# RECOVERY STRATEGIES FOR SERVICE FAILURE AND CUSTOMERS REPURCHASE INTENTIONS IN SELECTED HOTELS IN EKET, AKWA IBOM STATE, NIGERIA

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#### Abstract

This study examined the effect of recovery strategies for service failure on customers repurchase intention in selected hotels in Eket, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The study adopted the simple random sampling technique to aid the researcher get information from the sample population. Purposive sample was used in selecting 160 hotel managers and their customers in 10 hotels in Eket. The data collected were analyzed simple linear regression analysis with the aid of software. The result showed that SPSS that the four dimensions of service recovery (careless and rushing service, unclean rooms, food quality and rude behavior of staff) had a significant positive effect on customers repurchase intention at hotels in Eket, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. It is recommended from the study that in spite of the significant positive effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable, hotel management should look at other strategies not discussed in the study to help in service failure. Management of hotels in Eket should continually assess the performance of their employee in line with the constructs. Finally it was recommended that effort should be made to provide customers with high level service to enhance customer loyalty.

Keywords: Service Recovery, Customers Repurchase Intention

#### 1.0 Introduction

The hotel business is a sub-sector of the hospitality industry that is mainly associated with providing a temporary place for guest, travelers, and tourists to stay. Hotels are the first and most prominent aspect of the accommodation providers owing to the range of services, quality and comfort they provide. Hotels are classified according to their sizes, the locations and quality of services they render and names. Hotel business in Nigeria is one of the businesses that guarantee all season profit for the owner. Service recovery is a process carried out by an organization to return customers who feel disadvantaged after the service or equipment fails to meet expectations to their satisfaction level (Zemke and Bell, 2000).

Zeithaml and Bitner (2003) define service recovery as the actions taken by an organization in response to a service failure. All organizations in the competition environment in the service sector attempt to provide service that is free from error to customers in order to gain their loyalty. However, owing to human errors service failure is unavoidable and this failure affect how the customer afterwards relates to the service provider. Gronroos (1988) explains service recovery as the actions taken by a service provider to address a customer complaint regarding a perceived service failure. Service failure is simply defined as service performance that fails to meet a customer's expectations is rectifiable by performing service recovery (Miller et. al., 2000).

#### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

Service providers it can be said are not all doing poorly at service recovery. Many have learned the importance of providing excellent recovery for disappointed customers. It has been proven that excellent service recovery is really a combination of variety of strategies that need to work together. This study was designed to investigate the effect of recovery strategies on customers repurchase intention in selected hotels in Eket, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

# 1.2 Objectives of the Study

The major objective of this study is to investigate the effect of recovery strategies service failure on customers repurchase intentions in selected hotels in Eket, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The study's specific objectives are to;

- i) Ascertain the effect of careless and rushing service on customers repurchase intention in hotels in Eket, Akwa Ibom State.
- ii) Find out the effect of unclean rooms on customers repurchase intention in hotels in Eket, Akwa Ibom State.
- iii) Determine the effect of food quality on customers repurchase intention in hotels in Eket, Akwa Ibom State.

- iv) To examine to which degree rude behaviour of staff impacts upon customers repurchase intention in hotels in Eket, Akwa Ibom State.
- v) To investigate the strategies used by managers of the hotels to encourage customers repurchase intention in hotels in Eket, Akwa Ibom State.

# 1.3 Research Questions

Based on the objectives of the study, the following research questions were developed.

- 1. To what extent does careless and rushing service of hotels in Eket, Akwa Ibom State result to customers repurchase intention?
- 2. What is the level of relation between unclean rooms in hotels in Eket, Akwa Ibom State and customers repurchase intention?
- 3. To what degree does food quality affect customers repurchase intention in hotels in Eket, Akwa Ibom State?
- 4. In what way has rude behavior of staff influence customers repurchase intention in hotels in Eket, Akwa Ibom State?
- 5. What is the extent to which recovery strategies used by managers of the hotels in Eket, Akwa Ibom State affect customers repurchase intention?

# 1.4 Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were developed for the study.

Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant effect between careless and rushing service in hotels in Eket, Akwa Ibom State to customers repurchase intention.

- Ho<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant effect of unclean rooms in hotels in Eket, Akwa Ibom State on customers repurchase intention.
- Ho<sub>3</sub>: There exist no significant relationship between food quality in hotels in Eket, Akwa Ibom State and customers repurchase intention.
- Ho<sub>4</sub>: There is no significant effect of rude behavior of staff in hotels in Eket, Akwa Ibom State on customers repurchase intention.
- Ho<sub>5</sub>: There is no significant effect of recovery strategies used by managers in hotels in Eket, Akwa Ibom State on customer's repurchase intention.

#### 2.0 Review of Related Literature

# 2.1 Service Delivery Failure

Organizations in high-end hospitality strive to meet the immense expectations of the customers they serve. Failures occur for all kinds of reasons – the service may be

unavailable when promised; it may be delivered too late or too slowly, the outcome may be incorrect or poorly executed or employees may be rude or uncaring. All these types of failures bring about negative feelings and responses from customers. Left unresolved, they can result in customers leaving, telling other customers about their negative experiences and even challenging the organization through consumer rights organizations or legal channels. A service failure according to Palmer (2001) is the ability to meet the expectation of customer regarding the standard service of delivery. Hospitality organizations can fail in customer service in several ways. One of those ways according to Cranage (2004) can be in the physical surroundings. Hoffman, Kelly and Chung (2003) identified three points of failure that can occur in the physical surrounds in an organization. They are cleanliness issues, mechanical problems and facility design issues.

Dietrich (2019) listed these design issues in the order of frequency that occur in hospitality services, and are important because they can directly affect the guest's experience. For example, service failures, regarding cleanliness issues can be anything that pertains to foreign objects, foul odors or poor room quality. Mechanical issues could include certain facilities not being available. For example, broken faucet. Facility design issues could include factors such as the room being next to a noisy highway.

# 2.2 Service Recovery

When service failure takes place, what is expected of the hotel? By studying the explanation of service failure, findings in the field and explanations from experts agrees that the hotel should apologize and provide compensation if necessary, which is known as recovery. Service recovery is very essential to any successful hotel. Miller et. al. (2000) state that recovery is a form of action that involves handling problems, reducing the effects of unfavourable behavior from guest dissatisfaction and retaining the guest. Gronroos (1998) explained that just discussing what is done by the hotel is not all service recovery is about but also it includes a positive response from guests when the hotel corrects any error that occurs.

Specifically customers want justice and fairness in handling their complaints. Service experts Steven Brown and Steve Tax according to Zeithaml and Bitner (2003) have documented specific types of justice that customers are looking for following their complaints: outcome fairness, procedural fairness and international fairness.

# 2.3 Three-Dimensional View of Justice (Fairness)

The most widely used concept in service recovery literature is Justice Theory (Maxham and Netemeyer, 2002). A three-dimensional view of justice (or fairness) concept has evolved from equity theory as explained in by Zeithmal and Bitner

(2003) in 2.0 above. They include distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice.

#### 2.3.1 Distributive Justice

Distributive Justice refers to the perceived fairness of the actual, tangible outcome compared to inputs (Palmer, Beggs and Keown-Mcllan, 2000). In service recovery, distributive justice focuses on the specific outcome of the firm's recovery effort, such as actual monetary compensation, an apology, future free services, reduced changes, repairs/or replacements, (Zeithaml and Bitner, 2003). Customers expect service firms to provide compensation in result of service failure. The level of compensation can be different depending on the degree of service failure (Hucutt, Bowers and Donavan 2009). The customers expect equity in the exchange that is, they want to feel that the company has 'paid' for its mistakes in a manner at least equal to what the customer has suffered. The company's "punishment should fit the crime'.

#### 2.3.2 Procedural Justice

Procedural justice refers to the perceived fairness procedures used by decision makers to arrive at an outcome. The speed of handling problems and complains was identified by Palmer et. al (2000) as an important dimension of procedural justice. Customers want easy access to the complaint process and they want things handled quickly preferably by the first person they contact. They appreciate companies that can be adaptable in their procedures so that the recovery effort can match their individual circumstances. Fair procedures are characterized by clarity, speed and absence of hassles. Unfair procedures are those customers perceive as slow, prolonged and inconvenient.

#### 2.3.3 Interactional Justice

Above and beyond their expectations of fair compensations and hassle-free, quick procedures, customers expect to be treated politely, with care and honesty. Interactional justice focuses on the manner in which the complaint is treated throughout the process (Liao, 2007). Interactional justice is often seen as a sincere apology versus rude behavior. An apology from service provider delivers politeness, courtesy, concern, effort, dignity and empathy to customers who experience failure, enhancing customers' perception of fairness of the service encounter (Liao, 2007).

Apologies should therefore be incorporated into all service recovery strategies as the minimum that would be offered by a service provider (Silber et. al, 2009).

# 2.4 Repurchase Intention

Repurchase intention includes positive spoken word, repurchase visit and loyalty. Customers engage in repeat patronage, loyalty and positive word of mouth

recommendation upon belief that exactly the same quality service rendered to them or other customers will be offered each time the hotel is visited. As posited by Bitner, Booms and Tetreault (1990), one way of creating experience which exceeds expectations is by an appropriate recovery from service failures. This will not only lead to customer satisfaction but also repurchase intention.

# 2.5 Service Recovery Strategies

Excellent service recovery is a combination of a variety of strategies that need to work together. The service recovery strategies generally used by organizations as given by Zeithaml and Bitner (2003) are:

# 1. Fail safe your service

Do it right the first time. The first rule of service quality is to do it right the first time. In this way recovery is unnecessary, customers get what they expect and the costs of redoing the service and compensating for errors can be avoided.

## 2. Welcome and encourage complaints

A critical component of a service recovery strategy is to welcome and encourage complaints. Complaints from customers should be anticipated, encouraged and tracked. The complaining customer should truly be viewed as a friend. Some ways to encourage and track complaints include;

- i. Customer research through satisfaction surveys, critical incidents studies and lost customer research.
- ii. Employees in a less formed manner can be listening posts, discovering sources of customer dissatisfaction and service failure on the front line.
- iii. Customers can be taught how to complain. Sometimes they have no idea whom to speak to, what the process is, or what will be involved. The use of technology has made it easier for customers to have access to sales and service representatives.

#### 3. Act Quickly

Complaining customers want quick responses. Thus if the company welcomes, even encourages complaints, it must be prepared to act on them quickly. This requires systems and procedures that allow quick action, as well as empowered employees.

#### 4. Treat Customer Fairly

In responding quickly, it is also critical to treat each customer fairly. Customers expect to be treated fairly in terms of the outcome they receive, the process by which the service recovery takes place and the interpersonal treatment they receive.

# 5. Learn from Recovery Experience

Managers can often learn systematic problems in the delivery system that need fixing by tracking survey recovery efforts and situations. By conducting root-cause analysis, firms can identify the sources of the problems and modify processes, sometimes eliminating almost completely the need for recovery.

#### 6. Learn from Lost Customers

Another key component of an effective service recovery strategies is to learn from the customers who defect or decide to leave. Formal market research to discover the reasons customers have left can assist in preventing failures in the future. This type of research is difficult, even painful for companies, however. No one likes to examine their failures. Yet this is essential for preventing the same mistakes and losing more customers in the future.

# 7. Return to "Doing it Right"

The set of strategies described above leads directly back to the beginning "fail-safe the service and do it right the first time" by integrating all of the strategies, companies will find less and less of a need for service recovery.

# 3.0 Research Design

The study adopted the simple random sampling technique. This design is chosen to aid the researcher get information directly from a sample population and is useful in describing the characteristics attributed to the subject under study. The choice of this design also became necessary because the anonymity of surveys allows respondents to answer with more candid and valid answers to the research enquiry. Purposive sample was used in selecting the 160 hotel managers and their customers in 10 hotel in Eket. Using purposive sampling is best for this study as it results in the selection of participants with rich experience of the phenomenon (Iversen 2017). The researcher use purposive sampling to elicit information from hotel managers and their customers with rich experience on the phenomenon under study.

# 4.0 Testing of Hypotheses

Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant effect between careless and rushing service in hotels in Eket to customers repurchase intention.

**Table 4.1** Careless and rushing service in hotels in Eket to Customers repurchase intention

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.769ª	.575	.571	.44420

a. Predictors: (Constant), careless and rushing service

# **ANOVA**<sup>a</sup>

Mod	del	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	49.445	1	49.445	62.587	.000 <sup>b</sup>
1	Residual	50.576	159	.790		
	Total	100.021	160			

- A. Dependent Variable: customers repurchase intention
- b. Predictors: (Constant), careless and rushing service

#### Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

			dardized ficients	Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
Model		В	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	.470	.089		6.430	.000
1	careless and rushing service	.666	. 021	.769	12.827	.000

a. Dependent Variable: customers repurchase intention

The model summary in table 4.2.1 shows an R- value of 0.769. This suggests a strong influence on careless and rushing service and customers repurchase intention in hotels in Eket. The R square- value of 0.571 shows that 57.1% variation in customers repurchase intention was accounted for by variations in careless and rushing service. The ANOVA table indicates that the regression model significantly predicts the dependents variable given the F- value of 62.587 and its corresponding P- value of 0.00. This implies that there is significant effect careless and rushing service and customers repurchase intention in hotels in Eket. Also, the B-coefficient of 0.666 implies that holding every other thing constant, the model predicts 0.666 unit increase in customer's repurchase intention given a unit increase in careless and rushing service.

# 4.2 Hypothesis Two:

Ho<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant effect of unclean rooms in hotels in Eket on customers repurchase intention.

**Table 4.2.2** Effect of unclean rooms in hotels in Eket on customers repurchase intention.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.666ª	.555	.551	.43420

a. Predictors: (Constant), unclean rooms

#### **ANOVA**<sup>a</sup>

Mod	del	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	49.445	1	49.445	62.587	.000b
1	Residual	50.576	159	.790		
	Total	100.021	160			

a. Dependent Variable: customers repurchase intention

b. Predictors: (Constant), unclean rooms

#### Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Mo	odel		dardized ficients	Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		В	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	.570	.089		6.430	.000
1	unclean rooms	.766	. 021	.666	12.827	.000

a. Dependent Variable: customers repurchase intention

The model summary in table 4.2.2 shows an R- value of 0.551. This suggests a strong effect of unclean rooms in hotels in Eket on customers repurchase intention. The R square- value of 0.551 shows that 55.1% variation in unclean rooms on customer's repurchase intention. The ANOVA table indicates that the regression model significantly predict the dependents variable given the F- value of 62.587 and its corresponding P- value of 0.00. This implies that there is significant relationship between unclean rooms in hotels in Eket and customers repurchase intention. Also, the B-coefficient of 0.766 implies that holding every other thing constant, the model predict 0.766 unit increase in unclean rooms on customers repurchase intention.

# 4.3 Hypothesis Three:

Ho<sub>3</sub>: There exist no significant effect between food quality of hotels in Eket and customers repurchase intention.

**Table 4.2.3** Effect between food quality of hotels in Eket and customers repurchase intention.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.972ª	.779	.774	.43220

a. Predictors: (Constant), food quality

#### **ANOVA**<sup>a</sup>

Mod	del	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	49.445	1	49.445	62.587	.000b
1	Residual	50.576	159	.790		
	Total	100.021	160			

a. Dependent Variable: customers repurchase intention.

b. Predictors: (Constant), food quality

#### Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Mod	del		dardized ficients	Standardized Coefficients	Т	Sig.
		В	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.570	.089		6.430	.000
1	food quality	.766	. 021	.972	12.827	.000

a. Dependent Variable: customers repurchase intention.

The model summary in table 4.2.3 shows an R- value of 0.972. This suggests a strong effect between food quality of hotels in Eket and customers repurchase intention. The R square- value of 0.774 shows that 77.4% variation in food quality was accounted for by variations in customer's repurchase intention. The ANOVA table indicates that the regression model significantly predict the dependents variable given the F- value of 62.587 and its corresponding P- value of 0.00. This implies that food quality affect customers repurchase intention. Also, the B-coefficient of 0.766 implies that holding every other thing constant, the model predict 0.766 unit increase in food quality given a unit increase in customers repurchase intention.

# 4.4 Hypothesis Four:

Ho<sub>4</sub>: There is no significant effect of rude behavior of staff in hotels in Eket on customers repurchase intention.

Table 4.2.4 Effect of rude behavior on customers repurchase intention.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.864ª	.609	.605	.55220

a. Predictors: (Constant), rude behavior of staff

# **ANOVA**<sup>a</sup>

Mod	del_	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	49.445	1	49.445	62.587	.000b
1	Residual	50.576	159	.790		
	Total	100.021	160			

- a. Dependent Variable: customers repurchase intention.
- b. Predictors: (Constant), rude behavior of staff

#### Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

M	odel		dardized ficients	Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		В	Std. Error	Beta		
Г	(Constant)	.570	.089		6.430	.000
1	rude behavior of staff	.766	. 021	.864	12.827	.000

a. Dependent Variable: customers repurchase intention.

The model summary in table 4.2.4 shows an R- value of 0.864. This suggests a strong influence of rude behavior of staff in hotels in Eket on customer's repurchase intention. The R square- value of 0.605 shows that 60.5% variation in rude behavior of staff in hotels in Eket was accounted for by variations in customer's repurchase intention. The ANOVA table indicates that the regression model significantly predict the dependents variable given the F- value of 62.587 and its corresponding P- value of 0.00. This implies that there is relationship between rude behavior of staff in hotels in Eket and customers repurchase intention. Also, the B-coefficient of 0.766 implies that holding every other thing constant, the model predict 0.766 unit increase in rude behavior of staff given a unit increase in customer's repurchase intention.

# 4.5 Hypothesis Five:

Ho<sub>5</sub>: There is no significant effect of recovery strategies used by managers in hotels in Eket on customers repurchase intention.

Table 4.2.5 Relationship recovery strategies used by managers in hotels in Eket and customer's repurchase intention.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.592ª	.669	.664	.43220

a. Predictors: (Constant), recovery strategies

#### **ANOVA**<sup>a</sup>

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	49.445	1	49.445	62.587	.000b
1	Residual	50.576	159	.790		
	Total	100.021	160			ľ

a. Dependent Variable: customers repurchase intention

b. Predictors: (Constant), recovery strategies

#### Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		В	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.570	.089		6.430	.000
	recovery strategies	.766	. 021	.972	12.827	.000

a. Dependent Variable: customers repurchase intention

The model summary in table 4.2.3 shows an R- value of 0.592. This suggests a strong effect of recovery strategies used by managers in hotels in Eket on customer's repurchase intention. The R square- value of 0.664 shows that 66.4% variation in recovery strategy was accounted for by variations in customer's repurchase intention. The ANOVA table indicates that the regression model significantly predicts the dependents variable given the F- value of 62.587 and its corresponding P-value of 0.00. This implies that recovery strategies used by managers affect customers repurchase intention. Also, the B-coefficient of 0.766 implies that holding every other thing constant, the model predicts 0.766 unit increase in recovery strategies given a unit increase in customers repurchase intention.

#### 4.6 Discussion of the Findings

The study showed a significant effect on each of the four dimensions of recovery strategies (careless and rushing service, unclean rooms, food quality and rude behaviour of staff) and customers repurchase intention at hotels in Eket. The result of first hypothesis testing shows a strong influence on careless and rushing service and customers repurchase intention in hotels in Eket. The R square- value of 0.571

shows that 57.1% variation in customers repurchase intention was accounted for by variations in careless and rushing service.

The result of the second hypothesis demonstrates shows an R- value of 0.551. This suggests a strong effect of unclean rooms in hotels in Eket on customer's repurchase intention. The R square-value of 0.551 shows that 55.1% variation in unclean rooms on customer's repurchase intention. The ANOVA table indicates that the regression model significantly predict the dependents variable given the F- value of 62.587 and its corresponding P- value of 0.00. This implies that there is significant relationship between unclean rooms in hotels in Eket and customers repurchase intention. Also, the B-coefficient of 0.766 implies that holding every other thing constant, the model predict 0.766 unit increase in unclean rooms on customers repurchase intention. The model summary of the third hypothesis in table 4.2.3 shows an R- value of 0.972. This suggests a strong effect between food quality of hotels in Eket and customers repurchase intention. The R square- value of 0.774 shows that 77.4% variation in food quality was accounted for by variations in customer's repurchase intention. The ANOVA table indicates that the regression model significantly predicts the dependents variable given the F- value of 62.587 and its corresponding P- value of 0.00. This implies that food quality affect customer's repurchase intention. Also, the B-coefficient of 0.766 implies that holding every other thing constant, the model predicts 0.766 unit increase in food quality given a unit increase in customers repurchase intention.

The model summary in table 4.2.4 shows an R- value of 0.864. This suggests a strong influence of rude behavior of staff in hotels in Eket on customers repurchase intention. The R square- value of 0.605 shows that 60.5% variation in rude behavior of staff in hotels in Eket was accounted for by variations in customer's repurchase intention. The ANOVA table indicates that the regression model significantly predicts the dependents variable given the F- value of 62.587 and its corresponding P- value of 0.00. This implies that there is relationship between rude behavior of staff in hotels in Eket and customers repurchase intention. Also, the B-coefficient of 0.766 implies that holding every other thing constant, the model predicts 0.766 unit increase in rude behavior of staff given a unit increase in customers repurchase intention.

The model summary in table 4.2.5 shows an R- value of 0.592. This suggests a strong effect of recovery strategies used by managers in hotels in Eket on customers repurchase intention. The R square- value of 0.664 shows that 66.4% variation in recovery strategy was accounted for by variations in customers repurchase intention. The ANOVA table indicates that the regression model significantly predict the dependents variable given the F- value of 62.587 and its corresponding P-value of 0.00. This implies that recovery strategies used by managers affect customers

repurchase intention. Also, the B-coefficient of 0.766 implies that holding every other thing constant, the model predicts 0.766 unit increase in recovery strategies given a unit increase in customers repurchase intention.

#### 5. Conclusion

Recovery strategies is an important factor to influence the repurchase intention of customers especially in hospitality industry to increase the retention rate of customers. As per the model of research, the independent variables were showing a relevancy with the repurchase intention after applying the statistical applications of all, it came to know that all variable significantly contributes/effect on customer repurchase intention. This means, as the hospitality industry made heavy efforts to resolve the complaints as part of service recovery, the repurchase intention of the customer will increase. Variable like Apology, Compensation, Courtesy, Explanation, Facilitation, Follow-up, Speed of Response, and problem solving significantly contribute/effect on customers repurchase intention. Many other variables would be there which can affect the repurchase intention of customers which was not discussed/taken place in this research

#### 6. Recommendations

In the light of the above conclusion, the following recommendations are made;

- 1. Despite the strong effect of these constructs on customers repurchase intention, management of hotels are advised to continually assess the performance of their employee vis-à-vis the observed areas of service failure.
- 2. The hotel management should look at strategies that positively influencing repurchase intentions in this work that can better their relationship with customers they serve.
- 3. Effort should be made to effectively and efficiently provide quality service that will bring service failures rate to its minimum in hotels.
- 4. Food quality as a strategy in hotel business should be taken seriously as it a affect customers repurchase intention.
- 5. And finally, rude behavior of staff should be properly checked as it influences customers repurchase intention.

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