

Impact of Teacher Observations on Enhancing Teaching Quality and Student Outcomes in the Middle School**Tasneem Saifuddin (PhD)¹, Asma Afzal (PhD)², Asma Amin³**¹. Iqra University (tasneem.saifuddin@iqra.edu.pk)². NUML University (asma.afzal@numl.edu.pk)³. NUML University (asmamin@gmail.com)***DOI:*** <https://doi.org/10.63163/jpehss.v3i4.1238>**Abstract**

This research study explores the impact of teacher observation practices on teaching quality and student outcomes in middle school settings. Teacher observation is widely used as a tool for evaluating instructional practices; however, its effectiveness largely depends on how it is designed and implemented (Glickman et al., 2018). The present study aims to examine how classroom observations influence teachers' instructional practices, how teachers perceive observations, and whether these practices contribute to improved student engagement and learning outcomes. A qualitative descriptive research design was adopted to gain in-depth insights into the experiences and perceptions of middle school teachers and school leaders. Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions, and classroom observations involving approximately 15–20 purposively selected participants. The qualitative approach allowed the researcher to capture teachers' reflective experiences regarding observation feedback and professional growth in a natural school environment. The findings reveal that teacher observations, when conducted in a supportive and developmental manner, positively influence teaching quality. Teachers reported improvements in lesson planning, classroom management, questioning techniques, and student engagement after receiving observation feedback. Although teachers were cautious in linking observations directly to examination results, they acknowledged noticeable improvements in student behavior, participation, and formative assessment performance. The study also highlights that teachers perceive observations more positively when they are focused on professional development rather than evaluation or appraisal. However, several challenges were identified, including vague feedback, time constraints, emotional pressure, and classroom disruptions during observations. Peer observations were found to be particularly effective in promoting collaboration, reflective practice, and professional confidence among teachers. The study concludes that teacher observations can be a powerful tool for enhancing teaching quality and student outcomes in middle schools if implemented with clear objectives, constructive feedback, adequate training, and a growth-oriented approach. The findings offer practical implications for school leaders, policymakers, and teacher education programs seeking to strengthen observation practices for continuous improvement in teaching and learning.

Keywords: Teacher Observation, Teaching Quality, Student Outcomes, Classroom Practices, Instructional Improvement

Introduction

Teacher Observations is a systematic process for assessing and improving instructional practice in the classroom environment. This process utilizes trained observers, including administrators or peers, to systematically examine classroom dynamics, instruction and student interactions in order to offer constructive feedback (Danielson, 2007). Within the context of Middle School, when students experience dramatic changes in development, proper teacher observations may be critical in fine-tuning pedagogic interventions to better address the learning challenges of adolescents. This chapter identifies the core components of the study on the effect of teacher observations towards teaching quality and the achievement of students in middle schools laying the groundwork for a thorough exploration of the role of such practices in school improvement. Teacher observation practice has developed as a central element in school improvement efforts and professional development. In the past, observations have been utilized to determine effectiveness of teaching, areas of improvement and a culture of ongoing learning for teachers. Middle schools, which typically comprise children aged 12 to 14 or 15, have specific challenges that include addressing various learning styles, dealing with behavioral problems and ensuring engagement during a transition period from Primary or Juniors to Middle School. Middle school is a pivotal phase in the academic and personal growth of students. Successful teaching during this phase directly impacts learning, motivation, and attainment in the long run. Observations by teachers have become central to enhancing instruction. By allowing well-framed feedback, the pinpointing of strengths and deficits, and the integration of teaching with curriculum objectives, observations can act as a link between professional development and student achievement. One of the most powerful predictors of the success of students within the Middle Schools is teaching quality. Nonetheless, numerous schools find it difficult to offer constant means to assist teachers within instructional improvement practices (Mouraz et al., 2023). Teacher observation is commonly employed to offer comments, determine professional development needs and enrich classroom practices. Many middle school educators report inconsistencies in observation feedback, leading to limited improvements in instructional practices and student engagement. Even though observations are regarded as crucial in Middle schools, they are underused, poorly designed or alternatively to a development tool, it is regarded as a compliance measure. Due to this there is a perceived gap in knowing if formal teacher observations translate into better teaching quality and student results. Lower self-efficacy, behavioral issues, and academic achievement are the result of this, which necessitates targeted research to optimize observation practices for this educational purpose. Although numerous classrooms are observed in schools, few are aware of the actual effect on teaching quality and student achievement. Observations might be perceived as judgmental instead of developmental by some teachers, which could curtail their effectiveness. The significance of this study is that it will highlight whether, under proper design, observations can actually increase teaching quality and student achievement in the middle school setting (Kane et al., 2013). The results will assist teachers, policymakers, and school leaders in creating developmental, not punitive, observation systems that ultimately enhance teacher and student performance.

The argument for this research is based on increased focus on accountability and teacher professional growth in the field of education, especially in middle schools where teachers' performance has direct bearing on students' transition experience. With evidence of observations being able to build teachers' confidence, motivation, and teamwork, it becomes a strong necessity to examine their direct use. Being a B.Ed. student, the issue is of concern to me in terms of pedagogical enhancement and solving practical problems such as observation biases and disparities, which would further advance general educational reforms for improvement in teaching and learning. This study is of important importance to educators, school administrators, and education policymakers. By pointing out the positive effects of observation such as improved

emotional support resulting in improved student achievement and attitudes it offers evidence-based observations to help shape evaluation systems (Seidel & Shavelson, 2007). The results can shape professional development programs, especially in middle schools, where targeting adolescent needs can diminish behavioral problems and enhance equity. Secondly, exposing biases in policy-driven observations will encourage more equitable practices, creating confidence in evaluation systems and ultimately leading to better teaching quality and student achievement. B.Ed. students and prospective teachers can especially learn directly from this research, providing them with pragmatic advice on how to use observations for career development.

Aim of the study is:

- To investigate the function of teacher observations in the Middle Schools in enhancing teaching practices.
- To test the effect of teacher observations on student academic achievement.
- To investigate teachers' views on classroom observation as a professional development tool.
- To determine challenges and shortcomings in existing observation practices within middle schools.
- To recommend ways of making teacher observations more effective towards improving teaching and learning.

Literature Review

In educational evaluation and professional development, the role of a teacher is highlighted by the literature on teacher observations as a multifaceted tool. To enhance instruction through constructive feedback, systemic observations of classroom practice, typically through the application of rubrics is imperative. In this review, effectiveness of teacher observations is investigated on the classroom practices and the student learning with reference to the middle school context. The review investigates some solid foundations, effective impact, some challenges and research gaps based on various sources. Also, there are key themes like potential of observations which foster reflective practice, while acknowledging systemic issues that compromise or hinder their effectiveness. The study has emphasized on the value of teacher observation for professional development and growth; however, it has also suggested that there is a need for improvement in the implementation of the observation process and quality to get more benefits, particularly in the middle schools. This is because of the dynamic needs and challenges for this age group, such as adolescent developmental needs as well as specific pedagogical demands.

Teacher Observation as a Professional Development Tool

For Professional Development, teacher observations have long been recognized as an important strategy. Teacher Observations which are effective are not only evaluative but act as a means of reflection, constructive feedback and professional growth (Danielson, 2007). Peer observations also promote collaborative learning and shared practices among teachers, consistent with social learning theory (Bandura, 1977). Teachers are more likely to adopt reflective practices, improve instructional methods and try out innovative teaching strategies and approaches if they are observed in a supportive and collaborative manner. Along with this, peer observations inspire professional dialogue and foster the communities of practice, that are connected to sustained improvements in teaching (Mouraz et al., 2023)

Impact on Teaching Quality

Teaching quality is significantly enhanced through teacher observations because feedback helps teachers refine their instructional strategies and classroom management practices (Hattie, 2009; Marzano et al., 2011). According to the research, observation feedbacks lead to targeted

improvements in instructional strategies. These feedbacks are mostly helpful and constructive, which contribute to changing lesson planning and classroom management. Through modeling and debriefing, teacher effectiveness is built when peer observations are done, in particular. For new teachers, observing experienced teachers is beneficial as they get high expectations and insights into routines, resulting in a shift of focus from student behaviour to pedagogical planning. Teachers are able to exchange practices and receive mutual feedback that helps them to produce various instructional repositories through peer coaching. Structured supervision and instructional coaching have been shown to improve lesson effectiveness and student engagement (Glickman et al., 2018).

Impact on Student outcomes

According to the literature, teacher observations are linked with increased student outcomes such as student engagement, leadership, behaviour and academic performance. This is specifically through the improved teaching quality and better teacher-student relationships. Classrooms where teachers demonstrate effective instructional practices tend to show higher student achievement gains (Kane et al., 2013; Allen et al., 2013). In effective classroom environments, during observations, it has been observed that using engaging materials and greeting students by name fosters positive relationships that correlate with better outcomes. Also, students' assessments scores increased, and lower discipline referrals were also observed. Teacher practice is improved that supports student achievement through the teacher observations in the middle schools. Through discussions and critiques, research on perceptions of professional development indicated that the strategies improved after the observation feedback results in heightened student organization, motivation, and achievement, even when there are challenges for students and they are overloaded. Observation-based teaching frameworks are positively associated with student motivation and academic success (Seidel & Shavelson, 2007). Quantitative evidence from a Missouri district indicated student achievement gains on standardized assessments following observation implementation, though not coinciding with rating. Peer observations improve results by fostering collaborative settings; for instance, learn strategies for diverse students, resulting in improved student interactions and decreased isolation. In a Chicago study, bias impacted scores but positive observations were associated with student demographics, suggesting that adjusted systems could better assist results in disadvantaged contexts. Generally, observations centered on emotional support and involvement forecast improvements in self-efficacy, well-being, and conduct on par with test score effects. The effects are larger in middle schools, where transitional needs are enhanced by observed high-quality interactions.

Teachers' perceptions of Observations

The success of the Observation system and process depends upon how the teachers perceive it. According to the research, when observations are developmental rather than judgmental, teachers are more receptive towards it. For example, a study indicates that teachers view observations more positively and are likely to change their practices when observations are linked with professional dialogue, mentoring and actionable feedback (Sullivan & Glanz, 2013). However, when observations are done only for appraisals, accountability or evaluation, teachers perceive them as stressful, corrective measures that also decrease their effectiveness. This underscores the need to position observations as an instrument for development, and not for compliance. Supportive supervision increases teacher confidence and willingness to adopt new strategies (Danielson, 2007).

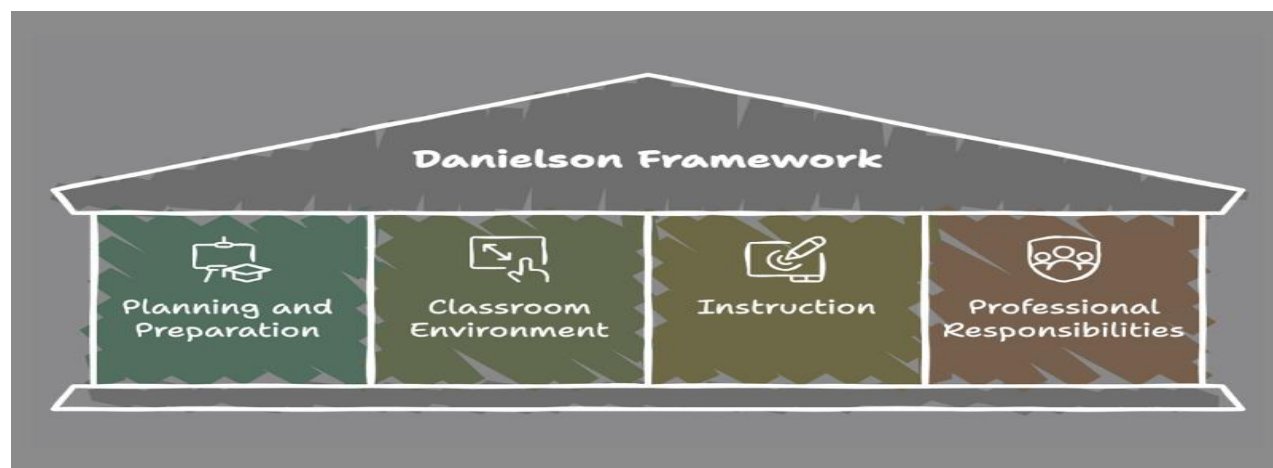
Challenges and Biases in Teacher Observation

With all of the benefits, teacher observations face challenges also in terms of biases that compromises fairness and validity. These biases are personal, where the observers favor the same teachers; halo/pitchfork effects due to first impressions; central tendency, tendency to avoid

extremes; leniency, overly flattering scores; and rater drift, drifting away from criteria over time. Observers often lack adequate training, which affects reliability and fairness of feedback (Strong, 2011). Urban district teachers with low-achieving students get disproportionately low ratings, implying bias related to classroom difficulties. These problems underscore the necessity for fair systems so that observations effectively measure teaching quality. Time constraints and system-level barriers are common in low- and middle-income countries (World Bank, 2019).

Conceptual Framework of Teacher Observation

Observations by teachers are based on adult learning and organizational development theories and serve as a link between professional development and evaluation. Teachers, as stated by adult learning theory and elaborated by Knowles (1984), gain from experience-based and self-directed learning, which peer observations promote through enabling educators to observe and reflect on actual practices. In the middle school context, observations tend to utilize models such as the Danielson model, which breaks teaching into domains such as classroom environment and student engagement. These models operationalize teaching quality into measurable scales, allowing raters to score aspects such as instructional support and discourse. Types of observations are administrative (top-down assessments) and peer-based (collegial). Peer observations specifically fit with social cognitive theory, learning through modeling and feedback from peers. Research prefers non-evaluative protocols, pre- and post-observations, to establish trust and target particular areas such as student engagement or instructional approaches. For example, in phenomenological action research in a middle school, teachers recognized such elements as sufficient time and flexibility as being important for successful peer observations, resulting in honed protocols that ensure mutual gain. Administrative observations, though necessary to ensure accountability, tend to blend with professional development plans, applying rubrics to offer constructive feedback. Overall, the conceptual framework emphasizes observations as a means to develop learning organizations, where collective reflection promotes improvement.



Literature Gaps and Middle School Focus

Although comprehensive across general education, the literature indicates areas of omission in middle school-specific studies in which developmental changes expand the requirement for customized observations. Middle school effects are seldom isolated in research, and most combine secondary levels. Knowledge gaps encompass the limited empirical attention to long-term outcomes of peer observations for adolescents and bias in diverse middle school populations. The research tends to exclude the role of observations in responding to middle school issues such as behavioral problems or needs for autonomy. Subsequent research would be to investigate these,

following on from conclusions that high-quality interactions foretell success in secondary environments.

Best practices and Recommendations

Literature indicates a number of strategies for making effective teacher observations:

- Employ structured models to ensure consistency.
- Make multiple observations throughout the school year to get a more complete picture of teaching practices.
- Offer timely, descriptive, and constructive feedback by means of pre- and post-observations conversations.
- Engage administrators and peers as part of the observation process to promote collaboration.
- Connect observation feedback to specific professional development opportunities.

By combining these practices, observations can become more than just a compliance system but instead a potent force for ongoing improvement in teaching and learning. The reviewed literature indicates that teacher observations, when implemented with a developmental focus, can significantly enhance teaching quality and student outcomes. Observations not only provide teachers with actionable feedback but also contribute to the broader culture of reflective practice and professional growth. However, challenges such as lack of observer training, teacher resistance, and time limitations must be addressed. The evidence suggests that structured, supportive, and collaborative observation systems are most effective in middle school contexts, where teaching quality strongly influences student motivation and achievement.

Research Methodology

This research used a qualitative descriptive research design. The design was suited because it permitted the researcher to gather rich, descriptive information and learn the actual experiences of teachers and school leaders concerning classroom observation practices and their effects on teaching and learning. The research did not include any experimental manipulation. Instead, it sought to describe and interpret participants' views in their natural school environments. A qualitative strategy that concentrated on what individuals thought, felt, and went through. Through open-ended questions and reflective answers, the research:

- Investigated how teachers and leaders viewed the purpose of classroom observations,
- Pondered how these observations influenced teaching practices
- Probed the perceived impacts on learners' learning and participation.

The approach was appropriate for investigating human experiences within an educational setting. Middle school teachers and school leaders from sampled schools formed the target population.

Population: School leaders and teachers who work in middle schools.

Sample: Purposive sampling was applied in selecting the participants who were directly affected by or involved in observations by teachers.

Sample size: Roughly 15–20 participants, comprising both leaders and teachers.

This size was sufficient for qualitative research since it enabled in depth responses while maintaining manageable data.

Tools used to study the data:

1. Questionnaire
2. Interviews
3. Focused group
4. Observations

Confidentiality and Voluntary participation were ensured throughout the process.

Data Analysis

The data gathered from a teacher-perspective questionnaire intended to investigate the influence of teacher observations on improving teaching quality and student outcomes in middle schools is analyzed in this chapter. Twenty teachers in all, representing a range of subjects and degrees of teaching experience, took part in the survey. Both the multiple-choice answers and the participants' open-ended comments are integrated into the analysis. The primary themes that correspond with the research questions are used to arrange the findings. Twenty teachers in all answered the questionnaire. A sizable portion of the respondents had more than ten years of teaching experience, and the majority were seasoned middle school teachers. Teachers taught a range of subjects, including Science, English, Urdu, Social Studies, and Islamic Studies. Teacher observation is a well-established practice in their school setting, as evidenced by the fact that every respondent said they had taken part in classroom observations on several occasions throughout their teaching careers. In general, teachers showed familiarity with the procedure of classroom observation and its intended purpose within the academic function of the school.

Impact of Teacher Observations on Teaching Quality

The survey's main goal was to find out how teachers thought observation affected their overall teaching. Most of them agreed that watching other teachers teach helped them get better at their jobs. Teachers said that feedback from observations made them think about how they teach and change things like how they plan lessons, how clear their instructions are, how engaged their students are, and how they ask questions. Several teachers noted that observations prompted concrete changes in their instructional methods. They mentioned enhancements like improving classroom management, adding more student-centered techniques, and establishing more precise lesson objectives. Compared to teachers who received general or ambiguous comments, those who received specific, actionable feedback reported a greater degree of improvement. One teacher said, for instance: "I modified my questioning strategy and students responded more after receiving observation feedback." Comments such as these imply that teachers are open to changing and improving their teaching methods when they receive meaningful feedback.

Relationship Between Teacher Observations and Student Outcomes

Additionally, teachers were asked if they thought that observations in the classroom affected the learning outcomes of their students. The majority of respondents concurred that student engagement rose as their instruction improved as a result of observations and feedback. Teachers noted that students were more engaged in the lessons as a result of better questioning strategies, better classroom management, and clearer instructions. Teachers frequently stated that short-term indicators, such as formative assessments, midterm assessments, and other forms of assessments, showed discernible improvement after they implemented observation feedback, even though they did not claim any significant changes in exam results. This implies that classroom observation affects immediate student outcomes (behavior, engagement, and participation), which over time may progressively result in improved academic performance. Teachers also noted that when lessons were better organized and carried out as a result of observation feedback, students became more engaged and self-assured.

Teachers' Perception: Supportive or Evaluative?

One of the research questions examined teachers' perceptions of classroom observations as either evaluative tools connected to performance appraisal or as helpful tools for professional development. The majority of educators saw observations favorably and characterized them as helpful. In the open responses, terms like "helpful," "supportive," and "developmental" were

frequently used. However, when observations seemed more evaluative than developmental, some teachers voiced concerns. Teachers experienced pressure and anxiety in these situations, particularly when observations were directly related to official performance reviews or decisions about promotions. So, it looks like how schools present classroom observations really changes how teachers see them. If it's shown as a helpful thing to make teaching better, teachers are way more open to it. But if it feels like it's just to punish or judge them, they get stressed out, and it doesn't work as well. Basically, teachers' thinking relies a lot on trust, being open, and understanding why the observations are happening.

Challenges Face During Observations

Teachers generally felt good about the observations, but they mentioned some problems that made them less useful. We found these problems in their answer choices and comments.

1. Vague or unclear feedback

The thing we heard most was that feedback wasn't clear enough. Teachers said it often didn't give them real direction. For instance, saying things like get students more involved or manage your class better was too broad to really help. Teachers want feedback with real examples and ways to do things differently that they can try out in their classes.

2. Time constraints

Many teachers who responded, mentioned that time management was one of their biggest challenges. Though, they really want to participate in peer observations, want to be observed, engaged in post observation discussions and implement observation feedback, but find it difficult to do so specially during the busy academic periods.

3. Classroom disturbances

Few teachers have observed that the presence of any other teacher can disrupt the students' behavior or interrupt the flow of the lesson. They even feel uncomfortable or intimidated in the presence of an authoritative figure. This suggests that observation protocols must be clarified so the process must not disrupt the teaching and learning going on.

4. Emotional pressure

Some people said they felt nervous or awkward when being observed. This means we need to make observations feel more supportive and less like a test for teachers. Basically, these issues show us where we can make observations better.

Role of Peer Observation in Teacher Professional Development

The survey also checked out what teachers think about watching each other teach. Many said it helped them because they felt way chiller and could be themselves when another teacher, not the principal, was watching. They saw these teacher watchers as easy to talk to since they get what it's like in the classroom. Teachers felt they could talk about tough stuff and get real advice from someone who knows the job. Watching each other also helped teachers work together and talk about teaching. So, it might be a good idea for schools to use teacher watching more in how they help teachers learn and get better.

Key Trends Identified

The data showed some things pretty clearly:

1. Teachers usually like being observed and think it's useful.
2. Observations really help teachers think about what they're doing, plan better, and get students more involved.
3. The worst part of observations is that the feedback is often unclear or just too general.

4. Teachers are more open to changing how they teach if they feel supported and coached.
5. Teachers tend to prefer being observed by other teachers over formal reviews.

Basically, it looks like teacher observations are good, but we need to do them better.

Recommendations And Conclusion

Conclusion

This study looked at how teacher observations affect teaching quality and student results in middle schools. The results showed that teachers usually see these observations as helpful, especially when the goal is to help them grow professionally, not just to judge them. Most teachers said that having people watch them teach made them think about what they do and helped them plan lessons better, improve how they teach, and manage their classrooms. The study also found that teachers thought better teaching led to better learning for students. They figured that when they used the feedback from observations well, students paid more attention, took part more, and behaved better in class. Though teachers were careful about saying observations boosted test scores directly, they did notice improvements in how students learned and how they acted in class. But the study did find some problems that kept teacher observations from being as helpful as they could be. The biggest issue was that the feedback wasn't always clear or specific. Teachers had a tough time making real changes when the feedback was too general. Not having enough time and the class being disrupted during observations were also common worries. Plus, when teachers felt like they were being judged, they got nervous, which made the whole thing less helpful for their development. Basically, the study says that teacher observations can be a good way to improve teaching and help students learn, if done in a way that's supportive, well-organized, and involves teamwork. It is important to see teacher observation as something ongoing, not just a quick, formal thing. If it's done regularly, with real talks afterward, it helps teachers keep getting better. The teachers in the study were more open to getting better when they felt supported and got good feedback. This shows that observation systems ought to focus on learning, working together, and getting better, not just following the rules.

School leaders are a big part of how well teacher observation goes. Leaders who create a trusting, open, and learning-focused place can really make observations better. When teachers feel okay with trying new things, thinking about them, and learning from feedback, observation becomes a great way to improve teaching. But if teachers think observations are just judging them, it doesn't help much. This study adds insights from middle school teachers. It shows that even experienced teachers can get something out of thoughtful observation and feedback. That is why teacher observations ought to be part of a bigger plan for helping teachers grow and make learning better for students. If done well, it can really help change teaching and make classrooms better for learning.

Recommendations

Here are some ideas, based on what the study found, to help middle schools do teacher observations better:

1. Give Better Feedback:
Observers need to give feedback that's easy to understand and use. It should point out what teachers are doing well and give ideas they can actually use in class.
2. Train Observers:
School leaders and observers need training to observe well and give constructive feedback for a fairer and more professional environment.

3. **Make Observations About Growth:**
Make it clear that teacher observations are to help teachers grow, not just to judge them to help teachers feel less stressed and be more open to feedback.
4. **Do Peer Observations:**
Schools should have teachers observe each other as part of their training to help teachers work together, learn from each other, and support one another.
5. **Make Time for Observations:**
Schools need to set aside enough time for observations and discussions after the observation to give teachers time to think about the feedback and use it.
6. **Don't Interrupt Class:**
Observers shouldn't interrupt lessons and should stick to the rules so that teaching and learning can continue without a problem.

So, to conclude it up, good teacher observations need good planning, clear talk, and a big focus on helping teachers grow. When done with support and teamwork, observations can really help teachers get better and make learning better for students. Schools should work on giving helpful feedback, training observers, and getting teachers to work together. If schools follow these things, teacher observations can turn into a helpful way to make teaching and learning better all the time in middle schools.

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