THE EFFECT OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATEGIES ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN KAMPALA CAPITAL CITY AUTHORITY (KCCA), UGANDA

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Abstract: This study was conducted to examine the effect of conflict resolution strategies on employee performance at Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA). The study is limited to the employees of KCCA and adopted the use of cross sectional survey research design in generating the required primary data. It targeted 498 technical staff of the institution using simple random sampling technique. The data was analyzed using means, standard deviations and multiples regression. The findings revealed that both levels of conflict resolution strategies and employee performance are satisfactory. It also confirmed that conflict resolution strategies can significantly explain a total variance of 27.7% of employee performance (Adjusted R Square=0.277, p=0.000). It further confirmed that Compromise as a conflict resolution strategy is the highest predictor of employee performance (Beta=0.374, p=0.00), followed by third party intervention (Beta=0.185, p=0.012); negotiation (Beta=0.083, p=0.022) was not a significant predictor. The study therefore concludes that conflict resolutions strategies do positively influence employee performance at KCCA. The recommendation as made that conflict resolution strategies are always essential to employee performance. It is further recommended that compromise and third party interventions should be adopted more as opposed to negotiations which might not yield the required outcome.

Keywords: Employee Performance, Conflict Resolution Strategies, Kampala Capital City Authority

1.0 Introduction

In the early 1900's, conflict was seen as an indicator of poor organizational management which needed to be avoided, in the mid 1950's, it was accepted passively and perceived as normal and expected; managers focused on resolving conflict, while in the 1970's, conflict was viewed necessary as not good or bad but could be used to promote growth, in the 1990's, managers needed to confront and manage conflict appropriately (Zhu, 2013). Conflict has historically been viewed in Britain as undesirable, something to be avoided (Kinnander, 2011). The Classical organization theorists believed that conflict produced inefficiency and was therefore undesirable, detrimental to the organization and should be eliminated or at least minimized to the extent possible (dysfunctional conflict). However, in the early 1990s in the United States, perceptions about conflict changed with the emergence of social systems and open system theory (MacDonald, 2016).

In sub-Saharan Africa, conflict resolution strategies have become one of the major areas of concern to many human resource managers over the past two decades. According to Igbinoba (2016), in Nigeria, management executives are spending twice as much time settling employees' disputes than they did a decade ago. For instance in Kenya, traditional workplace practices and systems with their hierarchical structures, tight divisions of labor, narrowly defined jobs, detailed rules, limited employee involvement, and managerial decision making, authority, and control are no longer considered adequate since they foster conflict (Olang, 2017). On the other hand, in Tanzania, due to frequent organizational conflict, performance in most organizations has taken a comparatively low sequence (Masalu, 2015). The frequent agitation by workers for improved working conditions and other interests have led to a down toll which eventually affected organizations performance (Manyenga, 2016). Key indicators such as sales return on investment and profit margins have reduced due to poor conflict resolution strategies in several public institutions (Ngowi, 2014).

In Nigeria, most of the available studies about conflict resolution strategies such as Adebile and Thompson (2012), Osisioma *et al.*, (2012), Ajike, *et al.*, (2015) investigated causes of conflicts across various organizational settings and suggested several measures or strategies for managing organizational conflict.

In Uganda, conflict has been the center of attention in most public institutions. In KCCA, conflict has been recurrent between the technical wing and the political wing headed by the Executive Director and Lord Mayor respectively. In 2011, the Mayor accused the Executive Director of usurping his political powers and vowed to fight the Executive Director relentlessly (Kafumbe, 2017). In 2017, the Executive Director and the Lord Mayor while appearing before parliament presented two conflicting reports regarding the operations of the Law Enforcement Unit, an indication of a complex working relationship between the duo (Kafumbe, 2017). In October 2018, the Executive Director announced her resignation, something that prompted a celebration from the Lord Mayor. The Lord Mayor accused the executive director of impunity, disrespect, absconding from duty and being 'power' obsessed (Kafumbe, 2017). However, Awan & Anjum (2015) notes that if conflicts are managed properly by applying the best course of action, the organization can increase it is performance in terms of utilizing the scarce resources and achieving the organizational objectives. Conversely, unmanaged conflict negatively impacts both employee satisfaction and performance. Thus timely management of conflict has the potential of improving employee satisfaction and overall employee performance.

There is poor level of employee performance at KCCA. This was indicated by the high level of inefficiency in the overall level of the performance of KCCA as an organization. The poor employee performance was attributed to majorly lack of motivational incentives, poor leadership, high employee turnover, political interference, lack of transparency and accountability, and high level of corruption among top officials (Ndagire, 2019). In addition, the problem of poor leadership due to the wrangles among the Minister of Kampala, former KCCA Executive Director and Kampala Mayor leave little to be desired of how an institution of that nature can be able to perform effectively (Ndagire, 2019). Apparently, the technical wing (headed by executive director) of the institution in several cases does not agree with the political wing (headed by the mayor) thus causing difficulty in the performance of KCCA. It is against this background that the current study will investigate to find out how conflict resolution strategies affect the employee performance in KCCA. More specifically the study sought to investigate (i) the levels of conflict resolutions strategies, (ii) levels of employee performance and (iii) the effect of conflict resolution strategies on employee performance.

2.0   Literature Review

2.1   Conflict Resolution Strategies

Conflict resolution strategy refers to the method and process involved in facilitating the peaceful ending of conflict and retribution (Fisher, 2010). According to Behfar *et al*., (2008), conflict resolution strategy is the process of limiting the negative aspects of conflict while increasing the positive aspects of conflict. On the other hand, Ishak and Ballard (2012) believe that conflict resolution strategy involves the reduction, elimination, or termination of all forms and types of conflict. Lang (2009) refers to conflict resolution strategy as the practice of recognizing and dealing with disputes in a rational, balanced and effective way. Conflict resolution strategy is defined by Swanstom and Weissmann (2005) as a requirement that is needed to initiate preventive measures to conflicts. The author further added that managing conflict required putting down appropriate measures to prevent the problem from reoccurring.

According to Donkor (2016), conflict resolution implemented within a business environment usually involves effective communication, problem resolving abilities and good negotiating skills to restore the focus to the company's overall goals. Bankovskaya (2017) opines that conflict resolution minimizes the negative outcomes of conflict and promotes the positive outcomes of conflict with the goal of improving learning in an organization. De Moyer and Desmidt (2015) explain that properly managed conflict increases organizational learning by increasing the number of questions asked and encourages people to challenge the status quo. According to Omayo (2016), conflict resolution implies reduction, elimination, or termination of conflict and a large number of studies on negotiation, bargaining, mediation, and arbitration fall into the conflict resolution category.

According to Osisioma *et al*., (2013), there are various styles that can be used to resolve conflicts in organizations. Among the early writers, Follett suggested three main ways to handle conflict: domination, compromise and integration. Moreover, she also found other such as avoidance and suppression (Adebile & Thompson, 2011). Saduman (2010) suggested that one of the five methods of coping with conflict is competition. The competition approach to conflict resolution is an attempt at complete victory (Saduman, 2010). It is a win/lose approach, a "winner takes all" position. Usually, the focus is on winning the conflict at all costs, rather than seeking the most appropriate solution for everyone concerned.

The second method of coping with conflict is accommodation, which is the opposite of competition. It is a lose/win approach. The third method is avoidance, where both sides in the conflict withdraw. It is referred to as the lose/lose outcome in managing conflict because neither side is able even to deal with the issue, much less manage or resolve it. The fourth one is collaboration, which is usually considered the best method to cope with conflict. It is called a win/win approach. It does not require either side to give up a valued position. Rather, both sides honestly seek new and common higher grounds. This kind of problem-solving requires an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect, the surfacing of hidden agendas, and a genuine willingness on both sides to resolve the conflict. The fifth method is compromise-conflict resolution. It involves negotiation and a high degree of flexibility. It is referred to as the win/lose-win/lose position since both parties in the conflict will get some of what they want, while at the same time giving up something in the process (Obasan, 2016). Hotepo (2010) noted that conflict can be managed in different ways, some focusing on interpersonal relationships and others on structural changes. Butler, et al (1993) has discussed styles used by negotiators and found that those negotiators who use integrating (collaborating), obliging (accommodating) or avoiding style were more effective than those who use dominating (competing) style. Individuals who use integrative (collaborative style) conflict handling style experience lower level of work conflict and stress at job, but people

using avoiding or dominating (competing) style were facing more conflicts and work stress (Friedman et al., 2000).

Overall conflict resolution should aim at minimizing affective conflicts at all levels, attain and maintain a moderate amount of substantive conflict, and use the appropriate conflict resolution strategy to effectively bring about the first two goals, and also to match the status and concerns of the two parties in conflict (Rahim, 2002). Thus conflict resolution strategies should satisfy certain criteria. These criteria are particularly useful for not only conflict resolution, but also decision making in management. The first criteria are organization learning and effectiveness. In order to attain this objective, (MacDonald, 2016) advises that conflict resolution strategies should be designed to enhance critical and innovative thinking to learn the process of diagnosis and intervention in the right problems. The second criterion is the needs of stakeholders. Sometimes multiple parties are involved in a conflict in an organization and the challenge of conflict resolution would be to involve these parties in a problem solving process that will lead to collective learning and organizational effectiveness.

Furthermore, Kinnander (2011) discourses that organizations should institutionalize the positions of employee advocate, customer and supplier advocate, as well as environmental and stockholder advocates. Ethics is noted to be the third criterion for conflict resolution strategies to be effective. A wise leader must behave ethically, and to do so the leader should be open to new information and be willing to change his or her mind. By the same token subordinates and other stakeholders have an ethical duty to speak out against the decisions of supervisors when consequences of these decisions are likely to be serious. Toku(2014) sums that without an understanding of ethics, conflict cannot be handled.

2.2 Performance

Performance is defined by Elena-Iuliana and Maria (2016) as the achievement of objectives and how these objectives are achieved. High performance results from appropriate behavior, especially discretionary, and the effective use of the required knowledge, skills and competencies. According to Arinanye (2015), employee performance involves quality and quantity of output, presence at work, accommodative and helpful nature and timeliness of output. According to Sorsatakaro and Wako (2014), organizations can use direct bonuses and rewards based on individual performance if employee performance is noticeable. To satisfy customers, firms do much effort but do not pay attention on satisfying employees. But the fact is that customers would not be satisfied until and unless employees are satisfied. Because, if employees are satisfied, they will do more work therefore ultimately customers will be satisfied (Ahmad, 2012). Employee performance is actually influenced by motivation because if employees are motivated then they will do work with more effort and by which performance will ultimately improve (Dukhan *et al.,* 2017).

Some researchers even argue that a person's personality has a more specific role in job performance (Hurtz & Donovan, 2000). However, according to various researchers, it is not what performance exactly means, but how it is composed and how it is measured (Yahaya *et al*., 2012). Some researchers even argue that personality has a more specific role in job performance. However, according to Ndungu (2017), job performance contains a problem; namely the measurement of performance.

2.3 Conflict Resolutions Strategies and Performance

Olang (2017) conducted a study on the influence of conflict resolution on employee performance among SACCO companies in Kenya. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The target population was employees from all cadres from top management, operational employees and other employees on casual basis. The study used the census technique hence the total sample size was 153 employees. Structured questionnaires

were the method used to collect data based on the research questions. A linear regression model was used to determine the nature of impact that the independent variables had on the dependent variable. The findings of the study revealed a positive relationship between negotiation and organizational performance. Furthermore, the study revealed a positive relationship between third party intervention and organizational performance. Lastly, the study revealed no positive relationship between communication and increased organizational performance. The study concluded that there is a good conflict resolution strategy in place. The study recommended that management should focus on increasing the utilization of conflict resolution strategies like negotiation and third party intervention to increase organizational performance.

Ajike *et al*., (2015) conducted a study to examine the effect of conflict resolution on employee performance of banks in Nigeria using Access Bank Plc as a case study. A sample size of eighty-one (81) out of the numerous employees of the bank was administered with questionnaires in three branches of the bank located in Lagos State. A descriptive and regression analysis with the aid of SPSS was used to analyze the relationship between conflict resolution on employee performance of Access Bank Plc. The result of the study found that there was a significant positive relationship between conflict resolution and employee performance (r= 0.715; p<0.05). It is therefore recommended that management should develop diverse but appropriate strategies to resolve and manage conflicts as they arise before escalating to unmanageable level in the organization.

Awan and Saeed (2015) conducted a study on conflict resolution and employee performance in a commercial bank in Pakistan. The study used formal questionnaire to collect data from a target group of respondents. Descriptive analytical techniques such as frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation and variance, and factor analysis were applied to analyze and interpret the data. The major findings are that Education does not have any effect on the opinion of respondents on Conflict resolution Strategies. Similarly, there is no significant difference between the opinion of male and female respondents regarding the causes of conflict. However, there is a significant effect of conflict on organizational performance. The study suggested that management should adopt conflict resolution strategies that improve the performance of the organization, besides ensuring a free flow of communication between the management and the employee as well as promote interpersonal relationships among co-workers to boost their morale.

Toku (2014) conducted a study to explore conflict resolution in basic schools in Ashanti Region of Ghana. Face to face interviews were used to solicit responses from teachers alongside participant observation. The sampling technique used by the researcher which aided in the collection of data was the purposive sampling technique. Content analysis was used in analyzing the data collected. The study discovered that the integrating style of resolving conflict was the most widely used conflict resolution style in basic schools in the region. This style placed more emphasis on high concern for self and others as well. It was also discovered that of all the challenges encountered in managing conflicts, lack of cooperation on the part of the two parties was considered the most striking challenge. Furthermore, it was also discovered that conflict resolution played a major role in strengthening the bond between management and workers. The study concluded on the note that the most influencing factor in resolving conflict in organizations was organizational culture. The study also recommended that organizations should organize training and educational programs for their members to enable them accommodate and deal effectively with the issue of individual differences in the workplace.

Mukolwe *et al*., (2014) investigated the effect of interpersonal conflict on employee performance of selected hotels in Kisii town, Kenya. The study employed both descriptive survey and explanatory research designs and targeted a population of 368 employees of purposively selected hotels. The data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics while multiple regression was used to test the hypotheses. The results indicated that

interpersonal conflict strategies, relationship conflict and task conflict significantly affect employee performance respectively, while outcomes of interpersonal conflict does not significantly affect organizational performance. Furthermore, Uchendu *et al.*, (2013) examined the relationship that exists between principals' conflict resolution and employee performance in Cross River State, Nigeria. The authors employed questionnaire to gather their data. The instrument was a 4 point likert type scale consisting 32 items. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Analysis was used in analyzing the data. The result of the analysis revealed that, there is a significant relationship between principals' conflict resolution in terms of teacher-teacher conflict (TTC), teacher-student conflict (TSC), principal-teacher conflict (PTC) and organizational performance. Hotepo *et al.*, (2010) investigated the effect of organizational conflict on employee performance in Nigeria. The study employed descriptive research design and used questionnaire to collect data from 96 managers in some selected Airlines, Road Transport and Insurance companies in Lagos Metropolis. The research revealed that limited resources is the major cause of conflict and that conflicts have both negative and positive effects on organization, but when managed properly, the positive effects can be used to encourage organizational innovativeness and build cooperation among the employees.

Adomi and Anie (2006) investigate the pattern of conflict resolution in Nigerian libraries. The researchers employed descriptive design and questionnaire to collect data from professional and para-professional staff of three Nigerian University libraries. Majority of the respondents perceive conflict as positive and can be stimulated by library managers. The study further found out that interpersonal conflicts are the dominant conflicts in Nigerian libraries, and accommodation ranks highest as technique of conflict avoidance. Rahim (2001) reported a positive correlation between democratic management styles and organizational stability. He noted that democratic strategies would promote inclusion in decision and by consequence workers identification with decisions and commitment to the organization. Schramm-Nielsen (2002) indicated that a confrontation style dealing with group conflict was used to a significant degree in higher than in lower performing organizations. Lang (2009) commented on the integrating style of handling conflict which shows that this style results in high joint benefits for the parties. While Rahim (2004) have suggested that the nature of leadership power in an organization mediates the needs of conflict resolution strategies. Thus, organizational stability may be maintained even when the leader is low in conflict resolution because workers sometimes exhibit acceptance behavior over the superior's attitude thus reflecting apathy and subjugation with little manifestation of aggression. Kazimoto (2016) analyzed the elements of a conflict resolution process and leadership organizational change and the benefits of managing conflict. The author concludes that leadership approaches are the key important factors for conflict resolution. The study recommends that managers in various organizations should encourage open communication policy, so that all employees get the right information at the right time. Miao, et al (2010) examined the relationship conflict has a greater impact on learning performance than does process conflict. The effects of dysfunctional conflict on learning performance in a Chinese cultural context were explored with cognitive style as a moderator. The results of their analysis show that the relationship between process conflict and learning performance is quadratic. In addition, it was discovered that relationship conflict has a greater effect on learning performance than does process conflict.

3.0   Methodology

This study is limited to the employees of KCCA. The study adopted the use of cross sectional survey research design in generating the required primary data. Cross-sectional studies often employ the survey strategy (Mugenda and Mugenda 2003). Quantitative approach was predominantly used as a synonym for questionnaire data collection technique so as to generate statistical and numerical data. On the other hand, qualitative approach was used as a synonym for interview data collection technique so as to generate non-numerical data

(Creswell, 2011). Thus the study population of this study was 1,425 respondents. However, the study targeted 498 technical staff using simple random sampling technique from only two directorates, namely: administration and human resource management, and Office of the Executive Director because they are most knowledgeable of the study elements than other categories of directorates. The sample size was 222 determined using Slovene's formula; $n = \frac{N}{1+N\,(\alpha)^2}$; Where n=sample size; N=target population; α=0.05 level of significance. $n = \frac{498}{1+498(0.05)^2}$, $\boldsymbol{n = 222}$

The study preferred to use a five Likert Scale questionnaire because of its universal nature. The five Likert scale included: 1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=not sure; 4=agree; and 5=strongly agree. The questionnaire was subdivided into three sections, namely: Section A included information about the profile of the respondents (i.e. gender, age, education and work experience); Section B included information regarding conflict resolution strategy measured using negotiation (5-items), third party intervention (4-items); and compromise (5-item). Section C captured information regarding employee performance which was measured using efficiency (5-items), effectiveness (5-items), and quality of work (5-items).

Amin (2005) says, if the CVI is ≥ 0.70, the instrument can then be considered valid.

Content Validity Index formula:

$$CVI = \frac{Number\ of\ items\ rated\ relevant\ by\ all\ judges}{total\ number\ of\ items\ in\ the\ instrument}$$

$$CVI = \frac{31}{34}$$

$$\boldsymbol{CVI = 0.91}$$

The study found that the CVI of the instrument was 0.91 thus using the recommendation by Amin (2005), the instrument was confirmed as valid.

According to Pallant (2013), if the Cronbach's alpha value α ≥ 0.70 then the instrument will be considered reliable. In this study, the Cronbach alpha values were all above 0.70 recommendations by Pallant (2013) thus confirming high internal consistency and subsequently implying that the instruments were highly reliable. The summary of the findings are indicated in table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Reliability

Variables Tested	No. Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Conflict resolution strategy	14	0.772
Employee Performance	20	0.852
Overall	**34**	**0.878**

The analysis was conducted using frequency and percentage distribution tables to analyze data the profile of the respondents. Mean and Standard Deviations were used to compute the central tendency and measure of dispersion of conflict resolution and employee performance respectively. To interpret the mean values, the following numerical values and descriptions were used as indicated in table 3.2 below.

Table 3.2: Mean Interpretation Values

Mean Range	Response Mode	Interpretation
4.21-5.00	Strongly agree	Very satisfactory
3.41-4.20	Agree	Satisfactory
2.61-3.40	Not sure	Fairly satisfactory
1.81-2.60	Disagree	Unsatisfactory
1.00-1.80	Strongly disagree	Very unsatisfactory

Furthermore, inferential statistics was used to determine the variations in the dependent variable. Specifically, linear regression analysis was used to determine the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable. In addition, multiple linear regression analysis was used to determine the highest predictor variable in the independent variable. The hypothesis was analyzed and testing using multiple regression analysis. The null hypothesis was determined at p=0.05 level of significance. The **decision rule** was that: if p≤0.05, the null hypothesis would be rejected, and the alternative hypothesis accepted. Based on this, the functional form of the model is stated below:

EP = ƒ (N, TPI, C)

Where:

EP = Employee Performance (dependent Variable)

N = Negotiation

TPI = Third Party Intervention

C = Compromise

This model can be further stated in econometric form as:

EP = α$_0$ + β$_1$N + β$_2$TPI + β$_3$C + ε

Where:

α$_0$ = Intercept of relationship in the model/constant

β$_1$ – β$_3$ = Coefficients of each independent or explanatory variable

ε = Error term

4.0   Results

4.1   Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

64% of the respondents were male while 36% were female. A majority of 36.9% of the respondents were within the age group of 30-39 years, followed by 34.2% who were within the age group of 40-49 years while the respondents within the age group of 20-29 years and 50 and above were represented by 14.4% respectively. Most (39.6%) of the respondents were Diploma Holders, followed by 29.2% Degree Holders, and 27.5% Certificate holders. Only 3.6% had Master's Degree and none of the respondents had a PhD.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics of Conflict Resolution

Table 4.1: Conflict Resolution

Conflict Resolution	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Negotiation	4.15	0.618	Satisfactory
Third Party Intervention	4.18	0.584	Satisfactory
Compromise	4.10	0.605	Satisfactory
Mean	**4.14**	**0.602**	**Satisfactory**

Table 4.1 shows that the overall assessment of conflict resolution a KCCA was satisfactory (overall average mean=4.14, Std=0.602). This implies that KCCA has a framework that helps them to successfully and satisfactorily provide resolutions to conflicts among employees.

4.3 Descriptive Statistics of Employee Performance

Table 4.2: Employee Performance

Employee Performance	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Efficiency	4.07	0.587	Satisfactory
Effectiveness	4.02	0.604	Satisfactory
Quality of Work	4.04	0.614	Satisfactory
Mean	**4.04**	**0.602**	**Satisfactory**

Table 4.2 shows that the overall assessment of employee performance at KCCA was satisfactory (overall average mean=4.04, Std=0.602). This was attributed to the fact that all the measurable of employee performance used in this study were all assessed as satisfactory, i.e., efficiency, effectiveness, quality of work, and timelessness.

Table 4.3: Multiple Regression Analysis

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	1.952	.243		8.023	.000
	Negotiation	.069	.055	.083	1.258	.022
	Third party intervention	.144	.057	.185	2.520	.012
	Compromise	.295	.053	.374	5.554	.000

R	0.536
R²	0.287
Adjusted R²	0.277

Table 4.3 shows that conflict resolution can significantly explain a total variance of 27.7% of employee performance (Adjusted R Square=0.277, p=0.000). This implies that a combination of negotiation, third party intervention and compromise as conflict resolution strategies significantly affect employee performance by up to 27.7%. Furthermore, table 4.3 shows that compromise is the highest predictor of employee performance since it significantly explains the highest variance, that is, 37.4% (Beta=0.374, p=0.00), followed by third party intervention, 18.5% (Beta=0.185, p=0.012) and negotiation, 8.3% (Beta=0.083, p=0.022). This implies that KCCA administrators should emphasis the use of compromise during any conflict resolution efforts among employees.

5.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

The finding of this study agrees with several others in previous studies (Olang, 2017; Ajike *et al*., 2015; Awan and Saeed, 2015 and Toku, 2014), all showing the positive effect of conflict resolution on performance of employee and the organizations. Hotepo *et al*., (2010) showed how conflict itself can be a source of performance. This study therefore concludes that conflict resolutions strategies do positively influence employee performance at KCCA. It is however important to note that conflict in its self can be a stimulator of performance as confirmed by Hotepo *et al*., (2010). It is a fact however that excessive levels and length of conflict is always detrimental to employee performance, thus the need for conflict resolution strategies.

This study therefore recommends that conflict resolution strategies are always essential to employee performance. It is further recommended that compromise and third party interventions should be adopted more as opposed to negotiations which might not yield the required outcome as hinted by Schramm-Nielsen (2002).

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