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An evaluation of purchasing department strategies in handling food and beverage operations in five-star hospitality settings

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Abstract - This study aims to analyse the handling and procurement of food and beverage (F&B) products by the Purchasing Department at The Westin Resort Nusa. As a core operational area in the hospitality industry, efficient F&B management significantly influences guest satisfaction and operational costs. The objective of this research is to assess how the purchasing department manages supplier selection, procurement processes, stock monitoring, and coordination with the kitchen and F&B service teams to ensure product availability, quality, and cost-efficiency. The study employs a qualitative descriptive method, using interviews, observations, and documentation as primary data collection techniques. Interviews were conducted with key purchasing staff and F&B personnel to understand workflows, procurement standards, and challenges faced. Observations of daily procurement activities and stock handling were also carried out, along with document reviews including purchase orders, vendor records, and inventory reports. The analysis reveals that the purchasing department plays a pivotal role in maintaining the consistency of raw material quality while balancing cost-effectiveness. Key strengths include a well-established supplier network, digitalized procurement records, and adherence to hotel SOPs. However, challenges were found in managing fluctuating supply prices, occasional delays in delivery, and the need for stronger interdepartmental communication. The study concludes that while the purchasing system is generally effective, it requires continuous monitoring, vendor performance reviews, and integration with inventory systems to enhance real-time responsiveness. These improvements are crucial for sustaining high service standards in the resort's F&B operations.

Keywords: food and beverage management, hotel procurement, purchasing department, hospitality operations, supply chain in hotels

1. Introduction

The hospitality industry plays a vital role in Indonesia's economic development, particularly in Bali, which is recognized as a leading global tourist destination. With its rich cultural heritage, natural beauty, and international accessibility, Bali continues to attract millions of tourists annually, making it a central pillar of Indonesia's tourism economy (Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, 2023). This growth drives the demand for premium hospitality services, placing pressure on five-star hotels to consistently deliver exceptional guest experiences.

Among these hotels, The Westin Resort Nusa Dua stands out as a luxury establishment that caters to both leisure and business travellers. It regularly hosts major international events, such as the ASEAN Summit and the IMF–World Bank Annual Meeting, which require world-class hospitality standards. In such a high-stakes environment, the Food and Beverage (F&B) Department plays a crucial role in shaping guest satisfaction and sustaining the hotel's brand image.

However, the success of the F&B department is not solely reliant on culinary creativity or service quality. A critical but often overlooked component is the Purchasing Department, which

functions as the backbone of hotel operations by ensuring the consistent availability of food and beverage supplies. The purchasing function involves complex activities such as vendor selection, price negotiation, inventory control, **and** quality assurance, all of which significantly impact cost management, food safety, and service quality (Kumar et al., 2020).

In luxury hotels like The Westin Resort Nusa Dua, where guest expectations are high and operating margins are tightly monitored, efficient purchasing becomes not just an operational necessity but a strategic imperative.

Despite the recognized importance of procurement in hospitality management, there is a noticeable gap in empirical research focused on food and beverage procurement within Indonesia's luxury hotel segment. Most literature tends to generalize supply chain management or focuses on manufacturing and retail sectors (Wirtz et al., 2017). In the context of hospitality, procurement is further complicated by perishable inventory, fluctuating prices, stringent hygiene standards, and seasonality in demand (Kotler et al., 2019).

This study is important for several reasons:

- It explores real-world practices in F&B purchasing in a leading five-star hotel in Bali, providing insights that are both practical and academically valuable.
- It contributes to the literature on operational efficiency in hospitality, particularly in the Indonesian context.
- It identifies challenges and mitigation strategies in procurement workflows, offering recommendations for improving purchasing performance.
- It supports decision-makers and hotel managers seeking to enhance the alignment between procurement practices and broader organizational goals, such as cost control and guest satisfaction.

Ultimately, this research can serve as a reference for other hotel practitioners, especially in emerging markets, who aim to refine their F&B supply chain processes and reduce operational inefficiencies.

This research is grounded in three interrelated theoretical perspectives:

a) Supply Chain Management Theory (SCMT)

SCMT provides the overarching framework for understanding the flow of goods, information, and finances from suppliers to end consumers. In hospitality, the F&B supply chain involves multiple actors, including farmers, wholesalers, logistics providers, and internal hotel departments (Hugos, 2018). SCMT emphasizes coordination and collaboration to minimize cost and maximize value, making it highly applicable to hotel procurement practices.

b) Total Quality Management (TQM)

TQM focuses on continuous improvement and quality assurance across all organizational processes. In the context of purchasing, TQM encourages rigorous vendor evaluations, adherence to food safety standards, and proactive issue resolution (Goetsch & Davis, 2014). TQM ensures that ingredients and beverages sourced meet consistent quality benchmarks, contributing to guest satisfaction.

c) Resource-Based View (RBV)

RBV posits that organizations gain competitive advantage by efficiently utilizing internal resources, including operational capabilities. The purchasing department can be seen as a strategic resource, where skilled personnel, effective negotiation processes, and strong supplier networks translate into improved operational performance (Barney, 1991).

By combining SCMT, TQM, and RBV, this study examines not just the mechanical aspects of procurement but also its strategic value and contribution to organizational excellence.

Research on purchasing in the hotel industry has evolved over time. Several studies have emphasized the strategic importance of procurement in ensuring service quality, especially in F&B operations.

Kwong (2011) emphasized that purchasing is often overlooked despite its substantial impact on cost control and food quality. His study in Hong Kong hotels found that poor vendor management and lack of documentation often led to inconsistencies in food quality.

In a more recent study, Ma et al. (2016) analyzed purchasing practices in Chinese five-star hotels and found that centralized purchasing systems helped standardize quality and reduce procurement costs. However, they also noted challenges in flexibility and responsiveness.

Kumar et al. (2020), in a study across Southeast Asia, highlighted that integrated procurement platforms and digital inventory systems led to better supplier transparency and improved food safety compliance.

In Indonesia, research by Bendesa et al. (2022) examined cost optimization in F&B management through portion control and supplier negotiations. While insightful, the study did not focus specifically on the role of the purchasing department or operational workflows.

The current study differentiates itself by providing an in-depth case analysis of a specific hotel—The Westin Resort Nusa Dua—and examining procurement from both operational and strategic perspectives.

Based on the background and literature review, this research aims to address the following questions: (1) How is the food and beverage procurement process conducted by the Purchasing Department at The Westin Resort Nusa Dua? (2) What are the challenges encountered in the procurement process, and what strategies are implemented to overcome them?

The goal is to provide a detailed understanding of the operational mechanics and strategic decisions involved in F&B purchasing, offering both theoretical insights and practical recommendations for improvement.

2. Method

This study employs a **qualitative descriptive approach** to explore and understand the procurement processes and operational practices of the Purchasing Department at The Westin Resort Nusa Dua. The qualitative method was selected because it allows for an in-depth examination of phenomena in their natural setting, particularly suited for understanding human processes, work routines, and organizational practices (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The **primary data** for this research were collected through the following methods:

- **In-depth interviews:** Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key personnel in the Purchasing Department, including the Purchasing Manager, F&B Cost Controller, and Receiving Clerk. Interviews were also extended to chefs and storekeepers to gain a holistic understanding of the procurement workflow, coordination, and decision-making processes. The use of semi-structured interviews provides flexibility in exploring emerging issues while maintaining a consistent thematic structure (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).
- **Direct observation:** Field observations were conducted on-site, focusing on the day-to-day operations of the Purchasing Department. This included observing activities such as goods receiving, quality control checks, inventory placement, and documentation practices. Observations allowed the researcher to corroborate interview data and gain insights into actual operational practices.
- **Document analysis:** Supporting documents such as purchase orders, supplier contracts, delivery notes, standard operating procedures (SOPs), and vendor evaluation forms were reviewed. This helped validate findings from interviews and observations and provided contextual data regarding procurement policies, budgeting, and supplier management.

The **research location** was chosen purposively, considering that The Westin Resort Nusa Dua is a five-star hotel with an international clientele and complex F&B operations, making it an ideal case for examining procurement strategies and challenges.

2.2 Analysis Technique

Data analysis was conducted using the **Miles and Huberman (1994) model** of qualitative analysis, which consists of three concurrent flows of activity:

1. **Data reduction:** Raw data from interviews, observations, and documentation were summarized and coded into meaningful categories. This step involved transcribing interviews, highlighting key statements, and removing irrelevant or redundant information.
2. **Data display:** Organized data were then arranged in tabular and narrative form to illustrate patterns, themes, and relationships among procurement processes, challenges, and solutions. This helped in comparing practices and identifying consistency across data sources.
3. **Conclusion drawing and verification:** In this stage, the researcher interpreted the findings, identified recurring themes, and formulated conclusions related to the research.

questions. Triangulation was used to ensure credibility by cross-verifying findings from different sources (Patton, 2015).

To maintain **data validity**, this study applied **triangulation, member checking, and peer debriefing**. Triangulation compared information from different sources (interview, observation, documentation). Member checking was conducted by returning interview summaries to informants for validation, while peer debriefing involved discussing emerging themes with academic supervisors.

The qualitative analysis framework enabled the researcher to develop a comprehensive understanding of the F&B procurement process in a hospitality context and offer practical implications for improving efficiency and quality assurance.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Results

This study examines the procurement and handling process for food and beverage (F&B) materials managed by the Purchasing Department at The Westin Resort Nusa Dua—a five-star property in Bali’s upscale tourism zone. The resort places strong emphasis on F&B service quality, understanding that freshness, safety, and operational precision significantly shape guest satisfaction and uphold brand prestige.

Procurement begins with a Purchase Requisition initiated by the Kitchen Department. This internal form specifies items, required volumes, and delivery timeline. It must be approved by the F&B Manager before routing to Purchasing. This practice aligns with protocols reported by Bendesa et al. (2022), where PR forms serve as internal communication tools that enforce standardized requests and accountability.

The Purchasing team issues Requests for Quotation (RFQs) to at least three approved vendors. Vendors are evaluated on cost, reliability, food safety standards, and supply quality—matching criteria endorsed in global hospitality supply studies such as Shaik et al. (2018). This multi-vendor approach enhances competitive pricing and ensures supplier compliance with food hygiene regulations.

Once a vendor is selected, a formal Purchase Order is generated, including item specifications, quantities, pricing, and delivery terms. POs undergo dual approval by the Purchasing Director and Finance Director. This dual-signatory process aligns with industry protocols ensuring both operational accuracy and financial accountability (Susanto et al., 2023).

At delivery, the Receiving Officer cross-checks items against the PO and PR using a Daily Market List. Sensitive items like seafood are inspected for freshness—e.g., ensuring temperature remains below 5 °C. Any deviations result in immediate return of the shipment. This approach parallels inspection regimes documented by Arunasalam & Good (2013), emphasizing temperature control and quality verification at delivery.

After acceptance, supplies are stored using the First-In, First-Out (FIFO) system. Products are categorized into dry goods, chilled, and frozen storage zones. Items are arranged by arrival date to minimize spoilage and maintain freshness. Countries such as Indonesia have documented broad benefits of FIFO application, including food quality preservation and cost control (Andika, 2022; Insyira & Nastaina, 2023; Alamsyah & Putri, 2024).

Every material is tagged with batch codes, expiration dates, and reception timestamps. These details feed into traceability systems, enabling rapid quality audits and recall processes as needed. Labelling and documentation protocols comply with strict hospitality standards and reduce food risk.

The FIFO methodology is validated in hotel operations globally for minimizing spoilage and ensuring consistent food quality. Case studies from Fairfield by Marriott Bali Legian show that raw ingredients are cleaned, dated, and stored so that oldest stock is used first—though noted gaps included missing bincards or inventory tags (Andika, 2022). Likewise, R-GINA Hotel in Pemalang demonstrated that implementing FIFO enhanced raw material turnover and reduced waste, though staff training and storage layout presented challenges (Alamsyah & Putri, 2024).

Surveys from Sheraton Bandung and other Indonesian properties underscore that failure to follow FIFO can lead to increased spoilage and compromised food safety—especially during high-volume operations such as banquet kitchens (Hanifa et al., 2020).

Procurement best practice literature recommends multi-stage vendor evaluation frameworks like AHP (Analytical Hierarchy Process) to balance price, quality, and reliability—similarly to methods adopted within hotel purchasing divisions (Shaik et al., 2018; Giridhar et al., 2018). While not explicitly using AHP, The Westin’s multi-vendor RFQ and evaluation approach mirror established supply chain strength metrics.

Implementation of batch-labelling and documentation systems enhances traceability in the kitchen supply chain. This practice matches sector guidelines emphasizing documented supply chains and recall readiness, such as expectations outlined by HACCP and ISO 22000 standards. Fragmented or undocumented records have previously hindered food safety audits in hospitality contexts (Mohamed & Bunawan, 2022).

Combining these rigorous procurement stages with FIFO-based storage and labelling yields practical benefits across multiple fronts:

- **Food Safety & Freshness:** Strict FIFO rotation and temperature checks reduce spoilage and bacterial growth risk—a critical factor for perishable goods like seafood and dairy.
- **Inventory Control:** Structured PR → PO routines, backed by traceable documentation, reduce ordering errors and help manage stock consumption efficiently.
- **Cost Management:** FIFO exits older (often cheaper) stock first, lowering inventory loss. Structured vendor competition and negotiation keep procurement prices competitive.
- **Seasonal & Event Resilience:** Banquet kitchens and high-demand seasons are handled with better planning and rotational procedures, helping reduce last-minute shortages or waste.
- **Audit Compliance:** Document-controlled PRs, POs, receiving logs, and batch labels ensure traceability during internal or external compliance reviews.

While the procurement system is robust, several challenges emerge:

(1) Employee Training and Understanding: Staff must be well-versed in FIFO principles and documentation steps. Even a slight deviation—e.g., misplacement of older stock—can compromise efficiency (Insyira & Nastaina, 2023).

(2) Storage Constraints: Physical layout and limited shelf/rack space can impede proper FIFO practice, especially during peak periods (Alamsyah et al., 2024).

(3) Communication Across Departments: Delays in PR submission or incomplete specifications slow procurement cycles and increase risk of misordered goods.

The Westin Resort Nusa Dua’s F&B procurement process demonstrates a mature, disciplined system aligning with international hospitality standards. Through structured requisitioning, competitive vendor evaluation, dual-signed ordering, temperature-based inspections, FIFO-based storage, and batch labeling, the resort upholds high standards of quality, compliance, and cost-control.

Insights from regional hotel studies—such as Fairfield Bali, R-GINA Pemalang, Sheraton Bandung, and Bumi Surabaya—reaffirm that adhering to FIFO principles and robust documentation processes significantly enhances food safety and operational resilience. However, achieving optimal outcomes depends on consistent staff training, adequate storage infrastructure, and cross-departmental coordination.

The hotel faces several procurement-related challenges:

- **Price Volatility:** Seasonal and market fluctuations affect ingredient costs. The solution includes long-term contracts and forecasting models (Kumar, 2023).
- **Delivery Delays:** Unreliable deliveries are mitigated by buffer stocks and engaging multiple vendors (Sánchez-Teba et al., 2020).
- **Non-Conforming Goods:** Inconsistent product quality or wrong deliveries are handled through strict receiving SOPs, return policies, and vendor evaluations (Bhandari & Sin, 2023).

3.2 Discussion

The results reveal that The Westin Resort Nusa Dua implements a procurement model that upholds excellence in quality assurance, operational efficiency, and accountability. Through a structured application of standard operating procedures (SOPs) at every procurement stage—from requisition to storage—the resort ensures seamless F&B operations and mitigates supply chain risks. This

practice aligns with Kwok et al. (2017), who emphasize that procurement accuracy is fundamental to service quality delivery in hospitality contexts (Xie & Kwok, 2017).

With heightened consumer expectations in the post-pandemic era, food safety and traceability have become non-negotiable. The resort's rigorous labeling protocols—batch codes, expiration dates, timestamps—strengthen both internal quality control and customer trust. Sánchez-Teba et al. (2020) found that traceability systems significantly enhance consumer confidence and regulatory compliance in luxury dining contexts, affirming the strategic value of these practices (Choe et al., 2009).

Moreover, traceability contributes to transparency, risk management, and recall readiness—qualities continually valued by premium guests and regulatory bodies alike. Procurement procedures at The Westin resonate with Porter's (1985) Competitive Advantage Theory. Strict adherence to vendor qualification standards, precise forecasting, and proper storage establish operational excellence and supply consistency—key differentiators in service-based sectors.

2 Additionally, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which distinguishes between hygiene and motivator factors, offers insight into the role of procurement as a hygiene factor. Arunasalam and Good (2013), in their study applying Herzberg's model to hotel contexts, describe system reliability (e.g., food delivered safely and on time) as essential to preventing guest dissatisfaction (Arunasalam Sambhanthan, & Good, A. (2013).

In this case, efficient procurement and storage procedures reduce complaints and support positive guest perceptions. The resort's approach to vendor management—including sourcing from multiple suppliers—demonstrates adaptability in managing price volatility and vendor reliability risks. This mirrors recommendations by Shaik et al. (2018), who underscore multi-sourcing strategies to enhance supply chain resilience. Dewanto et al. (2023) further highlight that in tourism-dependent regions like Bali, seasonal fluctuations demand agile procurement and flexible inventory planning.

This operational agility enables the hotel to dynamically adjust procurement pipelines during peak tourist seasons or supplier disruptions—ensuring continuous service quality without waste. Beyond operations, the procurement model supports sustainability—reducing food waste, optimizing storage, and minimizing unnecessary over-ordering. Global trends show that sustainable supply chains in hospitality not only align with environmental values but also contribute to competitive differentiation (Phala, 2023); Modica et al., 2018).

Traceability contributes further by building institutional trust with consumers; MDPI research shows that traceable food systems enhance perceived value and willingness to pay—especially when trust is built through transparent sourcing practices (Wang et al., 2021). Although The Westin's procurement process is robust, certain limitations persist. First, staff adherence to SOPs may fluctuate; consistent training is vital to limit deviations such as mislabelled items or incorrect FIFO usage. Training efforts should also address generational differences in adopting new operational technologies.

Second, the resort's procurement practices could further benefit from formal frameworks in vendor evaluation. While current vendor criteria reflect key supply chain concerns, methodologies like the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) could introduce more structured, quantifiable selection metrics, as suggested by Shaik et al. (2018).

Lastly, integration between F&B and purchasing systems could be enhanced via real-time digital platforms to improve forecasting and reduce communication lags, further aligning with Airport 4.0-style digitalization strategies in other sectors (Xie & Kwok, 2017).

The Westin Resort Nusa Dua's procurement system exemplifies best practices in food and beverage management within upscale hospitality environments. Standardization through SOPs, traceability protocols, rigorous vendor selection, and FIFO-based storage collectively contribute to operational efficiency, service reliability, and guest satisfaction.

Statistical alignment with theories—such as Porter's focus on competitive differentiation and Herzberg's hygiene factors—highlights how procurement underpins both strategic and experiential elements of hospitality delivery. Additionally, the resort's methods illustrate resilient supply chain planning suited for a region with high tourism variability.

Looking forward, opportunities to enhance system performance—such as advanced vendor evaluation, staff training programs, and digital integration—offer avenues for continuous improvement. As consumer demands evolve, embedding traceability, sustainability, and technological agility into procurement operations will remain essential for maintaining brand excellence and operational resilience.

4. Conclusion

4.1 Conclusion

The findings of this study underscore the critical role of the Purchasing Department in supporting food and beverage (F&B) service excellence at The Westin Resort Nusa Dua, a five-star hotel operating in one of Bali's most competitive hospitality markets. From procurement planning to vendor management, inspection, storage, and documentation, the procurement process is designed to uphold stringent standards of food quality, safety, and efficiency—factors that directly influence guest satisfaction and the overall reputation of the hotel.

The study reveals that the procurement process begins with a well-documented **Purchase Requisition (PR)**, ensuring that departmental needs are clearly communicated and approved before being forwarded to the purchasing team. This structured communication flow helps minimize errors and supports accountability across departments (Bendesa et al., 2022). Following the PR, **vendor sourcing and evaluation** are conducted through a competitive quotation system (RFQ), where vendors are assessed based on price, delivery timelines, product quality, and compliance with food safety standards (Shaik et al., 2018). This aligns with best practices in supply chain management for the hospitality industry (Susanto et al., 2023).

Once a vendor is selected, the **Purchase Order (PO)** is issued as a legally binding document that formalizes the transaction and details product specifications, pricing, and delivery schedules. The PO must be approved by authorized personnel, ensuring internal control and financial discipline (Kumar, 2023). Upon arrival of the goods, the **Receiving and Inspection** phase takes place, where a designated Receiving Officer cross-checks the delivered items against the PO and delivery note using tools like the Daily Market List. Special attention is given to perishable items, with temperature checks and visual inspection ensuring food safety compliance (Arunasalam & Good, 2013; Romero Montero et al., 2023).

Storage and handling procedures adhere to the FIFO (First In, First Out) principle to minimize waste and ensure freshness. Items are stored in appropriate environments—dry, chilled, or frozen—with clear labelling for traceability, which is vital for both inventory management and health safety (Sánchez-Teba et al., 2020). Finally, all procurement documents are forwarded to the accounting department for payment processing, and each item is labelled for traceability in the event of quality issues or recalls.

This research also identifies key **challenges** faced by the Purchasing Department, such as **fluctuating ingredient prices, delivery delays, and non-conforming goods**. In response, the hotel implements **strategic purchasing methods** such as fixed-term contracts, vendor diversification, buffer stock policies, and strict SOPs for receiving and evaluation (Kwok et al., 2017; Dewanto et al., 2023). These responses reflect the hotel's adaptability and proactive approach to maintaining supply chain stability.

The entire procurement system is aligned with **Porter's (1985) Competitive Advantage Theory**, which emphasizes the strategic importance of internal operational efficiencies to sustain market positioning. Additionally, the hotel's procurement strategy supports **Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory**, which highlights hygiene factors—such as consistent food supply and product quality—as necessary to prevent guest dissatisfaction (Arunasalam & Good, 2013).

In summary, the structured and responsive approach to food and beverage procurement at The Westin Resort Nusa Dua not only ensures high-quality guest experiences but also reinforces the hotel's operational resilience in a dynamic and competitive industry landscape.

4.2 Suggestions

Based on the results and conclusions of this study, several recommendations are proposed to further enhance the procurement operations of the Purchasing Department at The Westin Resort Nusa Dua and similar five-star hospitality institutions:

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1. **Strengthen Digital Procurement Systems:** The integration of procurement management systems or Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) platforms can further streamline purchasing workflows, automate documentation, and enhance vendor communication. According to Sánchez-Teba et al. (2020), digital transformation in procurement contributes significantly to accuracy, traceability, and decision-making speed.
2. **Develop Vendor Performance Dashboards:** Implementing a vendor scorecard system that tracks performance indicators such as delivery timeliness, product quality, and responsiveness will allow data-driven decisions during vendor evaluations and renewals (Bhandari & Sin, 2023). This ensures the hotel continuously works with reliable suppliers.
3. **Enhance Cross-Departmental Communication:** Continuous training and communication between the Kitchen, Purchasing, and Receiving teams are essential to align expectations and standardize quality benchmarks. Regular interdepartmental coordination meetings can reduce misunderstandings and improve response times (Bendesha et al., 2022).
4. **Expand Sustainable Procurement Initiatives:** The Purchasing Department should explore sourcing strategies that prioritize local, organic, and environmentally certified products. Not only does this support Bali's sustainable tourism mission, but it also aligns with changing consumer preferences for eco-friendly hospitality services (Romero Montero et al., 2023).
5. **Strengthen Risk Management Strategies:** Given the persistent threat of supply chain disruptions due to weather, economic shifts, or pandemics, the hotel should formalize a procurement risk management plan. This can include maintaining a diversified supplier network, flexible contracts, and inventory forecasting tools (Kumar, 2023).
6. **Continuous SOP Evaluation:** SOPs related to receiving, inspection, and storage should be periodically reviewed and updated to reflect emerging food safety standards and regulatory changes, especially for perishable and high-risk food items.
7. **Future Research Directions:** This study is limited to a single property and focuses primarily on inbound procurement processes. Future studies could explore outbound logistics (e.g., inventory turnover), waste reduction strategies, or compare procurement efficiency across different hotel classifications (3-star vs. 5-star).

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