TAWHIDIC PARADIGM APPROACH ON QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN MANAGEMENT

Suhaimi Mhd Sarif
Department of Business Administration
International Islamic University Malaysia
Jalan Gombak, 53100 Kuala Lumpur

Dolhadi Zainudin
Department of Business Administration
International Islamic University Malaysia
Jalan Gombak, 53100 Kuala Lumpur

and
Rohaziah Yahya
Sekolah Rendah Islam Integrasi Ibn Khaldun Gombak Selangor

ABSTRACT

Tawhidic paradigm approach to qualitative research in management offers the worldview from the revelation that contains Divine Commandments. Qualitative research in management uses cross disciplinary studies to contribute to the body of knowledge in management. There have been realism, constructionism and pragmatism paradigms used in the research of management. By adding the research paradigm with *Tawhidic* paradigm provides alternative research paradigm although it has not been encouraging. This study obtained feedback through personal interview from qualitative social researchers pertaining to the inclination toward applying *Tawhidic* Paradigm. The respondents gave positive inclination on the application of *Tawhidic* Paradigm given the holistic, comprehensive and balanced ontology, epistemology and methodology.

Keywords: Qualitative research, *Tawhidic* paradigm, Methodology.

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INTRODUCTION

Tawhidic paradigm approach to qualitative research in management offers the worldview from the revelation that contains Divine Commandments. Qualitative research in management uses cross disciplinary studies to contribute to the body of knowledge in management. There have been realism, constructionism and pragmatism paradigms used in the research of management. By adding the research paradigm with *Tawhidic* paradigm provides alternative research paradigm although it has not been encouraging.

In the competitive world, credible and convincing value proposition is very essential to sustain competitiveness and competitive advantage. Proven track records based on numerical, statistical, and extrapolation facts require description, explanation and exploration from words, texts, and situational voices. A convincing report is not about the well-arranged numbers with statistical presentation, but with powerful and convincing writing that touches the soul, heart and mind of stakeholders (Joseph, Fendt & Point, 2018). The nature of research is interpretive with narration of stories (Kammerlander et al., 2015; Thorne, 2016).

Qualitative research is dynamic when it uses realistic, pragmatic, and constructivist paradigm and philosophy for the society. Realistic in the human sense is within human reach and touch (Kammerlander et al., 2015) and narrative (Thorne, 2016). Nevertheless, the logical and reasoning ground alone lacks of rigor to reach the humane aspects. Reasoning-logical ground has partial aspect, which is just cognitive dimension, but inadequate to address affective (emotion) and behaviour.

The paper argues that *Tawhidic* paradigm has important effects on the dynamism of qualitative research. The discussion is divided into a few parts. Firstly, it discusses the literature review, which is about the key constructs of the study. Secondly, it explains the methodology of the study, which is also qualitative research inquiry through personal interview method. Thirdly, it presents the findings and provides discussion to the findings based on the contemporary literature. Finally, it concludes the study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This part critically reviews and discusses a few constructs pertinent to the topic of research, namely Tawhidic paradigm dynamism, qualitative research inquiry, and research framework.

Tawhidic Paradigm Dynamism

Qualitative research emphasizes on contextual inquiry of knowledge. Logical reasoning with several paradigms attempt to explain, explore and describe the contextual phenomenon rigorously. Realism, constructionism, pragmatism are among paradigms in qualitative research inquiry (Thorne, 2016). The *Tawhidic* paradigm is based on the revelation of Qur'an and the explanation in Hadith. This paradigm incorporates cognitive, affective and behavior research inquiry into *Ulū al-Albāb* model, which describes, explains and explores the understanding of human about the reality of life and the expectations in life with revelation and reasoning.

Unity of thinking serves as basis for reasoning driven by *Tawhidic* paradigm. Mohd Kamal Hassan (2010, p.187) explained the unity of thinking as *Ulū al-Albāb*, a thinking reflecting life with a purpose, objective, and goal in life. The unity of thinking manifests in the reality of human as servants of Allah (*'ibād al-Rahmān*) and vicegerents (*khulafā' fī al-ard*), and true believers (*al-mu'minūn*) with sole purpose is to serve for optimum benefit of mankind and 'balanced community'.

Unity of action serves as basis for pragmatism driven *Tawhidic* paradigm. In socio-political approach, Al-Faruqi (1992, p.5) explains unity of action into qualitative research inquiry as understanding of human to fulfill the duty of Divine trust (*al amānah*) and obligatory duties (*al farā'id*). The Al-Faruqi's model of inquiry is based on revelation (Qur'an and Sunnah) and execute the duties with reasoning and human unique capability. Figure 1 illustrates *Ulū al-Albāb* in inquiry of knowledge in qualitative research. The main argument depicts in Figure 1 is that *Tawhidic* paradigm dynamism has effects on qualitative research inquiry. The basis for this argument is the power of men of understanding (*Ulū al-Albāb*) in uniting thinking and action into obligatory duties (*al farā'id*), roles (*al amānah*) and expectations (*al-ghoyah*). The obligatory duties refer to the duties of human as servants and vicegerents of Allah simultaneously. Based on the duality of obligation, human has to perform dual roles without any separation; those are the roles as servants of Allah, to worship Allah with specific rituals, and to play the role as vicegerents of Allah, in the forms of general activities that are permissible and beneficial.
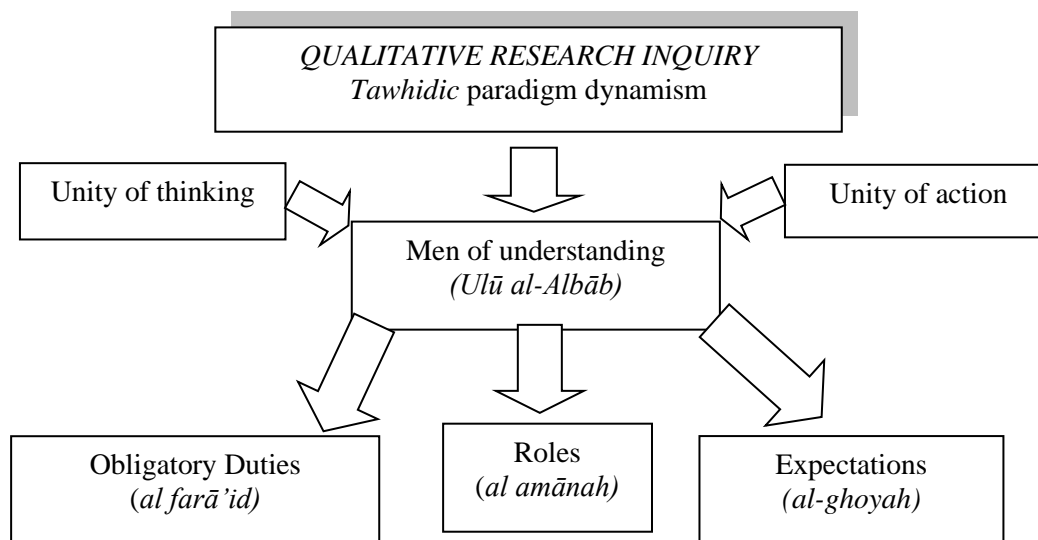

Figure 1: Inquiry of Qualitative Research driven by *Ulū al-Albāb* in Tawhidic Paradigm

Qualitative research inquiry enables unity of thinking and unity of action. This unification enables to the dynamic power of *Tawhidic* paradigm with *Ulū al-Albāb* to achieve organizational goals within the individual roles as servants and vicegerents of Allah. The essence of the unification of thinking and action combines and integrates elements of faith (*īmān*) and knowledge (*'īlm*) explained the obligation to fulfill the trust (*amānah*) and roles (*mas'ulīyyah*). Nevertheless, both thinking requires trust and consistency.

Trust and consistency derived from serious orientation. Zarkasyi (2010) contended that the orientation of *Ulū al-Albāb* inquiry into the nature of knowledge as religious (*al-diniyyah*) and rational (*al-'aqlaniyyah*), practical religion (*'ilm al-mu'amālah*), God's guided knowledge on how the religion can be executed (*'ilm al-shar'iyy*), and knowledge that derived from human intellect (*'ilm al-'aqliyy*). The ontology and epistemology of Tawhidic paradigm derived from the understanding from the practical religion (*'ilm al-mu'amālah*) integrates the exoteric (*zāhir*) and esoteric (*bātin*) sciences. The exoteric (*zāhir*) sciences include the act of worship (*'ibādat*), social ethics (*'ādat*), and matters pertaining to dangerous

act (*muhlikāt*). As for esoteric (*bātin*) sciences, it is about spirituality dimension into the inquiry of qualitative research with Tawhidic paradigm.

There are ways and means to attain qualitative research inquiry with Tawhidic paradigm dynamism. Zarkasyi (2010, pp.162-164) categorized the inquiry dynamism into reasoning with human teaching (*al-ta'lim al insaniyy*) and reasoning into Divine teaching (*al-ta'lim al rabbāniyy*). The human teaching reasoning can be obtained through face-to-face (Zabeda, 2004, 2008). However, the Divine teaching is based on Divine revelation (*al-wahy*), inspiration (*ilhām*), reflection and contemplation (*al-ishtighal bi al-tafakkur*).

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is a way to acquire knowledge for many disciplines of knowledge, whether it is social science, natural science or engineering. Indeed, qualitative research is a process of knowledge inquiry that has been accepted in the academic and non-academic world (Connelly, 2016; Levitt et al., 2018). The nature of qualitative research is profoundly distinctive in its inquiry method which is based on words and texts instead of numbers and figures (Sandelowski, 2015; Connelly, 2016; Levitt et al., 2018). This situation has created a scepticism that qualitative research is easy, just a conversation called interview, easy to analyse what has been said in the interview without having to worry about numbers.

Researcher and the qualitative research are not separable. The researcher involves in the research as researcher, participant, analyst, and quality controller. Therefore, qualitative researcher should possess competent research skill such as data collection skills, data analysis skills, writing skills, reflexivity skill, and fast worker. It explains the reality of contexts with convincing power writing (Joseph, Fendt & Point, 2018). The reality has been thoroughly examined with triangulation method to assure the narratives are credible (Sandelowski, 2015), valid (Sousa, 2014), trustworthy feedback from participants (Thomas, 2017) with protocols (Amankwaa, 2016; Connelly, 2016) and thorough checks (Levitt et al., 2018). The dynamism of inquiry within interepretive manner (Thorne, 2016), coupled with narrative in stories (Kammerlander et al., 2015) that are obtained through sharing and learning (Konopaski, Jack & Hamilton, 2015).

Qualitative research provides alternative approach in the inquiry of knowledge which emphasizes on contextual understanding of reality instead of generalisation. Amankwaa (2016) contended that the understanding of reality requires credibility and trustworthiness. In this approach of inquiry, any structure or system that could satisfy the logical reasoning is accepted as credible inquiry. Indeed, Connelly (2016) emphasised that the use of words and texts in describing, analyzing and synthesizing the reality require trustworthiness and credibility.

In any inquiry process, it needs solid foundation based on previous scholarly and empirical research. The work needs philosophical ground (Gehman et al., 2017), clear ontological basis (Hood, 2016), articulated epistemological ground (Konopaski, Jack & Hamilton, 2015), credible methodology (Amankwaa, 2016; Connelly, 2016), convincing writing (Jonsen, Fendt & Point, 2018), valid interpretation (Thorne, 2016; Sousa, 2014), and credible findings that are transferable (Vaismoradi et al., 2016). Figure 2 depicts the qualitative research inquiry as a process with dynamism. There are several components require to make qualitative research inquiry in action, namely, the researcher, the research, qualitative research skills, thinking, action, support, and philosophy. The presence of *Ulū al-Albāb* in the qualitative research inquiry is apparent when the researcher and the research are involved directly.
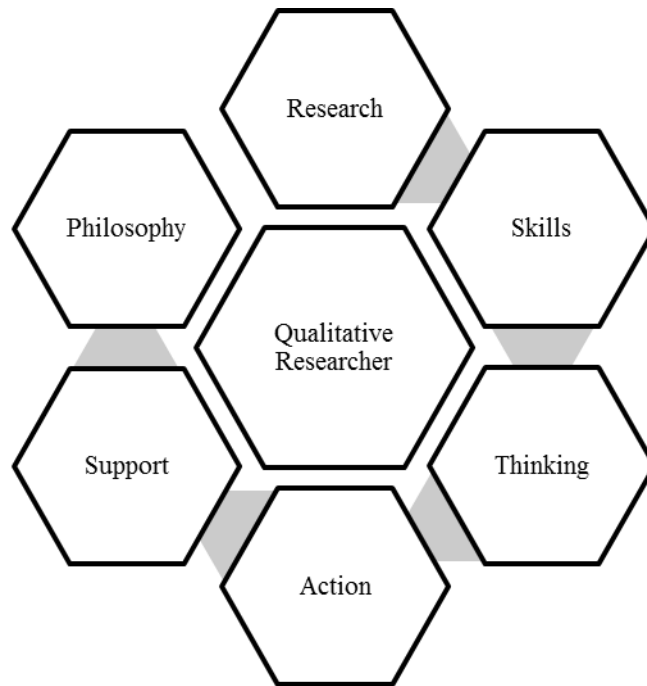
Figure 2: Key components of Qualitative Research as a process of *Ulū al-Albāb* in Tawhidic Paradigm

Besides competent in research skill, qualitative researcher also needs to understand various methods of collecting qualitative research such as discourse analysis, action research, case study, ethnography, ethnomethodology, narrative research, grounded theory, art-based research and conversation analysis. This is necessary when the research and the researcher are not separable (Gehman et al 2017; Konopaski et al., 2015; Sousa, 2014).

The philosophy needs to unite thinking with some intellectual assumptions. Philosophical ground is the foundation for inquiry of knowledge (Gehman et al., 2017) with clear ontological basis (Hood, 2016). The ontology relates to the nature of the study which later articulated as epistemological ground (Konopaski, Jack & Hamilton, 2015) and convinced with credible methodology (Amankwaa, 2016; Connelly, 2016), persuasive within convention of writing (Jonsen, Fendt & Point, 2018), valid interpretation (Thorne, 2016; Sousa, 2014), and credible findings that are transferable (Vaismoradi et al., 2016). In terms of philosophy, qualitative research has its own paradigm, ontology, epistemology, deontology, methodology, and axiology. Figure 3 summarizes the key inquiry elements of the study.
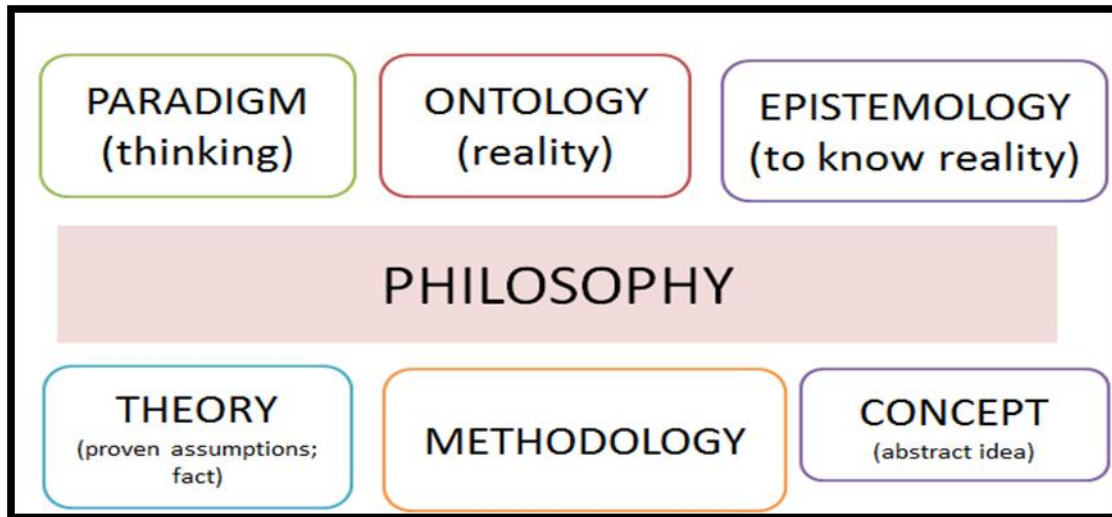
Figure 3: Elements of Inquiry of the study

This study postulates research framework for effects of *Tawhidic* paradigm on qualitative research inquiry. Figure 4 shows the key constructs of the study.
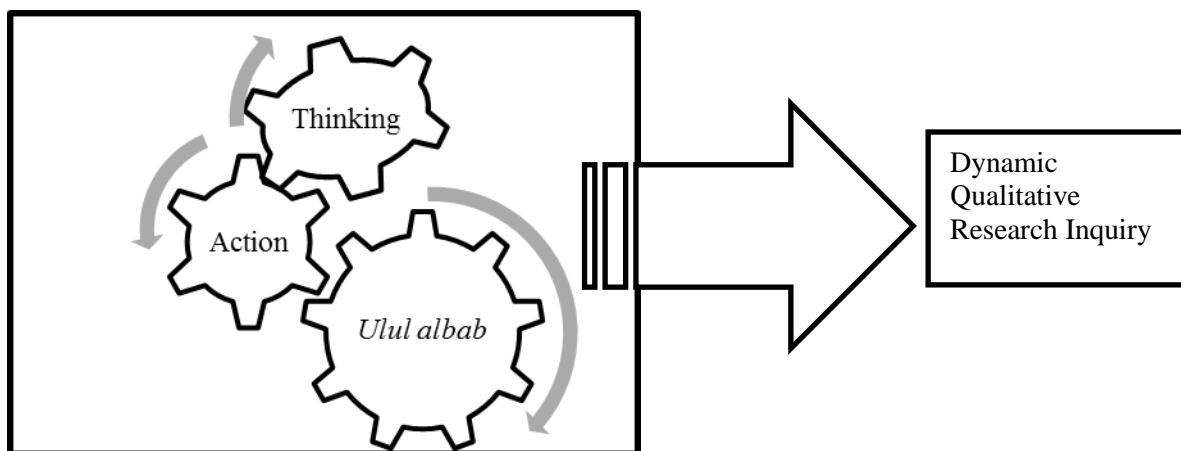

Figure 4: Research Framework of *Ulū al-Albāb* in Tawhidic Paradigm on Qualitative Research

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section explains the data collection process for this study that explores the effects of *Tawhidic* paradigm dynamism on qualitative research. This study uses qualitative research to explore contextual understanding (Whittemore, Chase & Mandle, 2001; Symon, Cassell & Johnson, 2018). In the meantime, the effects of Tawhidic paradigm with *ulul albab* assure reliability, validity, trustworthiness, and transferability of the results.

The study interviews five qualitative researchers *pertaining to the inclination on applying Tawhidic* Paradigm. Each interview consumed between 30 minutes to 50 minutes with note-taking. Figure 5 summarizes the flow on conducting personal interview.
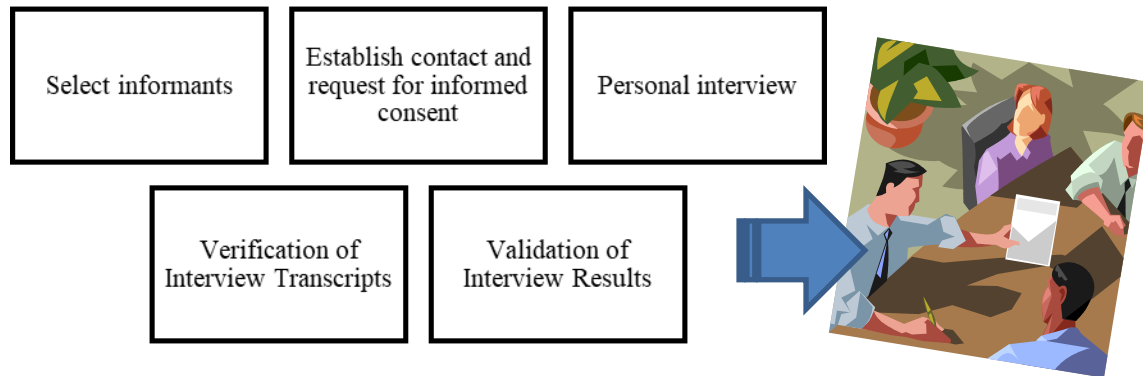

Figure 5: Flow of conducting personal interview

The study transcribed all interview notes into transcript for the verification of the informants. Then, the study approached independent researchers who familiar with the subject matter to validate the findings. This is done to ensure validity of interpretation, credibility of the feedback, the trustworthiness of the feedback and interpretation, and transferability of the study in the future.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the study and the discussion.

Firstly, this part presents the profile of the informants. Almost all of the informants received research training from United Kingdom (UK) and had experience in qualitative research inquiry for more than 15 years into high impact research.

Table 1: Informants' Profile

Code	Background of research	No of Years in Qualitative	Place of research training
R1	Islamic Behavioral Finance	28	USA & UK
R2	Fiqh Muamalat	15	UK
R3	Information systems	23	UK
R4	Commercial law	20	UK
R5	Business Management	25	Australia

R1 argued that Tawhidic paradigm is suitable for all disciplines and not just religious studies.

"Paradigm is a thinking product and it is dynamic. Positivism is a thinking which is about being objective on inferencing data. Post-positivism allows for some exemptions. As for Tawhidic paradigm, it is about oneness of Allah. Our thinking is all about Allah."

The main point argued by R1 is about being credible consistently. According to Joseph, Fendt and Point (2018) the value of qualitative research inquiry lies in the acceptance of truth and evidence in the forms of texts and words. Since it is word and text, scientific analysis and measurement of words and texts obtained from the must be examined comprehensively (Sandelowski, 2015). Credibility is also associated with the validity of the research instrument (Sousa, 2014), handle with care to assure trustworthy feedback from participants (Thomas, 2017). In the presence of with protocols together with the empowerment to get the research consistently credible (Amankwaa, 2016; Connelly, 2016).

R2 contended that the main effect of *Tawhidic* paradigm is on the nature of the qualitative research.

"In Islamic studies, analysis of text, especially Turath text requires a lot of interpretation guided by revelation and tradition of scholars. No numbers involved in the analysis. It is purely text. If this paradigm to extend to qualitative research, it enriched the contribution into the understanding of the reality with the Qur'anic interpretation."

In R2's argument about Qur'anic based interpretation and verification is an indicator for dynamism of qualitative inquiry (Levitt et al., 2018). The dynamism of inquiry within interpretive manner (Thorne, 2016), coupled with narrative in stories (Kammerlander et al., 2015) that are obtained through sharing and learning (Konopaski, Jack & Hamilton, 2015).

R3 explained that qualitative research inquiry remains as inquiry of knowledge regardless of the paradigm and philosophy of research.

"Inquiry of knowledge is to find truth. Whether it is from numerical fact or document text, it is about truth. Yes, there is no absolute truth in our reasoning, but beyond our reasoning there is explanation, which is available in commentaries of Qur'an and Ahadith. Having Tawhidic paradigm into qualitative research inquiry makes the inquiry more holistic. After all, merging faith and knowledge is necessary as vicegerents and servants of Allah."

R3's argument on the holistic nature of qualitative research inquiry is essential for logical reasoning research, which could be extended to the concern of *Tawhidic* paradigm. The interpretive approach with narrative is dynamic (Kammerlander et al., 2015; Konopaski, Jack & Hamilton, 2015).

R4 and R5 argued that qualitative research inquiry is important in any research. More importantly, both of them requires extensive reading, interpreting, and contextualizing (Thomas, 2017; Thorne, 2016). Extensive reading makes the horizon of paradigm more comprehensive (Kammerlander et al., 2015), holistic (Konopaski et al., 2015), trustworthy (Sousa, 2014; Thomas, 2017), credible (Amankwaa, 2016), and consistent (Connelly, 2016).

Based on the overall discussion, the effects of *Tawhidic* paradigm on qualitative research inquiry are into several areas, namely the dynamic nature of philosophy, paradigm, ontology, epistemology, and methodology. *Tawhidic* paradigm has important effects on the dynamism of qualitative research. Firstly, *Tawhidic* paradigm is based on revelation provides holistic, comprehensive, and balanced worldview. Secondly, *Tawhidic* paradigm provides dynamism in qualitative research through its logical reasoning guided by the revelation. Thirdly, *Tawhidic* paradigm enables its socioeconomic logical reasoning guided by the sense of duty.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study argues *Tawhidic* paradigm with *ulū al-albāb* enables qualitative research inquiry to reach a higher milestone. The feedback obtained from the informants suggest that there is

tendency and inclination to apply *Tawhidic* paradigm into qualitative research inquiry. Nevertheless, the results of the study are based on personal interview that could not be easily generalized.

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