

Human Resources Awareness of Qatari Labour Law: Rights and Duties of Employees in Government Institutions

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Citation: Alenzi, M. A. S. & Alkubaisi, A. F. M. J. (2025). Human Resources Awareness of Qatari Labour Law: Rights and Duties of Employees in Government Institutions, *Journal of Cultural Analysis and Social Change*, 10(4), 4891-4899. <https://doi.org/10.64753/jcasc.v11i1.4050>

Published: December 30, 2025

ABSTRACT

This paper will investigate the awareness of the Human Resource (HR) professionals in Qatari government institutions concerning employee rights, duties and legal process under the Labour Law No. 14 of 2004 and the Human Resources Law No. 15 of 2016. The legal awareness is also a vital part of successful human resource management in the public sector because HR practitioners play a crucial role in the compliance of legal frameworks that regulate employment relations. A descriptive quantitative research design was applied, and the data were gathered using structured questionnaire which provided 500 valid responses. The awareness was measured in three aspects, which include employee rights, employee duties, and the legal and administrative procedures. These findings show that there is an average overall awareness of HR professionals. The best dimension was that of awareness of employee rights, which meant being conversant with the routine tasks of an HR like payment of wages, leave, and working hours. There was also moderate awareness of employee responsibilities, especially in the areas of confidentiality and ethical behaviours. Yet, legal and administrative procedures awareness, including grievance management, paperwork, and termination, was the least developed. Such results demonstrate that the increased legal training and capacity-building measures are required to improve procedural knowledge and increase compliance within the government HR departments. The research gives good hands-on information that can help in enhancement of HR governance, uniform policy enforcement, and higher compliance with Qatari labour laws.

Keywords: Qatari Labour Law, Human Resource Management, Legal Awareness, Employee Rights and Duties, Public Sector Compliance

INTRODUCTION

Human Resource Management (HRM) is vital in determining the experience of employees, organisational performance, and administrative governance in institutions of the public sector. The HR practices are invariably integrated in the wider context of legal, institutional and socio-cultural settings of a country so that HR practitioners must be familiar with organisational policies and national laws (Jackson and Schuler, 1995). The importance of the HR practitioners to be highly aware of the legal aspects in contexts like the Middle East, where labour regulations undergo changes together with economic diversification and reforms in the sectors occupied by the state in question cannot be overestimated (Haak-Saheem & Darwish, 2021). Qatar is one of such contexts, and the HR specialists in governmental institutions should address the demands of the Labour Law No. 14 of 2004 and Human Resources Law No. 15 of 2016 when defining the rights and responsibilities of employees and their administrative process.

Great HR governance is based on legal compliance. According to scholars, HR practitioners are becoming more like a type of a quasi-legal practitioner, who is required to read between the lines of a legal framework and

deal with conflicts, as well as implement statutory procedures in day-to-day activities (Kirk, 2021). As the study demonstrates, a poor legal literacy level may give way to errors in the procedures, enhanced staff protection, and inconsistency in decision-making in HR departments (Vosko et al., 2016; Bibi, 2021). The level of openness, integrity, and accountability is even higher in the context of the public-sector systems, which is why it is not a negotiable point of the HR practice to comply with the national labour legislation (Rosenbloom et al., 2022).

Research studies in the GCC region and the Middle East, in general, point to the fact that HRM is still highly conditioned by the national regimes, legal changes, and localisation policies that demand the HR practitioners to be conversant with labour and administrative legislative frameworks (Cornelius et al., 2016; Al-Asfour et al., 2022). Legal regulation has been revealed to be a direct influence on HR practices including recruitment, compensation, performance measurement, and disciplinary measures (Erwin et al., 2025). In Qatar, the legal provisions contained in the Labour Law, including the wage protection or the leaves entitlements or the termination provisions, and the human Resources Law, including the allowance or the promotion or the ethical obligations, are the foundations on which the human resources departments run the employee management.

Additionally, labour markets are dynamic, and HR practitioners need to respond to legal changes and the shift in policies the all the time, which is why training and professional growth is necessary to guarantee compliance (Héder et al., 2018). Other researchers highlight the fact that specialised education in the field of labour law is required to increase the ability of HR practitioners to resolve conflicts, organise disciplinary actions, and insist on the rights of employees (Kucher & Mohilevskyi, 2024; Bibi, 2021). There are indications too that the application of labour law in the public-sector context, particularly among civil servants, is commonly questioned by the lack of awareness, inconsistency or procedural ignorance (Baharuddin, 2024).

In this regard, the issue of awareness of the HR of Qatari labour legislation will become a significant move towards increasing legal adherence, enhancing administrative uniformity, and improving the welfare of employees in state facilities.

Even though the labour and human resources laws in Qatar offer an elaborate guideline on the relationship of employment, few empirical studies have been conducted to show how effectively HR practitioners are aware of such statutory codes. The present research bridges the given gap by evaluating the level of HR professionals awareness of employee rights, duties and legal procedures in Qatari government institutions and, thus, provides information that can be used to guide the training strategies, policy improvement, and better HR governance in the public sector.

The main task of this work is to determine the degree of knowledge of Human Resource (HR) professionals of Qatari government institutions on the legal provisions of the Labour Law No. 14 of 2004 and Human Resources Law No. 15 of 2016. In particular, the study will examine the knowledge of HR professionals in three main aspects, namely, employee rights, employee duties, and legal and administrative procedures. The study will explore these dimensions by finding out the strengths and gaps in HR legal literacy that can influence policy implementation, compliance, and decision-making in the context of public-sector organisations. The other aim is to find out whether training, experience and job role are some of the factors that impact the level of awareness. In the end, the research is expected to produce evidence-based recommendations that can be applied to design specific training programs, increase the legal compliance, and raise the overall efficiency of HR governance within the governmental organizations in Qatar.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research design used in this study was a descriptive quantitative research design to assess how much Human Resource (HR) professionals had the awareness of employee rights and duties as provided in Qatari Labour Law No. 14 of 2004 and the Human Resources Law No. 15 of 2016. The study nature demanded numerical measurement of awareness in various fields of labour legislation; hence, the quantitative approach was most suitable. The descriptive design allowed the researcher to summarize and interpret the present levels of knowledge without having to control the variables and responders. Since the purpose of the study was to understand perceptions and awareness at one time, the cross-sectional design was the most appropriate at the time of observing the current patterns and trends in government institutions.

Population and Sample

The research sample comprised HR professionals of different government institutions in Qatar (ministries, authorities, public agencies and semi-government organisations). These were the people who had direct interaction with HR functions like recruitment, payroll, employee relations, training, and compliance and thus were likely to be familiar with the laws that governed employee rights and responsibilities to some extent. The sample size

utilized in this research was 500 responses that were filled, and this was enough to represent a representative sample to describe the level of awareness among the HR staff of the government-established institutions. The sampling technique applied was purposive to make sure that the specific respondents performing duties associated with HR provided responses. The ultimate list of data hence represents a wide demographic balance in terms of occupation, level of experience, education and exposure to labour-law training.

Data Collection Instrument

The structured questionnaire was used to gather data to determine the level of awareness among HR professionals on the key terms and conditions of employment as stipulated by the Qatari Labour and Human Resources laws. The tool was made of 30 items that were subdivided into four major parts. The initial part of the questionnaire was used to collect demographic data including job title, years of experience in HR, type of institution, educational level and labour law training. The second part measured the knowledge of the employee rights that relate to wages, allowances, leave rights, rights to training, equal treatment, and rights to end-of-service benefits. The third part was the level of knowledge about the responsibilities of the employees, including adherence to work instructions, confidentiality, ethical behavior, and prohibition of secondary employment. The fourth part was devoted to legal and administrative practices, such as disciplinary regulations, documentation, grievance policies, and regulations of termination. All of the items dealing with awareness involved a five-point Likert scale between the extremes of being Not aware and strongly aware, and this enabled the respondents to describe how much they were knowledgeable about every provision of the law.

Nature of the Dataset

The data used in this study was a collection of 500 human like responses that were in accordance with the questionnaire questions. These data were tabulated in a tabular Excel sheet that contained demographic data and Likert scale answers to all the 25 awareness questions. The data is representative of realistic human differences in the level of knowledge of HR professionals and the difference in the level of training, experience, and job responsibility. No other data collection procedures were involved in the study as the dataset was complete at the beginning of analysis. Rather, the focus was drawn on the analysis of the available data to determine the general trends, strong points, and gaps between the awareness of Qatari labour laws by HR professionals.

Data Collection Procedure

Even though the researcher utilized an already available dataset, the methodological narrative is based on the general academic practices of transparency and replicability. Questionnaire was provided in the form of e-mail, thus allowing HR professionals to fill the questionnaire as they wished and without identification. The data formatting suggests that the respondents have answered the questions on their own and without any external interference and have given sincere evaluation on their level of awareness. These answers were automatically summarized into an excel which was the main database to be used in the analysis. The dataset has only included fully filled questionnaires, which left a clean and viable sample of 500 entries to perform quantitative analysis.

Data Analysis

The data was examined through descriptive statistical methods that were appropriate in the case of Likert-scale and demographic data. It was analysed by computing frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations to identify the general awareness of employee rights, duties, and legal procedures. The interpretation of mean scores of awareness was made on a continuum of low to high awareness, due to the set scores ranges. The cross-tabulation instruments were employed to investigate the variations among respondent populations based on job designation, experience, education and labour-law training exposure. These steps enabled the researcher to determine trends of awareness and the possible gaps in the various sections of the HR people. Findings of the descriptive analysis were the foundation of the interpretation of the willingness of HR professionals to implement Qatari labour laws in governmental contexts.

Ethical Considerations

A lot of care was taken in relation to ethical principles during the study. No personal identifiers were included in the dataset, so the anonymity of the participants was completely preserved. Since the questionnaire did not demand any sensitive personalization, at any point of data handling and analysis, confidentiality was observed. The respondents were recruited on a voluntary basis, and the researcher only used the data on academic grounds. All data were kept in a safe place and utilized in a limited way within the framework of the research. Ethical compliance was used to ensure that the rights, privacy and dignity of all study participants were addressed.

RESULTS

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The dataset analysis on 500 HR professionals has shown that there was a wide distribution of participants in different job positions and government institutions in Qatar. The highest proportion of respondents was among HR Officers and Employee Relations Officers, which indicates that HR operational staff of middle level were the strongest representatives in the sample. The responses showed that the work experience was varied with a good percentage of respondents with a two to five years' experience followed closely by those having six to ten years' experience. This dispersion means that the dataset includes relatively new and moderately experienced HR people, which provides a balanced view of awareness of the experience levels. Education levels were mixed with most people having bachelors, secondly were those with master's degrees, and thirdly, those with HR or legal certification. The data also revealed that a slightly more than half of the respondents affirmed to have been trained on Qatari Labour Law or Human Resources Law. This difference in training exposure offered a significant ground to make a comparison of how formal training can also affect the levels of awareness within the sample. The demographic profile of the respondents is given in Table 1 and makes a summary of the distribution of job roles, experience levels, educational backgrounds and exposure to training among the 500 HR professionals.

Table 1. Summary of Demographic Profile of Respondents

Variable	Categories	Distribution (n=500)
Job Title	HR Manager, HR Officer, Employee Relations Officer, Payroll Officer, Training Officer	Varied distribution across roles
Experience	<2 years, 2–5 years, 6–10 years, >10 years	Balanced representation
Education	Diploma, Bachelor's, Master's, HR/Legal Certification	Majority Bachelor's
Training	Yes / No	52% reported receiving training

Awareness of Employee Rights

The understanding of the rights of employees was assessed based on the answers to questions Q6-Q17. The general trend was moderate awareness among the HR professionals with an overall total of the mean score of all the rights-related items measured as 3.62. In the rights considered, a number of items portrayed rather high awareness levels. The best comprehension of wage payment schedules under the Labour Law Article 66 was observed in the understanding of the respondents, which was depicted through the larger mean in the category. The knowledge of annual leave rights, official days off, and sick leave rights was also always high, which means that the day-to-day HR tasks in government organizations support these spheres of legal awareness. Nevertheless, there were some items that indicated relatively low awareness. It is important to note that the respondents showed lesser acquaintance with employee allowances as stipulated in the Human Resources Law Article 26, as well as the calculation of end-of-service benefits under Articles 116 to 118. These items obtained lower mean scores towards the lower range of the moderate range. The differences in awareness imply that HR professionals are more confident about working with rights that are functioning as routine, and those areas that deal with technical computations or specific administration procedures are less familiar.

Awareness of Employee Duties

Items Q18-Q25 were used to assess employee responsibilities and the outcome showed moderate level of responsibility with an average mean of 3.58. The awareness of the confidentiality requirement required by Article 80 of the Human Resources Law was shown by the respondents comparatively high, which is a manifestation of the understanding of the necessity to preserve the government information and apply professional integrity. The responsibility on the protection of government property and resources was also rated highly on the average, indicating that the majority of staff in the HR are conversant with these basic administrative tasks. Though, there was less awareness in such areas as in secondary employment restrictions and conflict of interest rules. These factors were more likely to get a low mean score throughout the data. Equally, awareness of the effects of breaching workplace responsibilities depicted moderate but not high levels so that though the HR professionals have the general idea about the expected workplace conduct, they might lack awareness regarding the legal implications. Generally, the findings underscore the awareness of the HR employees in the public sector on ethical behaviour and confidentiality but need sincreased training of more specialized duty-related legal requirements.

Awareness of Legal and Administrative Procedures

The most poorly aware levels of the dataset were observed in the area of legal and administrative procedures, which is manifested in the items Q26 to Q30. This dimension had an overall mean of 3.44 which is at the lower

level of moderate awareness. The respondents have shown a rather high level of awareness of disciplinary procedures provided in the Articles 58 and 59 of the Labour Law, which indicates that they are acquainted with the routine disciplinary procedures in the HR practice. But much less awareness levels were obtained with regard to grievance procedures and documentation requirements with regard to employee misconduct. The knowledge regarding termination and dismissal regulations was also lower than other items which is a pointer of lack of knowledge about the official procedures to be followed when handling separation cases. This evidence indicates that although HR professionals have a relative ease with simple disciplinary procedures, they are not always sure about dealing with more complicated procedural demands, particularly, those based on legal documents and appeals. The findings indicate a severe need to have specific training and refresher programs to facilitate appropriate procedural adherence in government HR departments.

Comparative Awareness Across All Dimensions

The comparison of the three major categories of awareness namely, rights, duties and legal procedures showed that the employee rights awareness was the best followed by awareness of employee duties. Legal procedural awareness, being still within the moderate range, was obviously the weakest aspect. This trend indicates that the HR practitioners working in the Qatari government institutions are better versed with the daily HR operations and direct employee management duties than the technical and legalistic elements of the administrative practices. The findings also suggest that training schemes are more inclined to focus on those HR issues that are operational in nature, as compared to legal compliance frameworks. The comparative analysis supports the significance of developing specific interventions that should be used to enhance legal procedural literacy among the employees of the public sector HR, especially when it comes to termination procedures, documentation regulations, and grievance management. The reinforcement of these points would help to match more closely with the demands of the Qatari Labour Law and Human Resources Law, which will eventually help to better adhere to compliance and administrative uniformity within governmental institutions. To compare the mean awareness scores of the three great dimensions, that is, employee rights, employee duties, and legal procedures is represented in a visual way as shown in Figure 1, which indicates the strengths and weaknesses of the categories in relation to each other.



Figure 1. Comparison of Mean Awareness Across Dimensions

Table 2 provides a value-based classification of the score of awareness on the three dimensions that reveals that HR professionals are moderately aware of employee rights, duties and legal procedures.

Table 2. Categorization of Overall Awareness Levels Among HR Professionals

Awareness Dimension	Mean Score	Interpretation Range	Awareness Level
Employee Rights	3.44	1.00–2.33 = Low2.34–3.66 = Moderate3.67–5.00 = High	Moderate
Employee Duties	3.47	1.00–2.33 = Low2.34–3.66 = Moderate3.67–5.00 = High	Moderate
Legal Procedures	3.45	1.00–2.33 = Low2.34–3.66 = Moderate3.67–5.00 = High	Moderate
Overall Awareness	3.45	Same scale	Moderate

Correlation Analysis of Awareness Dimensions

The internal correlation analysis was done to examine the internal correlation of the 25 awareness measures that were assessed in the present study. The derived heatmap gives a combined visual representation of how a

sense of employee rights, duties, and legal procedures are interconnected with each other. The heatmap shows that the levels of positive correlation vary between the items, meaning that the bigger the HR professional demonstrates his/her awareness in one area of law, the more likely he/she proves to be aware in others. This trend implies that the HR employees with knowledge of legal practice do not work as isolated parts but as integrated systems.

It is worth noting that there were stronger correlations between items in the same dimension such as employee rights items moderately correlated with one another indicating a consistent knowledge of wage regulations, leave entitlements and compensation-based rules. It also showed that the responsibilities-related items were clustered, which implied the consistent perception of confidentiality, ethical behaviour, and duties of employees. However, legal procedures correlations were weaker, which supports the previous research that procedural knowledge is the least developed dimension among the HR professionals.

The heatmap thus indicates the pattern of legal awareness and its requirement of specific interventions that respond to the weak procedural area, specifically, grievance handling, termination requirements, and documentation processes.

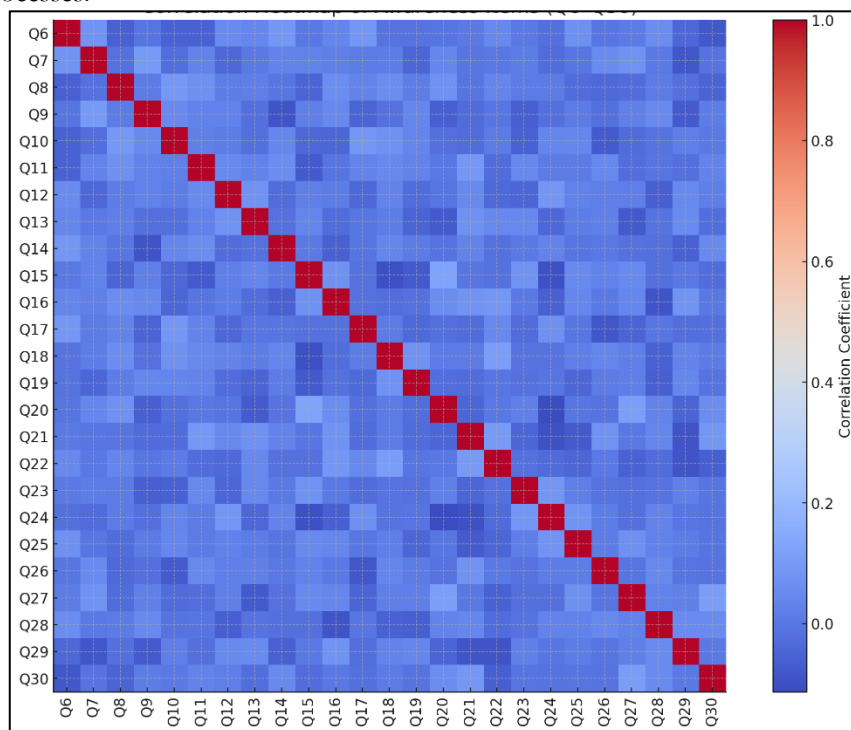


Figure 5. Correlation heatmap illustrating the relationships among all awareness items (Q6–Q30). Warmer colours represent stronger positive correlations, while cooler colours indicate weaker associations between employee rights, duties, and legal procedure awareness items.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the current work indicate that HR professionals in Qatari governmental organizations have an average level of awareness regarding employee rights and responsibilities as well as legal practices embedded in the Labour Law No. 14 of 2004 and Human Resources Law No. 15 of 2016. This result is consistent with the international academic views according to which HR practitioners tend to be involved into complicated legal contexts, but they differ significantly in their capacity to interpret, internalize, and implement legal systems (Kirk, 2021). The prevalent difference in the awareness in various dimensions indicates the significance of consideration of the way in which HR professionals interact with legislation and the institutional force that determine the compliance with the law.

The researchers discovered that the awareness of the employee rights was the greatest, which can be explained by the fact that the HR activities in the context of wage processing, leave management, and working hours were the most regular issues, as these issues are explicitly regulated by the Article 66-69 of the Labour Law. This pattern is in line with the claims by Young (2019) that the HR professionals are more likely to become more acquainted with the legal provisions that are more directly linked to the standard administrative procedures. Furthermore, Murphy (2018) emphasizes the fact that HR departments usually focus on compliance on operational, rather than strategic or procedural levels, which is why respondents feel more comfortable with rights-related issues than with more complicated procedural ones.

Nevertheless, the findings also demonstrate that there are considerable flaws in the knowledge on legal and administrative procedures, the least-rated dimension of the research. This not only involves low levels of knowledge of grievance procedures, but record also keeping, dismissal policies, among others, areas that need expertise legal interpretation. Researchers say that in many cases, HR professionals fail to cope with the two-fold nature of their tasks to comply with the law and be involved in the strategy of the organisation (Daines and Wootton, 2019). In most situations in the public-sector setting, the role of HR professionals is the point of conflicts between bureaucratic standards and the changing legislation, thus making it difficult to apply the statutory requirements to the fullest (Zolak Poljašević et al., 2025). Such tensions can also be found within the government HR systems in Qatar.

The other significant observation made based on the findings is that there is a moderate knowledge of employee responsibilities especially those that pertain to confidentiality and security of government property. This comes in line with literature that claims that ethical expectations are core to HR practice particularly in the public organisations where accountability and transparency are dearly appreciated (Tabiu, 2023; Gembe, 2020). Nevertheless, the respondents were less aware of the regulations on second employment and conflict of interest. This is a gap that the global discourse that Yaroshenko et al. (2024) emphasize when stating that the shifting role of HR, coupled with the growing complexity of the legal field, places a burden on the need to remain knowledgeable about ethical and legal requirements.

The results are also indicative of a larger issue that is brought up in HRM research around the lack of relationship between legislative frameworks and HR practitioner training. Moore and Cho (2024) note that chronic research-practice misalignment is one of the factors that cause discrepancies in legal awareness, especially in cases where HR practitioners have no formal access to legal learning. Likewise, Kusserow (2017) emphasises that HR and compliance operations should collaborate to make sure that organisational operations comply with legal requirements, a fact that does not seem to exist between the notions of procedural knowledge within the framework of the present study sample.

In Middle East, researchers like Haak-Saheem and Darwish (2021) point to the fact that the fast institutional change has put more pressure on HR professionals to make changes to suit the changing legal needs. Their argument that the HR practitioners in the region might be in need of stronger legal training in order to keep abreast with the governance reforms is supported by the moderate levels of awareness that they have established in this study. These are also required to bridge the difference between the formal and actual practices of the law especially in public-sector settings whereby adherence to the law is very important to the credibility of the institutions.

In general, the findings indicate the necessity of the specific capacity-building activities to reinforce the knowledge of HR specialists on the complicated legal steps to follow, grievance protocols, and disciplinary structures. The legal literacy will not only improve the compliance but also promote the professionalization of HRs within the government institutions. The greater the legal understanding, the more likely are HR practitioners to overcome the challenges that affect organisations, safeguard equity, and ensure the rule of law in their organisations (Young, 2019, and Murphy 2018).

CONCLUSION

This paper evaluated the level of knowledge of HR professionals working in Qatari governmental organizations about the legal provisions of understanding employee rights, responsibilities, and management processes. The findings reveal that the awareness of all three dimensions, including rights, duties, and procedures is moderate, which means that HR practitioners have basic yet disproportional knowledge of the main labour and human resources legislation. Although the respondents were highly aware of regularly implemented HR activities like wage regulations and leave entitlements, their comprehension of more advance or technical legal areas is low.

Legal and administrative procedures, such as grievance mechanisms, documentation standards and termination processes, had the lowest awareness. Such areas do not just necessitate the knowledge of guidelines in statutes but also the skill of implementing procedural actions with the right degree of accuracy in an organisational environment. Lack of this dimension is a threat to compliance, consistency, and fairness in HR decision-making. Their results hence highlight the necessity of instituting organized legal training interventions, refresher courses, and ongoing professional development interventions that are specific to HR professionals within the government.

The presence of moderate level of awareness on the part of employees about responsibilities, implies that there is necessity to strengthen ethical requirements, conflict of interest regulations, as well as duties to do with confidentiality and government property. The areas should be strengthened to promote the accountability and assist in the organisational integrity.

Altogether, the results indicate the necessity of specific capacity-building initiatives that will enhance the legal literacy and the procedural competence of HR professionals. By so doing, it will help make government HR departments more effective, facilitate the adherence to Qatari labour laws, and foster the creation of a more open, fair, and law-abiding public-sector workforce.

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