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Identifying Motives for Sport Participation from the Perspective of Self- Determination Theory: Gender Differences

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Abstract

This study aims (1) to identify motives of sport participation from the perspective of self- determination theory, and (2) to investigate gender differences between female and male subjects. The population of this study was female and male students of the School of Physical Education at the University of Jordan (n= 88, 120, respectively). In accordance with the self-determination theory, an Arabic version of the Sport Motivation Scale was used to collect the required data. The scale measures the different forms of motivation towards sport participation. It consists of various subscales of intrinsic motivation (IM-to know, IM-to accomplish, IM-to experience), extrinsic motivation (identified regulation, introjected regulation, external regulation) and amotivation. Results of the study revealed the mean value of 63.86 for the intrinsic motivation (high level), 58.46 for the extrinsic motivation (average level) and 10.91 for the amotivation low level. No statistically significant differences were found between female and male subjects in motivation subscales except for the "to know" which was 0.032, and the "amotivation" which was 0.005. In general, female and male participants were equally motivated. Future studies leading to female sports empowerment are encouraged.

Keywords: Sport psychology, self-determination theory, sport participation.

دو افع المشاركة في الأنشطة الرياضيّة وفق نظريّة تقرير الذات

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ملخّص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى: 1- تحديد دوافع المشاركة في الأنشطة الرياضيّة وفق نظريّة تقرير الذات 2- دراسة مستوى دوافع المشاركة في الأنشطة الرياضيّة وفق نظريّة تقرير الذات تبعًا لمتغيّر الجنس. وتكوّنت عينتها من طلاب وطالبات كلية التربية الرياضيّة/ الجامعة الأردنيّة (ن = 88، 120) على التوالي، واستخدمت فيها النسخة المعرّبة لمقياس "الدافعيّة في الرياضة" لقياس مستوى دافعيّة المشاركة في الأنشطة الرياضيّة وفقًا لنظريّة تقرير الذات كأداة لجمع البيانات. وتقيس الأداة مجالات الدافعيّة الداخليّة (من أجل المعرفة، لتحقيق الإنجاز، من أجل اكتساب الخبرة)، ومجالات الدافعيّة الخارجيّة (محددة، مفروضة، خارجية)، إضافة إلى اللادافعيّة. وقد تمّ تحليل البيانات إحصائيًّا، وأظهرت النتائج مستوى عاليًا من الدافعيّة الداخليّة بمقدار 63.86، ومستوى متوسطًا من الدافعيّة الخارجيّة بمقدار 58.46، ومستوى منخفضًا من اللادافعيّة بمقدار 10.91))، ولم تظهر النتائج فروقًا دالّة إحصائيًّا في مستويات الدافعيّة بين الجنسين سوى في المجال الفرعي للدافعيّة الداخليّة "من أجل المعرفة" بمقدار (0.032)، إضافة إلى اللادافعيّة بمقدار (0.005)، وقد كان مستوى دافعيّة المشاركة في الأنشطة الرياضيّة متكافئًا لكلا الجنسين. وعليه، فتوصي الباحثة بإجراء المزيد من الدراسات باستخدام النسخة المعرّبة من أداة الدراسة في المستقبل.

الكلمات الدالة :علم النفس الرياضي، نظريّة تقرير الذات، المشاركة في الأنشطة الرياضيّة.

1. Introduction

World Health Organization (WHO) defines physical activity as 'any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that require energy expenditure including sports, exercise and activities are undertaken while working, playing, carrying out household chores, traveling, and engaging in recreational pursuits' (World Health Organization, 2017). Sport, as defined by the Cambridge dictionary, is a game, competition or activity needing physical effort and skill that is played or done according to rules, for enjoyment or/and for a job. ("sport", 2017). Exercise, on the other hand, is a subcategory of physical activity that is planned, structured, repetitive and aims to improve or maintain one or more components of physical fitness (World Health Organization, 2017).

Sport participation on a regular basis has a positive effect on physical health, psychological enhancement, stress reactivity, and mental well-being, such as reduced depression, anxiety, tension, stress, increased vigor, and clear-mindedness. In addition, physical exercise has a positive impact on body-image, self-concept and to enhance self-esteem (Berger, 1996; Fox, 1999; Furnham, Badmin & Sneade, 2002; Scully, Kremer, Meade, Graham & Dudgeon, 1998; Tiggemann & Williamson, 2000).

To maximize the benefits of sport participation, adults aged 18–64 years are recommended to do at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity throughout the week, or to do at least 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity physical activity throughout the week, or an equivalent combination of moderate- and vigorous-intensity activity (World Health Organization, 2017

However, it seems like physical and psychological health and well-being are not enough reasons to exercise for everyone who can participate. Numbers of sport participants are low and are declining (Holt, Kingsley, Tink, & Scherer, 2011; Koivula, 1999). Several barriers and constraints restrict the extent to which people could engage in sport and gain sustained developmental benefits. Researchers have identified a range of barriers for sport participation and physical activity such as low confidence, lack of motivation for physical activity, lack of time and disinterest in competitive sports (Coakley & White, 1992; Withall, Jago & Fox, 2011).

Duncan, Hall, Wilson and Jenny (2010) consider motivation as the most crucial reason for people to be physically active. Researchers have examined motives for sport and exercise involvement. They believed that understanding the different types of participation motivation is an initial stepping stone to improving and sustaining it, and contributes to positive exercise behavior (Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, & Ryan, 1991; Ntoumanis, 2001).

One of the critical approaches that provide an understanding of motivational processes is Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 1985). SDT can be viewed as one of the underlying theories controlling the majority of research regarding sport and exercise motive (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). The theory argues that people have an inherent creative inclination to be involved in their social and physical environment to absorb and adapt ambient knowledge (Niemiec, Ryan & Deci, 2009). Deci and Ryan (2000b) claimed SDT as a requisite framework of motivation which facilitates our understanding of motivational behavior along with relevant affective and cognitive results in the realm of physical activity.

From the SDT perspective, motivation encloses three basic psychologically oriented requirements, explicitly; autonomy, competence, and relatedness with others. Autonomy can be defined as individuals' particular experience as volitional and a presentation of their self. The need for competence refers to individuals' feelings of being effective in their interactions with the world. Lastly, relatedness refers to feelings of belonging and relationship with others. Among the three needs, autonomy and competence have been the primary focus of research in motivation. Furthermore, when autonomy and competence mix together, they formulate the foundation of a further dichotomy of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation - constitutes a continuum which makes a distinction between the self-determination of individuals. On one extreme, there is amotivation (the lack of motivation for a task). On the other end of the continuum, intrinsic motivation (the motive to perform a task for its own sake or its pleasure) can be placed with various levels of extrinsic motivation falling in between (Vallerand & Losier, 1999).

Following the hierarchy of importance, the highest degree of self-determination can be seen as intrinsic motivation.

Being intrinsically-stimulated, individuals should assume the task to be interesting or enjoyable. Intrinsically motivated individuals experience choice in their behavioral dispositions and an optimum level of challenge, thereby fulfilling their needs for autonomy and competence. In contrast, many people also perform the Physical activity for extrinsically oriented causes. In other words, extrinsically motivated individuals perform the task for its advantages or the avoidance of negative results (Ryan & Deci 2000b; Vallerand & Losier, 1999).

Ingledew and Markland (2008) also argued that different participation motives have different functional significance depending on their intrinsic-extrinsic orientation. According to SDT, individual's initial motivation, whether intrinsic (participating in a sport for enjoyment) or extrinsic (participating in sport to gain rewards) usually have different effects on him. It can predict his attendance and whether or not he continues or adheres to his particular sport or physical activity (Deci & Ryan 1985; Lintunen, Valkonen, Leskinen & Biddle, 1999). Enjoyment and challenge, if intrinsically-oriented and autonomous, will probably be maintained in the long run, whereas the improvement of appearance and competition with others, being inherently extrinsic and internally controlling, are unlikely to generate long-term commitment. Therefore, the extrinsically-motivated individuals experience little optimal challenge or autonomy (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). Researchers have reported that extrinsic motives are critical during the early steps of physical activity adoption, whereas intrinsic motivations are critical for the physical activity engagement (Ryan & Deci 2000a, 2000b).

Gender role socialization is an aspect of our society which affects all of us in our day-to-day lives. Our gender influences the type of job we are likely to take, our career paths, and even our interests (Colley, Berman & Millingen, 2005). Furthermore, the sport has been and is still regarded as a male domain. The notion of sport as a very masculine activity probably influences the way in which men and women view the sport, motives to participate, the expected outcomes of participation, and the time spent engaging (Coakley & White, 1992; Koivula, 1999).

A review of the literature on participation motives indicated that there are significant differences in participation motives in relation to some demographic variables such as gender. Individuals internalize the standards of society for desirable behavior differently; one might expect differences between men and women in the motives for sport participation (Koivula, 1999).

Results of some studies have reported that females were motivated by extrinsic factors and males by intrinsic factors (Candela, Zucchetti & Villosio, 2014; Pelletier et al., 1995). Other studies concluded the contrary (Egli, Bland, Melton & Czech, 2011; Kilpatrick, Hebert & Bartholomew, 2005; Mathes & Battista, 1985). See also (Caglar, Canlan & Demir, 2009; Roy Chowdhury, 2012; Wilson et al., 2004).

Objectives of the study:

Statement of the problem

The motivation for sport participation and competition has become an important topic for researchers to investigate. Based on the results of previous studies people became more and more convinced of the importance of motivational factors on both sport participation and sustainability of a performer's motivation. A pioneer perspective in this aspect is SDT. The theory investigates sport and physical activity motivational aspects. This aspect is still unexplored in the Arab world in general and precisely not in my home country Jordan. Furthermore, females' sport participation has always been an interesting issue to address especially in our part of the world. the need to investigate female and male sport participation motives from the perspective of the SDT has occurred. Thus, this study emerged as an extended study of the (Bayyat, Almoghrabi, and Ay, 2016) who approached the SDT theory by translating and validating the sport Motivation Scale (SMS-28).

Objectives

This paper has two principal aims; Firstly, to identify the motives for sport participation of undergraduate students of the faculty of Physical Education at University of Jordan from the SDT perspective and framework. Secondly, to examine meaningful distinctions of sport participation motives between female and male undergraduate students.

Significance of the study

This study offers a fresh viewpoint on females' and males' participation motives. This will help policy makers, sport professionals and stakeholders to determine more effective ways to enhance sport motivation and eventually sport participation. Results will also help the participants to understand their motives for their sport participation better and work on themselves to be more determined and sustained.

2. Method

2.1 Participants

A random sample of 208 male and female students were recruited (n= 120, 88) respectively. They were undergraduate students of the faculty of Physical Education at University of Jordan. The mean age of the participants was 20 years old SD ± 1.5

2.2 The instrument: Sport Motivation Scale (SMS-28)

The original scale of Sport Motivation Scale (SMS). was called Échelle de Motivation dans les Sports and was translated to English Later Bayyat, Almoghrabi, and Ay, (2016) translated and validated an Arabic version of the Sport Motivation Scale (SMS-28). It was adopted in this study to measure the different types of motivation proposed by the self-determination theory. Participants answer the question of "Why do you practice your sport?". The answers of the scale's question is rated on a seven point Likert type scale from (1) (Does not correspond at all) to (7) (correspond exactly), with a mid point of (4) for the (correspond moderately). The SMS-28 scale consists of seven subscales, each of which includes four items. The scale assesses the three different types of motivation: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and amotivation.

Intrinsic motivation (IM) is reflected in the scale through calculating the sum of the average of the following three subscales:

IM - To Know: engaging in an activity for the pleasure and the satisfaction that one experiences while learning, exploring, or trying to understand something new, They are reflected in items no. 2,4,23,27.

IM - To Accomplish: engaging in an activity for the pleasure and satisfaction experienced when one attempts to accomplish or create something, such as trying to master specific difficult training techniques to experience personal satisfaction., They are reflected in items no 8,12,15,20

IM - To Experience: engaging in an activity to experience stimulating sensations (e.g., sensory pleasure, aesthetic experiences, as well as fun and excitement) derived from one's engagement in the activity. They are reflected in items no.1,13,18,25.

Extrinsic motivation (EM) is also reflected in the scale through calculating the sum of the average of the following three subscales:

Identified Regulation: to feel that involvement in sport contributes in part to one's growth and development as a person, They are reflected in items no. 7,11,17,24

Introjected Regulation: to feel the pressure of needing to be in good shape for aesthetic reasons, and feel embarrassed or ashamed of not being in top form. They are reflected in items no.9,14, 21,26.

External Regulation: participating in sport to receive praise from one's coach or to be urged to do so by one's parents are actions motivated by external regulation. In this case, the sport is performed not for fun but to obtain rewards (e.g., praise) or to avoid negative consequences (e.g., criticisms from parents). They are reflected in items no.6,10,16,22

Amotivation: individuals who do not perceive contingencies between their actions and the outcomes of their actions. They experience feelings of incompetence and lack of control. They are neither intrinsically motivated nor extrinsically motivated. When athletes are in such a state, they no longer identify any good reasons for continuing to train. Eventually, they may even decide to stop practicing their sport. They are reflected in items no. 3,5,19,28 (Bayyat, Almoghrabi, and Ay, 2016; Deci & Ryan, 1985).

An average of each subscale is calculated to reflect participants' motives as follows;

4 -12: Low.

12.01- 20: Average.

20.1 – 28: High.

Also, a sum of averages is calculated to reflect the Intrinsic and Extrinsic motivation level as follows;

12-36: Low.

36.01- 60: Average.

60.01-84: High.

2.3 Data Collection

The author distributed the scale to the sample of the study. They were told that their contribution was entirely voluntary and that it was for scientific research purposes. They were asked not to provide their names and were assured that all their information would remain strictly confidential. They were instructed to carefully read the items, check the answer that corresponded the most to them, and to answer all items.

2.4 Statistical Analysis

Descriptive analysis was conducted using SPSS 14 for windows. Means standard deviation, Skewness, Kurtosis, and t-test were calculated.

3. Results

Initial analysis for examining the normal distribution of the Arabic version of SMS-28 scale values was conducted.

3.1 Sport motivation

The results indicated that most of the representative forms of motivation for the sample were, in decreasing order: IM-to accomplish something 21.73 ± 4.36 (high level), IM-to know 21.59 ± 4.56 (high level), IM-to experience stimulation 20.55 ± 4.24 (high level), introjected regulation 20.4 ± 4.34 (high level), identified regulation 19.5 ± 4.29 (average level) and external regulation (average level) 18.55 ± 5.12 (average level). Whereas mean values were 63.86 ± 11.61(high level) for the intrinsic motivation, 58.46 ± 10.39 (average level) for the extrinsic motivation and 10.91± 4.7 (low level) for the amotivation.

3.2 Gender differences

Table (1) shows that there are no statistically significant differences between the male and female sample in all subscales except for the "IM-to know" ($\alpha = 0.032$) and "amotivation" ($\alpha = 0.005$) scales in favor of the male participants.

Table 1.t test results for the motivation scales according to gender

Motivation scales	Gender	N	Mean	SD	T	α
IM - to know	Males	120	22.14	4.38	2.16	0.032
	Females	88	20.83	4.23		
IM - to accomplish	Males	120	21.57	4.57	0.58	0.558
	Females	88	21.94	4.56		
IM - to experience	Males	120	20.86	4.18	1.23	0.219
	Females	88	20.13	4.32		
Intrinsic Motivation	*Males*	*120*	*64.57*	*11.65*	*1.02*	*0.307*
	Females	*88*	*62.90*	*11.55*		
Identified regulation	Males	120	19.79	4.26	1.14	0.253
	Females	88	19.10	4.33		
Introjected regulation	Males	120	20.62	4.39	0.82	0.410
	Females	88	20.11	4.27		
External regulation	Males	120	18.78	4.85	0.73	0.466
	Females	88	18.25	5.48		

Motivation scales	Gender	N	Mean	SD	T	α
Extrinsic Motivation	*Males*	*120*	*59.18*	*10.39*	*1.17*	*0.240*
	Females	*88*	*57.47*	*10.36*		
Amotivation	Males	120	11.70	4.72	2.86	0.005
	Females	88	9.84	4.48		

Discussion

An initial objective of this study was to identify the motives for sport participation from the perspective of SDT.

SDT considers sport participation as an intentional act that involves some combination of the different subtypes of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. A participant may choose sport activities that they find inherently enjoyable (intrinsic motivation) while at the same time engage in these activities for some separable outcome such as value for their health (extrinsic motivation). Sub-theories of the SDT address motivation from different angles. Two main sub-theories are the Cognitive Evaluation Theory (CET) and the Organismic Integration Theory (OIT). CET proposes that events supporting feelings of autonomy and competence will enhance intrinsic motivation. They are both necessary conditions for intrinsically motivated behavior. OIT specifies a continuum of autonomy underpinning extrinsic motivations (Ryan & Patrick, 2009).

Results of this study reflect SDT suggestion. Sport participation motives were found to be distributed between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

A mean score of 63.86 of the participants was intrinsically motivated and self-determined. They participated in the sport for the pleasure it gives them to know more about their sport and to discover new training techniques and performance strategies that they have never tried before. In addition, participants felt satisfied while, improving some of their weak points, perfecting their abilities and mastering difficult movements. Furthermore, they were pleased and excited to be involved in sport activity, exciting live experiences, doing a sport that they like while feeling immersed in the sport activity.

In accordance, Pelletier et al. (1995) stated that when people are intrinsically motivated, they are more fully involved in the activity itself and, therefore, display better performance. In addition, Coakley and White (1992) claimed that young people were most likely to participate in a sport activity when seen as an avenue for displaying or extending their competence. Moreover, when coaches, parents, or fellow players become less controlling or critical, they flourish feelings of competence and autonomy that are the foundations of sustained motivation (Ryan & Patrick 2009).

On the other hand, a mean score of 58.46 of the participants was extrinsically motivated. They believed that sport was one of the best ways to meet people, to develop other aspects of themselves, to learn many things which could be useful to them in other areas of their lives and to maintain good relationships with their friends. Therefore, doing sport, according to the participants' opinion, is necessary to be in shape, and to feel good. They would feel bad if they were not taking time to do it on a regular basis. Furthermore, participating in a sport activity allowed them to be well regarded by people that they knew, gain the prestige of being an athlete and gain the respect of people around them. They needed to be in shape and to show others how good they are at their sport.

These results fall into the continuum of internalization of the SDT. Each subtype of motivation carries with its unique characteristics and consequences and fostered by different antecedents (Ryan & Patrick, 2009). The representative forms of motivation for our participants were, in decreasing order: IM-to accomplish, IM-to know, IM-to experience, introjected regulation, identified regulation and external regulation (Candela et al., 2014). The varied types of regulation align both conceptually and empirically, along with the continuum of relative autonomy as an essential psychometric evidence supports (Ryan & Patrick, 2009).

Amotivation, on the other hand, scored mean value of 10.91. These participants used to have good reasons for doing sport in the past, but now they are reluctant, they have the impression of being incapable of succeeding in sports. They feel that they are no longer capable of achieving their own goals anymore. Ryan and Patrick (2009) declared that a possible

reason for a person to be amotivated is that he does not experience a sense of competence to carry out the activity. Furthermore, amotivation could be contributed to the lack of particular skills or knowledge necessary to act. Furthermore, the person might see no connection between the action and desired outcomes. Eventually, a person may find no interest or value in engaging in sports anymore. Coakley and White (1992) indicated that perceptions of competence had an impact on the decision of young people with high-level skills. They believed that their sport skills had reached their peak, and when this happen continued participation became problematic.

The second objective of this study sought to examine meaningful distinctions of sport participation motives between female and male students based on motives measured by SMS-28.

The most exciting finding was that there were no significant gender differences in both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for sport participation measured by the SMS-28. However, males showed significantly higher mean scores in motivation subscale IM - to know and amotivation.

These results are in line with those of previous studies. Al-Kubaisy, Mohamad, Ismail, Abdullah and Mokhtar (2015) revealed no significant differences in the mean score for physical exercise motivations, except for two motivating reasons; to " have a positive effect on the sex life, and have more energy to go about the daily chores." Also, Khan, Haider, and Ahmed, (2011) found that there was no difference between male and female badminton players on motivation.

Meanwhile, the results of this study do not support the findings of earlier studies which suggested significant differences between participation motives related to gender; Candela et al. (2014) indicated that females showed a higher level of intrinsic motivation while males were more extrinsically motivated. Pelletier et al. (1995) also found that females had a higher score than males in identification regulation, IM- to know and to accomplish subscales but scored lower on the introjection regulation subscales.

On the other hand, other studies concluded that males show a higher level of intrinsic motivation whereas females were more extrinsically motivated. Female athletes mentioned socializing as the main reason for physical activity engagement. While competition and winning were the males main reason for participation (Mathes & Battista, 1985; Wilson et al., 2004).

Similarly, studies revealed that male college students were intrinsically motivated. Mostly by factors such as strength, competition/ego, and challenge. Whereas females were driven by extrinsic factors such as weight management/health and appearance (Egli et al., 2011; Caglar, Canlan, & Demir, 2009; Kilpatrick et al., 2005). Roy Chowdhury (2012) also found that females rated appearance as the primary motive for engaging in physical activity, whereas males rated affiliation as their priority.

In this current study, results revealed no significant difference in sport participation motives based on gender. The author contributes such effect to several factors;

Firstly, participants of this study did not have to engage in a sport to experience a sense of pride. Likewise, they did not have some degree of guilt or shame if they do not exercise as suggested by previous research (Al-Kubaisy et al., 2015; Allison et al., 2005; Wilson et al., 2004).

Secondly, body image is no longer a female issue for our participants. Both males and females were interested in their body images. Males were also interested in well built, fitted muscular bodies, while females hope for a model- like body. These findings support Allison et al. (2005) who found that the central concern of adolescent males was to impress others and to build relationships, particularly with females through focusing on the physical appearance of their bodies.

Thirdly, it can also be assumed that motives of sport participation reflect support and encouragement from significant others who are more likely to be adults serving as advocates or models for them. Thus, female participants benefit from the support and facilitation by their parents. It is unlikely that these girls, though keen and highly motivated, would have been motivated and take the decisions about sport participation without the encouragement from significant others (Coakley & White, 1992).

Fourthly, these findings may be taken to indicate that recent change in the definitions of gender roles for women may have occurred, our female participants probably saw sport and physical activities as avenues through which they could

prove to themselves and males that they deserved respect as competent human beings (Coakley & White, 1992). Besides, our female participants did not face barriers for sport participation such as the lack of time, cost, the desire to do other things, as well as to higher involvement in domestic chores (Al-Kubaisy et al., 2015).

Fifthly, females of this study seem to be on an ongoing mission of changing the female stereotype for participation in sport. The young women generally used traditional gender stereotypes to define what should happen during their transition to adulthood. According to the norms they had learned while growing up, becoming a woman, usually meant that sport participation was given a low priority in their lives. More relevant to womanhood were activities and relationships through which femininity, in a traditional sense, could be reaffirmed (Coakley & White, 1992). Nevertheless, in this study, our female participants tend to see their womanhood reiterates through sport participation. This was reflected in the non-significant difference between males and females in the intrinsic motivation. Females were self- determined, autonomous and competence.

Conclusion

The taxonomy of motives derived from the SDT allowed the author to look at both the functional impact of varied motives; how they are configured and combined. Both males and females were self-determined concerning their sport participation motives. Results of the subtypes of motivation were falling along the continuum of internalization suggested by the SDT. Participants will probably be more self- determined, autonomous and competent towards their sport participation which will lead to long-term adherence. Gender, in general, had no significant influence on sport participation motives. Female participants were equally motivated as their male colleagues. They have accomplished equality through their sport participation motives. They, in a way, were able to break the stereotype of a female and their gender role expected by the society. By taking significant steps ahead, they claimed their sport participation rights side by side with the male. These interesting results of highly motivated and self-determined sport female participants will be taken into consideration in the future. Consequently, identifying these similarities or variations between males and females may help in the implementation of interventions based on self-determination approaches aimed at promoting the sport and physical exercise across the lifespan.

Despite these promising results, further investigations are required to provide greater insight on this issue.

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