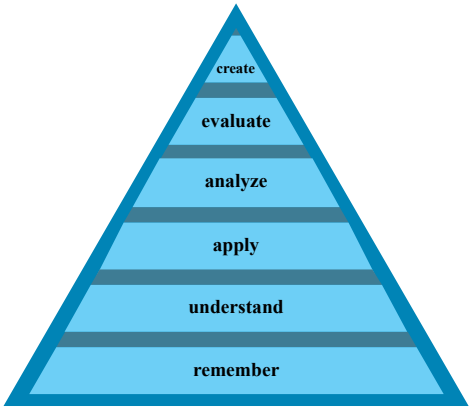
ability of critical thinking from the classroom under the guidance of the teachers. Therefore, the role of the teachers in the classroom should be as a manager, who will advocate the activities essential for the learners to develop their critical thinking skills. Classroom will not only disseminate information but also develops the inner quality of effective thinking, problem-solving, novel decision making etc. In a classroom, the teachers must have a sharp intension on holistic development among the learners. According to Ekvall's (1996), creative climate is supportive for the teachers to introduce creative environment in the classroom. Critical thinking focuses on '*how to think'* instead of '*what to think'* (Sinek, 2009).

In Bangladesh, a new pattern of question known as 'creative question' has been followed since 2010. Initially, this new system of questioning is introduced at the secondary level of education and gradually later in junior and primary levels with a vision to develop students' critical thinking skills and to solve their life-oriented problems with a better solution to develop their innovation skills. The skills of creative thinking should be cultivated from the classroom. Therefore, the teachers must be well prepared and skilled over creative questioning and to influence the students to participate in critical thinking activities.

How to define Creative questions?

From 2010 onward Bangladesh government has been implementing creative question in the evaluation system at the secondary level of education (MoE, 2016). Creative means being generative, producing, and disrupting knowledge and letting others produce knowledge (Khan, 2014). The idea of Bloom's Taxonomy is generally used in developing creative question (Hasan, Naomee & Bilkis, 2013), where emphasize is given on each of the six steps belong to cognitive domain. Bloom's taxonomy, a framework developed by Dr. Benjamin Bloom and his collaborators in 1956 to categorizing educational goals: Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. The framework elaborated by Bloom and his collaborators consisted of six major categories, as given in the following figure 1.1: knowledge, understanding, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, which is later upgraded into remember, comprehension, application, analysis, evaluation, and creation. The categories after knowledge were presented as "skills and abilities" with the understanding that knowledge was the necessary precondition for putting these skills and abilities into practice (Armstrong, 2015).

Figure 1
Bloom's Taxonomy



Note: Adopted from https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/blooms-taxonomy/ (2020)

Following this in a creative question of Bangladesh, education system, each question starts with a stem relating to the textbook contents. Based on the stem, a question splits into four parts with some weights as given in the following table.

Table 1

Different Parts of Cognitive Domain

Parts of cognitive domain	Value weight
• Cognitive	1
• Analytical	2
• Application	3
• Higher Ability	4

Note: Based on Primary Data

Evaluation is an essential part of teaching. The final evaluation system in Bangladesh has made through 'Structured Question' or 'Critical Question.' So, the quality and skill of the teachers in this issue is not compromising. Thus, the government of Bangladesh is following strict rules and regulations for creative question and claimed that most of the teachers in the country have already been trained for the new system (Qatar tribune, 2013). However, teachers are still confused about the development and applicability of creative question system (Billah, 2016). The author (ibid) also claimed that 99% of teachers do not have clear idea about how to develop creative questions. Furthermore, the planning and development unit of the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE) mentioned in one of their reports that 30% of school teachers are unable to prepare creative question for the students. 1443 institutions out of 4810 sample institutes still cannot formulate questions following the creative method (Billah, 2012). Habib (2016) explored from the latest government report that teachers of more than 40 % secondary schools still cannot set question in creative methods though seven years already have gone since its introduction. They either depend on question from outside or take help of fellow teachers from other institutions to prepare creative questions for their internal examination. He (ibid) also added that one of the weaknesses of creative question is, teachers are not adequately trained, and the duration of the training is also not sufficient. Tuhin et al. (2016) explored a survey on primary teachers' conception and practice about creative question. Findings of their study indicates that 13% of teachers do not understand creative method; 45% of teachers understand creative method, and 42% of teachers have trivial understanding, where 47% of teachers rely on guidebooks for preparing creative question. In a nutshell, creativity in education does not simply mean implicit questions in examinations but ensuring an actual creative space. Before making the examination system more creative or in Bengali term *'srijonshil,'* we need to ensure the creative space and assess creativity of teachers (Khan, 2014).

Focusing on the above literature, this study aims to explore teachers' conception, attitude, and practice of creative question, who are working in the schools located in old Dhaka city. The researchers believe that the current study will help to understand the level of teachers' knowledge, attitude, and practice of creative questions identifying their gap of knowledge and suggesting a possible solution to support the teachers to improve their knowledge, skill, practices, and attitude to creative questioning.

Research Aim and Objectives

The broader aim of the study was to investigate teachers' conception and practice of creative question. This study also attempted to explore teachers' attitude to creative questions. The objectives of the study considered to address the research aim conducted in some selected schools of Dhaka old city were -

1. to explore teachers' conception of creative questions (i.e., what is creative question? What are the steps of creative question? How to develop creative question?);
2. to identify whether teachers are properly trained on creative question;
3. to assess teachers' level of practice of creative questions; and
4. to measures teachers' attitudes to creative questions.

Methodology

A cross-sectional survey design was used for this study following a mixed research approach to generate information from the key informants. Mainly quantitative data were generated for this study. However, it was also incorporated numerous sets of qualitative data. A fundamental assumption to consider qualitative data in social science and the quantitative approach was that it might provide a better and more credible understanding of the phenomena under investigation than a dichotomous qualitative or quantitative approach (Cohen *et al.,* 2011). The teachers of some selected schools located in old Dhaka city were constituted the samples of this study. The sampling strategy considered in the current study was purposive sampling for selecting schools. Thus, four (04) schools were chosen purposively for this study. Simple random sampling was used while selecting teachers involved in teaching-learning activities in class VI (six) to X (ten) from the selected schools. Fifteen (15) teachers from each of the sampled schools were selected following random sampling rules for the study, where ten (10) teachers participated in the questionnaire survey, and the rest five (05) participated in FGD. Four (04) FGD sessions were carried out for this research. Data were generated in two different phases, i.e., quantitative data phase and qualitative data phase. The number of total schools and teachers selected for the study is given in the following Table 2. The questionnaire was administered to the 10 sampled teachers to generate data about teachers' knowledge, attitude, and practices of creative questions. Four FGDs were conducted for four selected schools (i.e., one FGD in one school). A code number for each of the schools and teachers in the sample to identify them with less effort. The quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS software that includes simple frequency counting and percentages. To analyze the qualitative data, simple frequency counting was calculated, and narrative forms of participants' views were used to present participants' opinions. Research ethics were strictly followed in every point of the research.

Table 2

Number of total schools and teachers with their code and name

School code	School Name	Number of teachers	
		Questionnaire	FGD
School sample 1	Pogos Laboratory School and College	10	5
School sample 2	Wary High School	10	5
School sample 3	Lalbag Model School and College	10	5
School sample 4	Central Girls' High School	10	5
Total=60		40	20

Note: Based on Primary Data

Salient Findings and Discussion of the Study

Salient findings derived from the study are presented and interpreted in the following section.

Teachers' conception of Creative Questions

In order to measure teachers' conception of creative question, teachers were asked to indicate whether they are familiar with the term 'creative question'. It is clear from Table 3 that all teachers in the sample (60, i.e., 100%) claim that they are familiar with the term'creative question'.

Table 3

Teacher's Familiarity with Creative Question

Teacher's familiarity with creative questions			
	Yes	No	Total
N (%)	60 (100)	00 (00)	60 (100)

Note: Adopted from Primary data collected from fieldwork, April-May, 2018

In the next steps, the researchers asked them what the term creative question stands for. Findings achieved from analyzing open-ended questionnaire and FGD data are presented as follows in Table 3 According to teachers' views, creative question means a pattern or style of question where -

Table 4

Conception of creative question obtain from teachers' opinion

Teacher's conception about creative questions	%
• Students can create something new using their thinking and intellectualability.	50%
• Students can answer by their words about anything after gaining knowledge from their textbooks.	10%
• Students can express their thinking and ability to gain and organizing knowledge from their textbooks.	12%
• Able to answer using their intellectual and thinking ability rather than only through memorizing.	6.7%
• Teacher could not explain the term.	6.7%

Note: Adopted from Primary data collected from fieldwork, April-May, 2018

To support the above statements, some teachers' voices found from open-ended questionnaires and FGDs are given below.

> *"Creative question means to create something new by the students after reading the text. Actually, with creative question we try to measure what students have learned, whether they can create knowledge. In short, to create something new is creative question". (Assistant teacher, Sample school 1).*

> *"The term'creative question' implies to create something by students' own words or to create something new using their thinking ability. It is possible to measure students' creativity through their own opinions or answers about the given question". (Senior teacher-1, Sample school 2).*

Thus, it is clear from the findings presented in Table 4 that most of the teachers do not have very clear conceptions about creative question. Interestingly, 6.7% of teachers in the sample do not have any idea about creative question as they could not explain the term 'creative question'. Tuhin *et al.*(2016) also found similar findings in their study.

Are teachers of secondary schools properly trained on creative questions?

Table 5 portraits teachers training related information demonstrates that a large number of teachers (66.7%) of old Dhaka city schools are leg behind of getting any training on creative question after introducing the new evaluation technique known as 'creative' or 'srijanshil' question, which is in line with the findings of Yasmin et al. (2020). In contrast, 33.3 % of teachers reveal that they received training on creative question.

Table 5

Teacher received Training on Creative Question

Variable	Yes N (%)	No N (%)	Total N (%)
• Received training on creative question.	20 (33.3)	40 (66.7)	60 (100)
• I know the number of steps used in creative question.	60 (100)	00 (00)	60 (100)
• I use all steps while developing creative question.	60 (100)	00 (00)	60 (100)

Note: Adopted from Primary data collected from fieldwork, April-May, 2018

After defining the term 'creative question' and revealing their training status, teachers were asked to indicate whether they know the steps of creative question. Interesting findings were found that 100% of teachers are familiar with the steps and use all steps while making creative question for school examination regardless of getting any training on creative question.

Teachers' conception about four different steps of creative questions

Findings indicate that teachers can name the four steps of creative question. In order to assess teachers' understanding level of the four steps followed in creative question, they were also asked to define the terms. Findings obtained from teachers'opinions are presented in the following section.

Knowledge: With this step, teachers assess students' ability to recall the facts and basic concepts learned from their textbook. Findings presented in Table 6 indicate that half of the teachers (50%) in the sample explaind this level of Bloom's taxonomy appropriately, which is used in creative question. In contrast, 50% (43.3%+6.7%) of teachers could not explain the term at all, though they use the step while developing creative question for their school examination.

Table 6

Teachers' conception about first step (knowledge) of creative question

Knowledge	N (%)
• Student can answer the question in short form.	4 (6.7)
• Define anything according to textbooks.	30 (50)
• Could not define the term appropriately.	26 (43.3)
Total	60 (100)

Note: Adopted from Primary data collected from fieldwork, April-May, 2018

Understanding: In this step, teachers measure students' level of comprehension about any ideas or concepts that they have learnt from their textbooks. Findings of Table 7 reveal that 60% of the teachers could explain this step precisely. In contrast, a good number of teachers (40%) in the sample could not define the term.

Table 7

Teachers' conception about the second step (understanding) of creative question

Understanding	N (%)
• In this level students can explain any topic (story, poem, content etc.) of the textbooks and we measure their level of understanding.	36 (60)
• Could not define the term.	24 (40)
Total	60 (100)

Note: Adopted from Primary data collected from fieldwork, April-May, 2018

Application: The main intention of this step is to assess whether students can use their acquired knowledge and understanding in a new solution. Findings derived from the teachers' opinion, as shown in Table 8, imply that 40% of teachers in the sample have conception about the term 'application'. However, they are in a bit confusion about the term, where as 13.3% (3.3%+10%) tried to explain the term, which did not reveal the exact meaning of application level of creative question. Ironically, 46.7% of teachers could not explain the term.

Table 8

Teachers' conception about the third step (application) of creative question

Application	N (%)
• Compare based on similarity and dissimilarity of the text content.	2 (3.3)
• Identify similarity and the dissimilarity between the given stimulus in the question and content of textbook.	6 (10)
• To apply achieved knowledge according to textbook in a similar situation.	24 (40)
• Could not define the term.	28 (46.7)
Total	60 (100)

Note: Adopted from Primary data collected from fieldwork, April-May, 2018

Higher-order thinking: Final step of creative question is the combination of the last three steps of Bloom's taxonomy, namely analyzing, evaluating, and creating. At this step, students are assessed whether they justify, analyze, synthesize, or produce new knowledge using their previous knowledge, understanding, and applying ability. While describing the term 'higher-order thinking', 59.9% (53.3%+3.3%+3.3%) teachers opined as given in Table 9 that with this step they measure students' analytical ability. Higher-order thinking does not measure only analytical ability but also measures students' capability of justifying, synthesizing, and producing new knowledge. However, again a large number of teachers (40%) could not explain the term as they have no clear idea about higher-order thinking.

Table 9

Teachers' conception about the fourth step (higher-order thinking) of creative question

Higher-order	N (%)
• Measures students'ability to analysis	2 (3.3)
• Students present their opinion with logic after reading textbook.	2 (3.3)
• To analyze in detail according to text content.	32 (53.3)
• Could not define the term.	24 (40)
Total	60 (100)

Note: Adopted from Primary data collected from fieldwork, April-May, 2018

It is clear that teachers need more knowledge on different steps of creative question as the findings imply that more than 40% teachers in the sample do not possess very clear conception about four steps, i.e., knowledge, understanding, application, and higher-order thinking of creative question, which is alarming for quality teaching and education as well. Thus, proper training on the creative question is imperative to improve teachers' knowledge and skills in developing precise, valid, and reliable creative question.

Teachers' Practice of Creative Questions

To generate information regarding teachers'practice of creative question, they were asked to mention whether they use all steps of creative question while preparing their school examination question, use their knowledge acquired from the training, to what extent they use creative question for their examination, how long they spend time to develop their skills in making quality creative question at school and outside of school (i.e., at home). Findings derived from analyzing data are presented in the subsequent sections.

Teachers practice of creative question for school examination

Teachers in the sample were asked to mention whether they use their knowledge achieved from the training in developing creative question. It is observed from the findings given in Table 10 that 30% of teachers use their knowledge they received from training, and 3.33% of teachers answered that they do not use their achieved knowledge while preparing creative question for school examination. Interesting findings were found for a large number of teachers (76.67%) who prepare creative question, although they did not get any training on this issue from the schools or training offered by the government. Then they were asked (though this question was not included in the questionnaire) how they prepare creative question without any training. In favor of this point, they informed the researchers that using the instructional guide provided from the schools,

guide book available in the market, and sharing knowledge from senior and experienced teachers; they try to develop creative question for school examination, and the findings are in line with the findings of other researchers (Habib, 2016 &Tuhin et al., 2016). According to their opinion, this knowledge is not adequate for making creative question, and they need proper training on creative question for clear conception and understanding. It is important to improve the quality of their ability to make question and to improve education quality.

Table 10

Teachers use their knowledge received from the training in developing creative questions

Item Category	N(%)
• Yes, I use my training knowledge while developing creative questions for school examinations.	18(30)
• I prepare creative questions for examination following proper steps though I didnot get any training.	40(66.67)
• No, I do not use our knowledge.	2(3.33)
Total	60(100)

*Note:*Adopted from Primary data collected from fieldwork, April-May, 2018

Teachers'opinions derived from FGDs and open-ended questions about the practice of creative question in school examinations are given below, which is similar to the above findings generated from the survey questionnaire.

> *"I prepare creative question though I have not got any training on creative question. I do the task taking help from senior and experienced teachers who received training on creative question. Apart from this, I use the school guide/instructional book and guide book available in the market". (Assistant teacher, Sample school 1 and Assistant teacher, Sample school 2).*
>
> *"Yes, we all prepare creative question for the school examination. We do it because it is mandatory for all teachers as school authorities follow government order to practice creative question in the school examination". (Senior teacher, Sample school 1, and 2 Assistant teachers, Sample school 2 & 3).*

Teachers' practice of creative question for developing quality questions

Teachers were asked whether they use creative question in the school examination following all steps. The result indicates, as shown in Table 11, that all teachers use all steps of creative questions, while preparing question for school examination.

Table 11

Teachers' practice of creative question for developing quality question

Variables	Yes N (%)	No N (%)
• Do you use creative question in school examinations?	60 (100)	0 (00)
• Do you use all steps of creative question in your examination question?	60 (100)	0 (00)

*Note:*Adopted from Primary data collected from fieldwork, April-May, 2018

Looking at Table 12, it has been found that most of the teachers in the sample use creative question always (36.7%) and most of the time (46.7%) though a negligible number of teachers (16.7%) use creative question sometimes. It is important to note that most of the teachers in the sample informed the researchers that they have to do it as the teachers must use creative question at the school's examination.

Table 12

How Frequently Teachers use Creative Question in School Examination?

Variable	Always	Most of the time	Some-times	Seldom	Never	Total
• How frequently do you use creative question in school examination?	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
	22 (36.7)	28 (46.7)	10 (16.7)	00 (00)	00 (00)	60 (100)

Note: Adopted from Primary data collected from fieldwork, April-May, 2018

Creative question is still a new concept in Bangladesh. So, teachers need to spend some time for developing quality creative question. Findings present in Table 13 indicates that teachers spend on average 3 hours per week to improve their knowledge and skill on creative question at home (3.5 hours) and school (3.24 hours). Please note that most of the teachers in the sample informed the researchers that usually they do not get enough time to study on creative question at school for their excessive workload.

Table 13

Time for studying creative question at home and school (hour/week)

Variable	Mean	SD	Range	Minimum	Maximum	N (%)
• Home	3.50	2.56	9.50	0.50	10	60 (100)
• School	3.24	2.13	7	00	7	50(83.3)*

[Missing value= *10 (16.7%), Total sample= 60 (100%)]

Note: Adopted from Primary data collected from fieldwork, April-May, 2018

What teachers actually did to develop their skill on creative question at home and school, found from FGDs and open-ended questionnaires, are narrated below to support the findings as given in Table 13.

> *"Yes, I work out on creative question at home and school as well. I have to spend time developing appropriate stimulus for creative question. I usually study on average in a week 8-10 hours at home and 1-2 hours at school to develop quality creative question"(Assistant teacher 4, Sample school 3).*

> *"I should study more on creative question to increase my skill, but I cannot spend more time studying creative question at school due to workload. I spend 2 to 3 hours on average per week to prepare creative question only. (Senior teacher 1, Sample school 2).*

Teachers' Attitude to Creative Questions

Teachers' attitude to creative question was measured using an attitude scale. Teachers' levels of attitude to creative question were divided into five categories based on scale value. The minimum

scale value for attitude was 18, and the maximum value was 90. Table 14 represents teachers' level of attitude to creative questions along with a range of scale value. Looking at Table 143, it is clear that most of the teachers (80%) in the sample possess favorable attitude to creative question. So, it can be opined that teachers in the secondary school of old Dhaka city have easily accepted and coped with the newly introduced evaluation system familiar as 'creative' or *'srijonshil'* question though they are facing problems in developing creative question and many of them did not get any training on it

Table 14

Teachers' level of attitude to creative question and scale value

Level of Attitude	Scale value	N (%)
• Very unfavourable attitude	16-30	0 (0)
• Unfavorable attitude	31-45	2 (3.3)
• Moderate level attitude	46-60	6 (10)
• Favorable attitude	61-75	48 (80)
• Very favorable attitude	76-90	2 (3.3)
	Total	58 (96.7)

Missing Value= 2 (3.3%)

Note: Adopted from Primary data collected from fieldwork, April-May, 2018

Limitation of the Study

1. Only four secondary schools located in old Dhaka city were included in the sample, which is one of the limitations of this study.
2. Sample size is important for generalization of findings. From this point, it can be said that sample size is also a limitation of this study as the study was carried out with the sample size of 60 teachers.
3. This study used questionnaire and FGD to generate information from the key informants. Other techniques like interviews, case study, and observation can be used to gather more in-depth information about creative question.
4. Information about the creative question was generated only from the teachers. If the researchers include students and parents in the sample, they could have obtained other dimensions of information.

Policy Implication

Creative questions have been introduced in the evaluation system of Bangladesh since 2010. It is an issue of debate among different stakeholders, for example, parents, students, teachers, education experts, researchers, and intellectuals. Researchers of this study believe that their findings have depicted the real picture of teachers' attitudes, conception, and practice of creative question that the educational policy makers can consider while formulating policy on creative question in future. Some policy implications of this study are given below.

- Most of the teachers do not have apparent conception about creative question. School authorities need to take immediate effective action on this issue, arranging short-term or day-long workshops to provide their teachers appropriate knowledge on creative question.
- School authority should arrange an introductory session on creative question for newly joined teachers before assigning them to develop creative question for examination purposes. This introductory session can be arranged inviting an expert or with the help of senior teachers, who have an outstanding level of knowledge about creative question.
- Many teachers (66.7% found from the findings) did not receive any training on creative question yet, they are obliged to prepare creative question for their school examination according to school rules. Paying attention to this point, school authority and policy makers should take some effective actions, like short-term subject-based in-service training programs. So, the teachers can get an opportunity to improve their knowledge, understanding, and skill about creative question.

Conclusion

Introducing creative question in evaluation system is an issue of debate for policy makers, education experts, teachers, parents, and students in Bangladesh. Students are not getting on with creative question in one hand, and the other hand, teachers are not well trained up on this controversial issue yet. So, there is a gap between knowledge and understanding in both of the groups. Most of the time, students face problems to answer the question following steps of creative question. Findings indicate that a significant number of teachers did not receive any training on creative question, though they have to prepare creative question for their school examination. They serve this purpose using a school guide book, guidebook available in the market, and with the guidance of senior experienced teachers, which absolutely not the proper way. So, school authorities should take necessary steps on this vital issue and provide them proper training. It is expected that teachers can improve their capability if they get in-service and short-term training on creative question. At school level, teachers should provide proper knowledge to the students during teaching-learning activities to remove all misconceptions about creative questions. Some teachers in the sample said that implementation of creative question in mathematics is not an easy job, and policy makers should rethink and take necessary action to compensate for this issue for the betterment of students' mathematical achievement. Summing up the discussion, it could be said that this study has identified some vital issues of creative question and provide some policy recommendations for policy makers and education experts to think about the issues while taking further development of creative question.

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