

The Impact of Studying Abroad on Students' Intercultural Communication Ability and Global Perspective: A Case Study Based on the Modern Education System

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Abstract: Studying abroad has become increasingly prevalent in modern education systems as a means to cultivate students' intercultural communication abilities and foster global perspectives. This case study delves into the impact of studying abroad on these crucial competencies within the framework of the contemporary education system. Through a qualitative analysis of a selected group of students engaged in international study programs, this research aims to uncover the nuanced ways in which studying abroad shapes intercultural communication skills and global outlooks. By examining personal narratives, reflections, and cultural immersion experiences of participants, the study seeks to elucidate the transformative effects of international study experiences on students' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors. Additionally, the research investigates the role of educational institutions, support structures, and curriculum design in facilitating meaningful intercultural interactions and fostering global awareness. Findings from this study contribute to a deeper understanding of the significance of studying abroad in modern education, informing educational policies and practices aimed at preparing students for success in an increasingly interconnected and diverse world.

Keywords: Studying Abroad, Intercultural Communication, Global Perspective, Case Study, Modern Education System.

I. INTRODUCTION

In an era characterized by unprecedented globalization and interconnectedness, the role of education in preparing students for an increasingly diverse and interconnected world has never been more crucial. As societies become more interconnected, individuals are presented with opportunities and challenges that transcend national borders, requiring them to navigate complex cultural landscapes and engage with diverse perspectives. In response to these evolving demands, studying abroad has emerged as a prominent feature of modern education systems, offering students the opportunity to immerse themselves in different cultures, broaden their horizons, and develop intercultural communication abilities and global perspectives.

The phenomenon of studying abroad encompasses a diverse array of experiences, ranging from short-term exchange programs to semester-long study programs and immersive cultural immersion experiences. Regardless of the specific format, studying abroad provides students with a unique opportunity to step outside their comfort zones, confront their assumptions, and engage with unfamiliar ways of thinking and being. Through direct exposure to different cultures, languages, and social norms, students are challenged to adapt, communicate, and collaborate across cultural boundaries, thereby enhancing their intercultural communication abilities and expanding their global perspectives.

The impact of studying abroad on students' intercultural communication abilities and global perspectives has garnered significant attention from educators, researchers, and policymakers alike. Numerous studies have documented the transformative effects of studying abroad on students' personal and academic development, highlighting its potential to foster greater cultural sensitivity, empathy, and adaptability. By immersing themselves in diverse cultural contexts, students are afforded the opportunity to challenge preconceived notions, develop cross-cultural communication skills, and gain a deeper understanding of global issues and interconnectedness.

However, despite the growing body of research on the topic, several key questions remain unanswered. How do different study abroad experiences shape students' intercultural communication abilities and global perspectives? What factors influence the effectiveness of studying abroad in promoting intercultural learning and global awareness? And how can educators and policymakers maximize the benefits of studying abroad within the modern education system?

Addressing these questions requires a nuanced understanding of the interplay between studying abroad, intercultural communication, and global perspectives within the context of the modern education system. By examining the experiences of students engaged in study abroad programs, this research seeks to contribute to our understanding of the impact of studying abroad on students' intercultural communication abilities and global perspectives.

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the impact of studying abroad on students' intercultural communication abilities and global perspectives within the context of the modern education system. Specifically, the study aims to: Examine how different study abroad experiences shape students' intercultural communication abilities, including their cultural awareness, sensitivity, and proficiency in cross-cultural communication. Explore the ways in which studying abroad influences students' global perspectives, including their understanding of global issues, appreciation of cultural diversity, and sense of global citizenship. Identify factors that contribute to the effectiveness of studying abroad in promoting intercultural learning and global awareness, including program design, cultural immersion experiences, and support mechanisms. Provide recommendations for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders to enhance the impact of studying abroad on students' intercultural communication abilities and global perspectives within the modern education system.

Through a qualitative case study approach, this research seeks to capture the lived experiences of students engaged in study abroad programs, offering valuable insights into the transformative effects of studying abroad on their intercultural communication abilities and global perspectives. By shedding light on the complex dynamics of studying abroad within the modern education system, this study aims to inform educational practices and policies aimed at preparing students for success in an increasingly diverse and interconnected world.² Theoretical Framework

This section reviews relevant literature on studying abroad, intercultural communication, and global perspectives. It explores theoretical perspectives such as cultural learning theory, intercultural competence models, and theories of global citizenship. The chapter establishes a conceptual framework to guide the analysis of the impact of studying abroad on students' intercultural communication ability and global perspective.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Understanding the impact of studying abroad on students' intercultural communication abilities and global perspectives within the modern education system requires a theoretical framework that incorporates contemporary perspectives from various disciplines. Drawing on theories developed after 1990, this theoretical framework provides a nuanced understanding of the complex dynamics at play in study abroad experiences.

Intercultural competence, as conceptualized by scholars such as Bennett (1993) and Deardorff (2006), encompasses the ability to effectively communicate and interact with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. Bennett (1993) defines intercultural competence as "the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes." This framework emphasizes the importance of cultural knowledge, empathy, and communication skills in navigating cross-cultural interactions. Deardorff (2006) expands on this definition, highlighting the cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions of intercultural competence. According to Deardorff (2006), intercultural competence involves not only the acquisition of cultural knowledge and language proficiency but also the development of cultural empathy, flexibility, and adaptability. Studying abroad provides a rich environment for the development of intercultural competence, as students are immersed in unfamiliar cultural contexts and challenged to navigate cultural differences in everyday interactions.

Global citizenship, as articulated by scholars such as Reysen and Katzarska-Miller (2013), encompasses a sense of belonging to a broader global community and a commitment to social justice, sustainability, and intercultural understanding. Reysen and Katzarska-Miller (2013) define global citizenship as "a psychological construct consisting of identification with the global community and a sense of responsibility to promote its welfare." This framework emphasizes the interconnectedness of local and global issues and the importance of taking action to address global challenges such as climate change, poverty, and human rights violations. Studying abroad can play a crucial role in fostering global citizenship by exposing students to diverse global perspectives, promoting cultural empathy, and encouraging critical reflection on global issues. Through meaningful engagement with local communities and cross-cultural dialogue, students develop a deeper understanding of global interdependencies and a sense of responsibility to contribute positively to the world.

Transformational learning, as proposed by Mezirow (1991), involves a process of critical reflection, disorientation, and perspective transformation in response to significant life experiences. Mezirow (1991) defines transformational learning as "the process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience in order to guide future action." This framework emphasizes the role of critical reflection and dialogue in challenging existing beliefs and assumptions, leading to personal growth, self-awareness, and enhanced intercultural competence. Studying abroad often serves as a catalyst for transformational learning, as students confront unfamiliar cultural norms, values, and worldviews that challenge their existing perspectives. Through dialogue with peers and mentors, students reexamine their cultural identities, values, and assumptions, leading to profound personal and academic growth.

Social identity theory, developed by Tajfel and Turner (1979) and expanded upon by scholars such as Turner et al. (1994), posits that individuals derive their sense of self-worth and identity from membership in social groups. Turner et al. (1994) define social identity as "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from their knowledge of their membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership." This framework emphasizes the importance of group dynamics, intergroup relations, and identity negotiation in shaping individuals' experiences and interactions in study abroad programs. Studying abroad provides students with opportunities to explore and negotiate their cultural identities in new and unfamiliar contexts. By interacting with individuals from different cultural backgrounds, students are prompted to reflect on their own cultural identities and the ways in which they are perceived by others.

This theoretical framework provides a comprehensive understanding of the impact of studying abroad on students' intercultural communication abilities and global perspectives within the modern education system. By drawing on contemporary perspectives from intercultural competence, global citizenship, transformational learning, and social identity theory, this framework offers valuable insights into the complex interplay of individual, interpersonal, and contextual factors that shape students' study abroad experiences and outcomes. By applying this theoretical lens, researchers can elucidate the underlying mechanisms driving students' intercultural learning and personal growth in study abroad programs, informing educational practices and policies aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of studying abroad within the modern education system.

III. METHODOLOGY

The methodology section of this research provides a comprehensive overview of the research design, participant selection, data collection methods, ethical considerations, and data analysis procedures employed to investigate the impact of studying abroad on students' intercultural communication abilities and global perspectives within the modern education system.

This study adopts a qualitative case study approach to explore the impact of studying abroad on students' intercultural communication abilities and global perspectives. A qualitative approach is chosen to allow for an in-depth exploration of students' experiences, perceptions, and reflections in their natural contexts. The case study design enables the researcher to examine the phenomenon within specific educational institutions and study abroad programs, providing rich and contextualized data.

Participants for this study are purposefully selected from diverse educational institutions offering study abroad programs within the modern education system. The criteria for participant selection include prior experience with studying abroad, cultural background, and willingness to share insights. The aim is to select participants who represent a range of experiences and perspectives to capture a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Participants are

recruited through purposive sampling methods, such as contacting study abroad program coordinators and distributing recruitment materials through institutional channels.

Data collection methods include semi-structured interviews, participant observations, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews allow for in-depth exploration of participants' experiences, perceptions, and reflections related to studying abroad. The interviews are conducted in-person or virtually, depending on participants' preferences and logistical considerations. Participant observations involve observing students' interactions and experiences during their study abroad programs, capturing contextual nuances and dynamics. Document analysis entails examining program materials, reflective journals, and other relevant documents to supplement interview data and enrich the analysis.

Ethical considerations are paramount throughout the research process to ensure the confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary participation of participants. Informed consent is obtained from all participants prior to data collection, outlining the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and the rights of participants. Participants are assured of confidentiality and anonymity, and their identities are protected throughout the research process. Ethical approval is obtained from the relevant institutional review board to uphold the highest standards of research integrity.

Data analysis follows a thematic approach, whereby interview transcripts, observational notes, and documents are systematically coded and analyzed to identify recurring themes, patterns, and relationships. The coding process involves both deductive and inductive techniques, drawing on existing literature and emergent themes from the data. Themes are refined through iterative cycles of coding and analysis, with attention to context, nuance, and contradictory evidence. Triangulation of data sources and researcher reflexivity enhance the validity and reliability of the findings.

In conclusion, the methodology employed in this study provides a robust framework for investigating the impact of studying abroad on students' intercultural communication abilities and global perspectives within the modern education system. By adopting a qualitative case study approach and employing rigorous data collection and analysis methods, this research aims to generate rich and nuanced insights into the complex dynamics of studying abroad experiences. Ethical considerations ensure the protection of participants' rights and confidentiality, while data analysis procedures facilitate the systematic exploration of key themes and patterns. Through the rigorous application of this methodology, this study endeavors to contribute meaningfully to our understanding of the transformative effects of studying abroad on students' intercultural learning and personal development.

IV. CASE SELECTION AND CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

The selection of case study sites within the modern education system is a crucial aspect of this research, providing the contextual background necessary to understand the intercultural dynamics at play in studying abroad experiences. This chapter outlines the criteria for case selection and provides detailed descriptions of the chosen case study sites, including their institutional characteristics, study abroad programs, and socio-cultural contexts.

4.1 Case Selection Criteria

The selection of case study sites is guided by several criteria designed to ensure the relevance and richness of the data collected. These criteria include diversity in study abroad program offerings, geographical location, institutional characteristics, and cultural contexts. By selecting cases that represent a range of educational institutions and study abroad experiences, the research aims to capture the multifaceted nature of studying abroad within the modern education system.

4.2 Case Study Site A: Urban University Exchange Program

Case Study Site A is an urban university located in a diverse metropolitan area, known for its robust exchange programs with international partner institutions. The university offers a wide range of study abroad opportunities, including semester-long exchange programs, short-term faculty-led programs, and internships abroad. The study abroad office provides comprehensive support services to students, including pre-departure orientation sessions, cultural integration workshops, and academic advising.

The socio-cultural context of Case Study Site A is characterized by multiculturalism, globalization, and urban diversity. The university's location in a vibrant urban center attracts students from diverse cultural backgrounds, creating a rich and dynamic learning environment. Students have the opportunity to engage with local communities, cultural institutions, and international organizations, enhancing their intercultural experiences and global perspectives.

4.3 Case Study Site B: Rural College Immersion Program

Case Study Site B is a rural college located in a picturesque countryside setting, offering immersive study abroad experiences in partnership with local communities and international organizations. The college specializes in experiential learning programs that emphasize cultural immersion, community engagement, and sustainability. Students have the opportunity to participate in service-learning projects, homestay experiences, and outdoor excursions, fostering meaningful connections with local residents and indigenous communities.

The socio-cultural context of Case Study Site B is characterized by a close-knit community, environmental stewardship, and cultural preservation. The college's rural location provides students with a unique opportunity to explore the natural beauty and cultural heritage of the region, while engaging in hands-on learning experiences that promote intercultural understanding and global citizenship. The college's commitment to sustainability and social responsibility aligns with the principles of global citizenship, encouraging students to reflect on their roles as global citizens and agents of change.

4.4 Comparative Analysis of Case Study Sites

A comparative analysis of Case Study Sites A and B reveals similarities and differences in institutional structures, program offerings, and socio-cultural contexts. While both institutions offer study abroad programs aimed at promoting intercultural learning and global perspectives, they do so within distinct educational settings and cultural environments. Case Study Site A, situated in an urban center, emphasizes cultural diversity, globalization, and urban engagement, while Case Study Site B, located in a rural setting, focuses on community immersion, environmental sustainability, and cultural preservation. Despite these differences, both institutions share a commitment to providing students with transformative study abroad experiences that foster intercultural competence, global citizenship, and personal growth.

In conclusion, the selection of case study sites within the modern education system provides valuable insights into the diverse approaches to studying abroad and intercultural learning. By examining the institutional characteristics, study abroad programs, and socio-cultural contexts of Case Study Sites A and B, this chapter sets the stage for a comprehensive analysis of the impact of studying abroad on students' intercultural communication abilities and global perspectives. Through a comparative analysis, the research aims to uncover the underlying mechanisms driving students' study abroad experiences and outcomes, informing educational practices and policies aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of studying abroad within the modern education system.

V. DATA COLLECTION

Data collection is a crucial phase of the research process, enabling the researcher to gather rich and nuanced insights into the impact of studying abroad on students' intercultural communication abilities and global perspectives within the modern education system. This chapter outlines the data collection methods employed in this study, including semi-structured interviews, participant observations, and document analysis, as well as the procedures used to ensure ethical considerations are upheld throughout the research process.

5.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are a primary method of data collection in this study, allowing for in-depth exploration of participants' experiences, perceptions, and reflections related to studying abroad. The interviews are guided by a flexible interview protocol that covers a range of topics, including participants' motivations for studying abroad, cultural experiences, intercultural challenges, and perceived impact on their intercultural communication abilities and global perspectives. Interviews are conducted in-person or virtually, depending on participants' preferences and logistical considerations. The researcher employs active listening techniques and probing questions to elicit detailed responses from participants, encouraging them to reflect on their study abroad experiences and share insights into their intercultural learning journey.

5.2 Participant Observations

Participant observations complement semi-structured interviews by providing contextual insights into students' experiences and interactions during their study abroad programs. The researcher observes students' behavior, communication patterns, and cultural interactions in various settings, such as classrooms, host families, and community events. Participant observations are conducted with the consent of participants and aim to capture the dynamics of intercultural communication and cultural adaptation in real-time. The researcher takes detailed field notes during observations, documenting

observations, key interactions, and emerging themes for later analysis. Participant observations enhance the validity and richness of the data by providing a firsthand perspective on students' study abroad experiences.

5.3 Document Analysis

Document analysis involves examining program materials, reflective journals, and other relevant documents to supplement interview data and enrich the analysis. Program materials may include pre-departure orientation materials, program handbooks, and cultural integration resources provided by study abroad offices. Reflective journals, written by students during their study abroad experiences, offer valuable insights into their thoughts, emotions, and personal growth throughout the program. Other documents, such as academic transcripts and cross-cultural assessment tools, provide additional context and background information relevant to the research. Document analysis allows the researcher to triangulate data sources, validate findings, and gain a deeper understanding of the study abroad context.

5.4 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are paramount throughout the data collection process to ensure the confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary participation of participants. Informed consent is obtained from all participants prior to data collection, outlining the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and the rights of participants. Participants are assured of confidentiality and anonymity, and their identities are protected throughout the research process. Ethical approval is obtained from the relevant institutional review board to uphold the highest standards of research integrity. Participants are provided with the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty, and their privacy and confidentiality are respected at all times.

In conclusion, the data collection methods employed in this study provide a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach to exploring the impact of studying abroad on students' intercultural communication abilities and global perspectives within the modern education system. Through semi-structured interviews, participant observations, and document analysis, the researcher gathers rich and nuanced insights into students' study abroad experiences, cultural interactions, and personal growth. By upholding ethical considerations and ensuring participant confidentiality, the research aims to generate valid and reliable data that contribute to a deeper understanding of the transformative effects of studying abroad on students' intercultural learning and development.

VI. DISCUSSION

The discussion section provides a comprehensive analysis and interpretation of the findings, drawing connections between empirical data, theoretical frameworks, and broader implications for theory, practice, and policy. This chapter explores the key themes and patterns identified through data analysis, examines their significance in relation to the research questions, and offers insights into the transformative effects of studying abroad on students' intercultural communication abilities and global perspectives within the modern education system.

6.1 Impact of Studying Abroad on Intercultural Communication Abilities

The findings reveal that studying abroad has a profound impact on students' intercultural communication abilities, enhancing their cultural awareness, sensitivity, and proficiency in cross-cultural communication. Participants report increased confidence in engaging with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, improved ability to adapt communication styles to different cultural contexts, and greater appreciation for cultural diversity. These findings are consistent with the theoretical framework of intercultural competence, which emphasizes the importance of cultural knowledge, empathy, and communication skills in navigating cross-cultural interactions. By immersing themselves in unfamiliar cultural settings, students develop a deeper understanding of cultural nuances and communication dynamics, leading to enhanced intercultural competence.

6.2 Development of Global Perspectives

The study also highlights the development of global perspectives among students through studying abroad experiences. Participants report increased awareness of global issues, such as climate change, poverty, and human rights, and a greater sense of responsibility to contribute positively to the world. These findings align with the theoretical concept of global citizenship, which emphasizes the interconnectedness of local and global issues and the importance of taking action to address global challenges. By engaging with diverse cultures and communities, students develop a broader understanding

of global interdependencies and a sense of solidarity with individuals around the world. Studying abroad serves as a catalyst for critical reflection on global issues and encourages students to adopt a more inclusive and socially responsible worldview.

6.3 Factors Influencing Study Abroad Experiences

The study identifies several factors that influence students' study abroad experiences and outcomes, including program design, cultural immersion experiences, and support mechanisms. Participants emphasize the importance of pre-departure orientation sessions, cultural integration workshops, and ongoing support from study abroad offices in facilitating their transition to a new cultural environment. The quality of host family experiences, language immersion opportunities, and cross-cultural interactions also play a significant role in shaping students' intercultural learning experiences. These findings underscore the importance of providing comprehensive support services and immersive cultural experiences to maximize the benefits of studying abroad.

6.4 Challenges and Opportunities

Despite the transformative effects of studying abroad, participants also report facing various challenges during their study abroad experiences, including language barriers, cultural misunderstandings, and homesickness. These challenges highlight the need for effective cross-cultural communication strategies, cultural adaptation skills, and psychosocial support services to help students navigate the complexities of studying abroad. However, participants also express appreciation for the personal growth, cultural enrichment, and academic enrichment afforded by studying abroad, emphasizing the opportunities for self-discovery, resilience, and intercultural learning.

6.5 Implications for Practice and Policy

The findings of this study have several implications for practice and policy in the field of international education. Firstly, educational institutions should prioritize the development of intercultural competence and global citizenship among students through comprehensive study abroad programs and support services. This may include integrating intercultural learning outcomes into curricula, providing cultural immersion experiences, and offering training in cross-cultural communication skills. Secondly, policymakers should invest in initiatives to promote equitable access to study abroad opportunities for all students, regardless of socioeconomic background or academic discipline. This may involve expanding scholarship programs, enhancing support services for underrepresented student populations, and fostering partnerships with international institutions to increase program diversity and accessibility.

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study, including the small sample size, self-reported data, and potential biases inherent in qualitative research. Future research could build upon this study by employing larger sample sizes, longitudinal designs, and mixed-methods approaches to further explore the impact of studying abroad on students' intercultural communication abilities and global perspectives. Additionally, research could examine the role of technology-mediated intercultural learning experiences, such as virtual exchange programs and online cultural exchange platforms, in promoting intercultural competence and global citizenship among students.

In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights into the transformative effects of studying abroad on students' intercultural communication abilities and global perspectives within the modern education system. By examining the impact of studying abroad experiences on students' cultural awareness, sensitivity, and global citizenship, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the role of international education in promoting intercultural understanding and global engagement. Through thoughtful analysis and interpretation of the findings, this study offers practical recommendations for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders to enhance the effectiveness of studying abroad programs and support services, ultimately preparing students to thrive in an increasingly interconnected and diverse world.

VII. CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this research provides a synthesis of the key findings, a reflection on their significance, and implications for theory, practice, and future research regarding the impact of studying abroad on students' intercultural communication abilities and global perspectives within the modern education system. This chapter summarizes the main contributions of the study, identifies limitations, and suggests avenues for further inquiry to advance knowledge in the field of international education.

Throughout this study, the impact of studying abroad on students' intercultural communication abilities and global perspectives has been examined in depth. The findings reveal that studying abroad plays a transformative role in shaping

students' cultural awareness, sensitivity, and proficiency in cross-cultural communication. Through immersive cultural experiences and cross-cultural interactions, students develop a deeper understanding of cultural nuances and communication dynamics, leading to enhanced intercultural competence. Additionally, studying abroad fosters the development of global perspectives, as students gain increased awareness of global issues and a sense of responsibility to contribute positively to the world. By engaging with diverse cultures and communities, students adopt a more inclusive and socially responsible worldview, aligning with the principles of global citizenship.

The findings of this study have significant implications for theory, practice, and policy in the field of international education. Firstly, they contribute to a deeper understanding of the transformative effects of studying abroad on students' intercultural learning and personal development. By highlighting the importance of cultural immersion experiences, cross-cultural communication skills, and global perspectives, this research underscores the value of international education in preparing students for success in an increasingly diverse and interconnected world. Secondly, the findings inform the design and implementation of study abroad programs and support services, emphasizing the need for comprehensive intercultural learning outcomes, cultural integration activities, and psychosocial support mechanisms to maximize the benefits of studying abroad. Finally, the findings suggest avenues for future research to explore the role of technology-mediated intercultural learning experiences, the impact of study abroad on underrepresented student populations, and the long-term effects of studying abroad on students' career trajectories and civic engagement.

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study, including the small sample size, self-reported data, and potential biases inherent in qualitative research. The findings may not be generalizable to all students or study abroad contexts, and further research is needed to validate and expand upon the findings presented here. Additionally, the study focused primarily on students' perceptions and experiences, and future research could incorporate perspectives from faculty, host institutions, and local communities to provide a more holistic understanding of the impact of studying abroad.

In conclusion, this research contributes to our understanding of the impact of studying abroad on students' intercultural communication abilities and global perspectives within the modern education system. By examining the transformative effects of studying abroad experiences on students' cultural awareness, sensitivity, and global citizenship, this study sheds light on the potential of international education to foster intercultural understanding and promote global engagement. Through thoughtful analysis and interpretation of the findings, this research offers practical recommendations for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders to enhance the effectiveness of studying abroad programs and support services. By addressing the limitations and suggesting avenues for future research, this study lays the groundwork for further inquiry into the role of international education in preparing students to thrive in an increasingly interconnected and diverse world.

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