

Relationship between Task-Oriented Leaders' Behavior and Organizational Performance in Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract

The study aims to find out the relationship between the task-oriented leaders' behavior and organizational performance in higher education institutions as well as to identify that how a task-oriented leader will perform to face the challenges of the gaps between planning and implementation of educational policy reforms in higher education institutions. A Multi-stage stratified cluster sampling method was used for the study. A total of 324 individuals, including the Deans of the Faculties, Heads of the Departments and Heads of Quality Enhancements Cells from HEC recognized general public and private universities in Punjab, participated in this study. To evaluate the task-oriented leaders' behavior, the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ) was administered whereas to assess the organizational performance of higher educational institutions, the researchers developed the Institutional Performance Questionnaire (IPQ) for the participants. Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to test the relationship between two variables of the study. The results showed that the leader who has high task-oriented behaviour displays a low degree of organizational performance in higher education institutions and particularly anticipates that the task-oriented leader has not a significant role to implement the policy reforms in higher education institutions. This paper contributes to the theoretical and practical understanding of leaders' behavior for the organizational performance and implementation of policy reforms in higher education institutions.

Keywords: Task-oriented leader, organizational performance, higher education institutions

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Introduction

The Significant transformation has taken place in higher education institutions during the second half of the twentieth century (Staley & Trinkle, 2011). As the number of institutions and students' enrolment is increasing, different leadership behavioral styles are also emerging (John, Rowley, & Hu 2009; Daft, 2005). The leader's behavior influences on all aspects of the organization's performance that stimulate the employees to commence new projects for the completion of desired objectives (Mangi, Abidi, Soomro, Ghumro, & Jalbani, 2011).

Research studies about leadership behavior in organizations have been initiated since the last ten decades (Al-Malki & Juan, 2018). Consecutively the theorists concentrated on the qualities and traits of the leader that foster the performance of the organizations (Halaychik, 2016). During the theoretical development, Bass and Bass (2008) concluded that these efforts lead to the evolution of trait theory by Psychologist Gordon Allport in 1936 that explored the leader's personality traits. With the time, researchers switched their concentration from the individual leadership towards leadership affected by a group (Lord, Day, Zaccaro, Avolio, & Eagly, 2017). They evolved around the behavior of the leader influenced regarding by followers group. Trait theory was followed by a behavioral theory that was originated by the behaviors of the leaders.

Within the perspective of historical literature regarding leader behavior, there are many reviews of different approaches and theories. Hooijberg, Lane, and Diverse (2010) highlighted the behavioral approaches to leadership ranging from Fiedler's (1967) LPC theory to House's (1971) Path-goal approach to Quinn's (1988) competing values formation (CVF) and Bass' (1985) transformational leadership theory.

Fred Fiedler was a social scientist who researched on the personality and characteristics of the leaders in the mid-1960s. He established a model that was based on fundamental assumptions about task-oriented leaders' behavior and relationship-oriented leaders' behavior. The model states that there is no paramount approach to leadership. Instead, a leader's efficiency is based on the situation. It is the consequence of two factors "leadership approach" and "situational favorableness" (later called "situational control").

In his research study, Northouse (2010) defined that the task-oriented leader is concerned with attaining objectives for organizational success. The task-oriented leader defines the roles to the employees, assigns them the tasks and sets the destinations. He coordinates the work plan, motivates the employees to complete their assignments correctly and also gives them technical assistance. The task-oriented leader always evaluates different situations.

Yukl, O'Donnell, and Taber (2009) identified in their research study that a task-oriented leader maintains the Quality standards leading towards the progress of the organization and determines the short-term plans the task-oriented leader is suitable for both favorable and unfavorable situations. Griffin & Moorhead (2014) is analytical and mechanical in mind. He keeps in view that determinations of the resources are needed for the completion of every assigned project within organizational performance targets.

Keeping in view, the above debate in Pakistani perspective, the organizational performance of higher education institutions has declined due to many challenges and issues starting from the gaps between planning and implementation of policy reforms in higher education institutions. The investigation of leadership behavior has a fundamental importance in this perspective (Ali, 2006). Ramay (2010) stated in his study that in the last fifteen years or so, Pakistan has been concentrating on the troubles of leadership behaviors of educational institutions. Shamsi, Ahad, and Imtinan (2010) indicated the problems of educational leadership that some leaders cannot enact appropriately with the clarity of purpose and precise task definitions, so the organizational performance lacks due to non-coordinated activities. In Pakistani scenario, a few studies have been conducted (Ramay, 2010; Faisal, Ayesha, Amna, Saleem, & Nadeem, 2012; Javaid & Mirza, 2012; Rehman, Shareef, Mehmood, & Ishaque, 2012) to identify the relationship among task-oriented leaders' behavior, relationship-oriented leaders' behavior and organizational performance. Particularly in this study, the task-oriented leaders' behavior was specified. Furthermore, it is pertinent to identify that how a task-oriented leader will perform to face the challenge of gaps (weak management, poor communication, financial irregularities, leadership vacuums, etc.) between planning and implementation of educational policy reforms in higher education institutions

Literature Review

Many studies provide insight into task-oriented leaders' behavior as a measure of organizational performance. Moreover, through many studies, it has been proved that the inquiry about a relationship between leadership and organizational performance is very complicated because, in the meanwhile, many other variables are affecting the situation (Powell, 2004).

Holloway (2012) defined in his study that the task-oriented leader primarily focuses on the organizational performance according to goals with the teamwork. Individual issues do not matter for him. However; good judgment is according to employees so that they may use the best ways and time for the accomplishment of the tasks.

Kellett, Humphrey, and Sleeth (2006) investigated the relationship of the task-oriented leader with cognitive abilities, and it was also hypothesized that performance of the complex task in the organization has a positive relationship with leaders' behavior. The opportunities for doing a simple and complex task were given to the employees according to their choice. The complex tasks were planning, organizing and drawing the solutions to the problems. This study posited that with the help of cognitive abilities that the task-oriented leader has a positive correlation with the complex task. The authors measured the cognitive ability with the Wonderlic Personnel Test. The cognitive ability and complex tasks received high ratings with a task-oriented leader's behavior.

Fiedler (1967) originated the term of task-oriented leaders' behavior and argued that task-oriented leaders' behavior depends on the situation. He further explained three variables for the favorability of the situation.

Leader-Member Relations

This variable indicates the degree of support and mutual trust between the leaders and the employees. According to Fiedler, it is the single most significant situational variable that is considerable in matching the leader's behavior to a situation. When leaders and employees trust each other and mutually supportive to accomplish the tasks, it indicates the leader-member relations are right, and when leader and employees do not interact with each other and also not favorable, it means that the leader-member relations are weak.

Task-Structure

It is the second most influential variable that defines the task's goals, tactics and central beliefs of performance. The strategic planning for goal attainment shows high task-structure, haphazard work on goal achievement and determines low task-structure.

Position Power

Third and the last variable defined Fiedler contingency theory is the position power that is directly correlated with the leader's authority to employees' recruitment, assign them tasks and also compensate them. If the leader has a weak authority, then his position-power is low. On the other hand, if the leader has substantial authority to perform his duties then, he has a high position of power.

During an exploration of the competencies of task-oriented leaders' behavior, Cha, Lam, and Schaubroeck, (2007) speculated that a task-oriented leader is more capable of achieving the better performance from group members and consequently, the group working efficiency will be influenced. Bono, Foldes, Vinson, and Muros (2007) also brainstormed the importance of the task-oriented leaders' behavior that concentrates on targets with his subordinates.

A task-oriented leader sets the goals for the betterment of organizational performance. He communicates and motivates the subordinates and gives them deadlines for the accomplishment of tasks according to preplanned goals (Fey, Adaeva, & Vitkovskaia, 2001).

Academic researchers nominate the task-oriented leaders' behavior as the original model among other leadership behaviors because he is well matched to a structured work atmosphere. The task-oriented leader makes planning and arrangement of the work, clarifies the aims, defining the roles of the employees, and organizes the steps of the tasks for its accomplishment. Necessary supplies, technical assistance, and equipment presence are the primary responsibilities of the leader (Anzalone, 2017).

The task-oriented leader is less concerned with the initiative of realigning to employees and more focused on finding the solution of requisites to meet specific goals. Whenever any assignment assigns, the leader jumps into it feet first and hits the ground operation. The leader also maps out the venture, searches out the best techniques, resources and elaborates all the responsibilities to the employees (Forsyth, 2010). Yuki (2006) explained three particular types of task-oriented behaviors that are especially relevant for effective leadership. The behaviors include

1. Planning work activities
2. Clarifying roles and objectives
3. Monitoring operations and performance

Robbins and Judge (2009) narrated in their research study that task-oriented leaders' behavior had a negative connection with the job satisfaction of teachers and developmental procedures. It was also concluded that the principal who pays more attention to tasks would have a lack of interest in return and healthier performance could not be achieved.

In the Pakistani context, Faisal, Azeem, Ayesha, Amina, Saleem and Nadeem (2012) concluded in their research study that task-oriented leaders' behavior and relationship-oriented leader's behavior are correlated to each other, and a leader must have both types of behaviors to attain the required objectives of the organization.

Objectives of the Study

Following were the objectives of the study.

1. To investigate the relationship between task-oriented leaders' behavior and organizational performance in higher education institutions.
2. To explore that to what extent the task-oriented leaders' behavior will perform better to implement the policy reforms in higher education institutions.

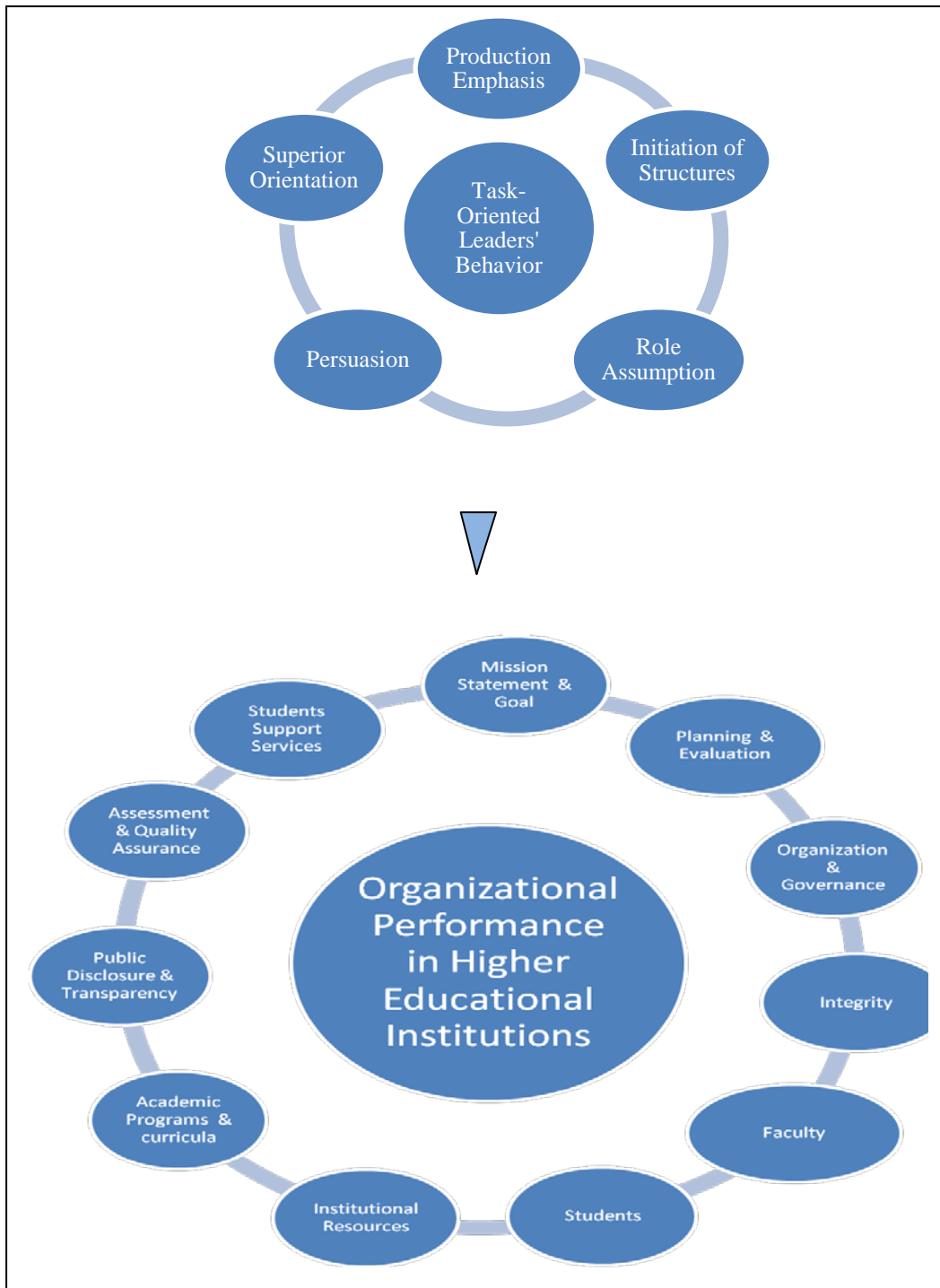
Hypotheses of the Study

The following null hypotheses were tested in the proposed research work.

- H_{01} : There is no significant relationship between task-oriented leaders' behavior and organizational performance in higher education institutions.
- H_{02} : There is no significant relationship between task-oriented leaders' behavior and the implementation of policy reforms in higher education institutions.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

This study encompasses diverse aspects that were perceived in the conceptual framework of the study. There were two variables in the study. The first variable was the task-oriented leaders' behavior. Further, there were five dimensions of task-oriented leaders' behavior. These dimensions were production emphasis, initiation of structure, role assumption, persuasion, and superior orientation. The second variable was the organizational performance in higher education institutions. The organizational performance in higher education institutions was evaluated with the help of eleven standards namely, Mission Statement and Goal, Planning and Evaluation, Organization and Governance, Integrity Faculty, Students, Institutional Resources, Academic Programs and Curricula, Public Disclosure & Transparency, Assessment & Quality Assurance, and Student Support Services. The relationship between both variables was identified with the help of five dimensions of task-oriented leaders' behavior and eleven standards for the evaluation of the organizational performance in higher education institutions.



Research Methodology

The design of the study was correlational and quantitative. The rationale of the study was to consider a relationship between task-oriented leaders' behavior and organizational performance in higher education institutions. It was also explored that what is the role of the task-oriented leaders' behavior to perform better for the implementation of the policy reforms in higher education institutions.

A multi-stage stratified cluster sampling method was used for the study. The researchers formed two strata of universities specified as general public universities and general private universities. The data were collected from the Deans of the Faculties, Heads of the Departments and Heads of the Quality Enhancement Cells. At the first stage; the researcher selected 50% of the universities from each stratum (eight from public and eight from the private sector). In the second step, all the Deans of the Faculties from the selected universities were selected as samples. At the third stage, 50% of the Heads of Departments from public sector universities and 50% of the Heads of the Departments from private sector universities randomly selected. Similarly, all the Heads of the Quality Enhancement Cells from the selected universities were taken as a sample of the study. List of selected public and private universities along with participants is given in Table 1.

Table 1

Deans of the Faculties, Heads of the Departments and Heads of Quality Enhancement Cells from HEC recognized general public and private universities (Sample of the study).

Universities	Number of Deans of the Faculties	Number of the Heads of the Departments	Heads of Quality Enhancement Cells
General Public Universities	50	123	6
General Private Universities	46	92	7
Total	96	215	13

Instruments of the study

Two research instruments were administered to collect data about the task-oriented leaders' behavior and organizational performance of higher education institutions. To assess the task-oriented leaders' behavior, the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ) was administered. The LBDQ was developed by the personnel of the Research Board, The Ohio State University, as one plan of the Ohio State Leadership Studies.

The Questionnaire was the five-point Likert type scale. There are five subscales related to the task-oriented leaders' behavior in this survey. Each subscale is contained of either ten items. Brief definitions of the subscales are scheduled below:

Persuasiveness – uses encouragement and reasoning efficiently, and manifests strong relevance. (10 items)

Initiation of Structure – clearly explains own duties, and lets subordinates know what is required. (10 items)

Role Assumption – actively performs the leadership role rather than capitulate the duties to other followers. (10 items)

Production Emphasis – applies influence for productive output. (10 items)

Superior Orientation – maintains cordial relations with seniors and influences with them; is striving for high destinations. (10 items)

During the pilot study, the final version of assessing (Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire) was developed, and the Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficient of the final instrument was **.893**

For the assessment of the organizational performance of higher education institutions, the researchers developed the five-point Likert type, Institutional Performance Questionnaire (IPQ) based on performance evaluation standards provided by the Higher Education Commission (Batool, Qureshi, & Raouf, 2010).

Standard 1: Mission Statement and Goals

Standard 2: Planning and Evaluation

Standard 3: Organization and Governance

Standard 4: Integrity

Standard 5: Faculty

Standard 6: Students

Standard 7: Institutional Resources

Standard 8: Academic Programs and Curricula

Standard 9: Public Disclosure and Transparency

Standard 10: Assessment & Quality Assurance

Standard 11: Student Support Services

During the pilot testing of this instrument, the Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficient was **0.951**.

Data analysis and Interpretation

Out of 114 Deans of the Faculties from the HEC recognized general public and private universities, 96 Deans of the Faculties were the respondents with a share of 84.2%. There were 215 respondents (with the share of 89.95%) out of 239 Heads of the Departments in HEC recognized general public and private universities, prescribed as the sample of the study. Moreover, out of 16 Heads of the Quality Enhancement Cells, there were 13 respondents with a share of 81.2%.

The Following hypothesis was formulated to identify the relationship between task-oriented Leaders' behavior and organizational performance in higher education institutions.

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between task-oriented leaders' behavior and organizational performance in higher education institutions.

Pearson Correlation Coefficient Formula measured the correlation between task-oriented leaders' behavior and organizational performance in higher education institutions.

Three types of participants were involved in the measurement of the Pearson Correlation Coefficient Formula.

Table 2

Descriptive statistics about Correlation between Task-Oriented Leaders' Behavior and Organizational Performance in Higher Education Institutions

Variables	N	Pearson 'r'	Sig (2-tailed)
Deans of the faculties			
Task-oriented leaders' behavior	96	-.311	.002
Organizational performance	96		
Heads of the Departments			
Task-oriented leaders' behavior	215	-.456	.000
Organizational performance	215		
Heads Of The Quality Enhancement Cells			
Task-oriented leaders' behavior	13	-.708	.005
Organizational performance	13		

Value of the relationship between Deans of the Faculties' task-oriented leaders' behavior and organizational performance in higher education institutions as shown in the table is -.311 that was Significant at .10 Alpha. The P-value of the calculated value was .002 which was less than the significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$), so the hypothesis was rejected. Furthermore, the direction of the correlation indicated a weak negative correlation between task-oriented leaders' behavior and organizational performance in higher education institutions.

The -.456 value of the relationship between Heads of the Departments' task-oriented leaders' behavior and organizational performance in higher education institutions was explored. The P-value was 0.00 which was less than the significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$), so the hypothesis was rejected. The direction of the correlation specified a moderately negative correlation between task-oriented leaders' behavior and organizational performance in higher education institutions.

Strong negative correlation (-.708) between Heads of the Quality Enhancement Cells' task-oriented leaders' behavior and organizational performance in higher education institutions was identified. The correlation was significant at $p = .005$, which was less than the significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$) so the hypothesis was rejected.

The Following hypothesis was formulated to identify the relationship between task-oriented Leaders' behavior and the implementation of policy reforms in higher education institutions.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between task-oriented leaders' behavior and the implementation of policy reforms in higher education institutions.

Table 1.3

The description of the hypothesis with three kinds of participants

Variables	N	Pearson 'r'	Sig (2-tailed)
Deans of the Faculties			
Task-oriented leaders' behavior	96	-.225	.029
Implementation of policy reforms.	96		
Heads of the Departments			
Task-oriented leaders' behavior	215	-.181	.008
Implementation of Policy Reforms	215		
Heads of the Quality Enhancement Cells			
Task-oriented leaders' behavior	13	-.615	.019
Implementation of Policy Reforms	13		

Pearson Correlation Coefficient measured the correlation between the Deans of the Faculties' task-oriented leaders' behavior and the implementation of policy reforms. The value of the relationship as shown in the table was -.225 which was significant at .029 (Alpha). Therefore, the null hypothesis between both hypotheses was rejected. Moreover the direction of the correlation specified weak negative correlation between task-oriented leaders' behavior and the implementation of policy reforms.

The weak negative correlation was found between Heads of the Departments' task-oriented leaders' behavior and Implementation of policy reforms. The calculated value of $r = (-.181)$ and the p-value was .008

The moderate negative correlation was identified between Heads of the Quality Enhancement Cells' task-oriented leaders' behavior and Implementation of policy reforms. The value of r is $-.615$ at the $p = .019$ so it was decided according to the level of significance that the null hypothesis was rejected.

Discussion and Conclusions

The primary objective of the study was to identify the direction of the relationship between the task-oriented Leaders' behavior and organizational performance in higher education institutions. It was proved from the findings of the research with different kinds of participants that there were significant weak negative, moderate negative and strong negative correlation between task-oriented leader's behavior and organizational performance in higher education institutions. It was concluded that the leader who has highly task-oriented behavior displays a low degree of organizational performance in higher education institutions, as well as a highly task-oriented leader, has not a significant relationship with organizational performance in higher education institutions.

It was also proved from the findings of this research with different kinds of participants that there were significant weak negative, very weak negative and moderate negative correlation between task-oriented leaders' behavior and implementation of policy reforms in higher education institutions. The results of data (collected from the majority of the participants) analysis anticipated that the task-oriented leader does not play a significant role to implement the policy reforms in higher education institutions. The findings of the present study also further conceptualized that a task-oriented leader does not bridge the gaps between planning and implementation of the policy reforms in higher education institutions. The present study' supported by the research findings of (Fey, C.F., Adaeva, M., & Vitkovskaia, A.; Brown, 2003; Cha.S., Lam. S., & Schaubroeck. J. 2007; Bass & Bass, 2008; Robbins & Judge, 2009; Griffin & Moorhead, 2014). Wroblewski, (2019) also maintained results and concluded that task-oriented leader squelches innovation and creativity, create a tense work environment, so the required results of improving the organizational performance could not be achieved.

Recommendations

It is recommended that a task-oriented leader may not get the best organizational performance of higher education institutions. The leader should not concentrate only on tasks. He has to focus also on other aspects related to subordinates and academic requirements, so the organizational performance of higher education institutions may be progressed. The task-oriented leaders' behavior should not be forcefully recommended for implementing the policy reforms in higher education institutions. There are many gaps between the planning and the implementation of policy reforms in Pakistan. A task-oriented leader may initiate the structure of bridging the gap between planning and

implementation of policy reforms in higher education institutions but he has to keep eye on all the features of the academic environment, that are essential for the proper implementation of policy reforms in higher education institutions.

It is critically needed the right balancing for the leaders' behavioral patterns to enhance the organizational performance in higher education institutions. The leaders may flexible in their behaviors with the subordinated to take rational initiatives, especially in developing countries. To maintain the consistency for the implementations of policy reforms, leaders take prevailing actions according to the internal and external environment of present educational contextual settings. It is essential for the development of higher education institutions and bring them in the adaptive region of obligatory implementations.

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