Article

Improving Teaching Professionals' Satisfaction through the Development of Self-efficacy, Engagement, and Stress Control: A Cross-sectional Study

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Abstract

Purpose It has been observed that teachers face the problems of job satisfaction, self-efficacy and engagement issues. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to identify the relationship between self-efficacy, workspace stress and teachers' engagement to improve job satisfaction. **Methodology** This study adopted quantitative research approach. A cross-sectional research design was selected for data collection. Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) was carried out for data collection. **Findings** The study highlights strategies to help teaching professionals improving their job satisfaction through self-efficacy, engagement and reducing stress levels. **Implications** This study demonstrates that there should be suitable workspace environment for the teachers, to facilitate them with job satisfaction, by providing them logical empowerment to teach in effective method with satisfaction.

Keywords

Teaching professionals, teaching development, job satisfaction, self-efficacy, stress, engagement

The teaching profession is the key factor that supports any plans for social, economic, and cultural development. The effectiveness of learning processes depends on many factors like the level of job satisfaction, self-efficacy, engagement, and stress among teaching professionals. It is time to formulate professional teaching policies that align with the overall governments' strategic plans to enhance teachers' well-being and their motivation level. This paper tries to explore the main factors that affect teaching effectiveness like self-efficacy, engagement, and stress with job satisfaction. In addition, the paper tries to explore the interrelationships between these factors. The current and future happiness of students and other stakeholders depends on the teachers' satisfaction and happiness.

Teachers are the most valuable asset in all universities, schools, and educational institutions. The administration should formulate effective strategies and policies to enhance teachers' satisfaction. The role of administration is to create and maintain a conducive teaching environment to help teachers and other learning parties enhancing the teaching effectiveness by developing teachers' self-efficacy, engagement, and removing stressors. Studies have mentioned that teaching is one of the most respectable occupation, however, teacher may feel uncomfortable, if there is no self-efficacy (MacBeath, 2012; A. B. Smith et al., 2002).

This study is important because it uses strong evidences to address dependent variable to achieve the study objective. This study aims to provide some strategies and practical recommendations to the management of schools, colleges, and educational institutions to enhance the job satisfaction level among teaching professionals by developing their self-efficacy, engagement, and controlling their stress level. This done through research-based evidence, best management practices as well as practical advice.

This study is important because it uses worldwide data collected by quantitative method from one of the most reliable educational bodies "Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS)" around the world. In addition, it also provides findings to reflect the current situation of teaching professionals under the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings of this study will help schools' management to develop their teaching and self-efficacy of teachers, workspace stress and teacher' engagement.

Self-efficacy of Teachers

The ability of teaching professionals to adapt depends on different variables. Although there are some academic researches focused on some of these variables, there is a need to implement empirical studies to explore how these variables interact and change especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. One of these variables is self-efficacy (Multon et al., 1991). The concept of Self-efficacy is defined as peoples' beliefs about what they can do in their profession and how they act in different actions (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007, 2010). This definition of self-efficacy reflects many factors related to the teacher's job like duties, responsibilities, decisions, and abilities. The level of education, skills, capabilities, and experience also help to improve teachers' self-efficacy while doing their jobs. If there are regular training programs for all teaching professionals, this might improve the self-efficacy.

There might be two main categories that affect the self-efficacy. First, the personal factors that relate directly to the teacher's personality, values, perception and attitudes. Administration can monitor these factors on the first stage of selection phases. Selecting the right person for the right job in the right time will help to reduce the impact of the personnel factors on the self-efficacy. Second, the working environment, extrinsic factors like policies, procedures and system of work might also affect the self-efficacy (Dang & Chou, 2019). The creation of a conducive working environment is the role of top management. A regular review and development of the current working environment will help to meet the real needs of all stakeholders and improve the self-efficacy of the teaching professionals (Kowalski, 2003; Noorossana et al., 2021).

The role of the administration at colleges and schools is to understand how to manage teachers' self-efficacy and improve it effectively. All educational goals depend on the teacher's ability to plan, control and organize the learning processes. There are different sources of self-efficacy like the level of experience, task characteristics, and abilities (Bandura et al., 1999). The most influential source of teacher self-efficacy is the previous experiences on activities that are the same as the present activity (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016). This reflects the importance of working experience in the teaching profession. It also shows how the previous experience might shape the present and future of teaching efficiency.

When teachers understand how to manage and control the learning processes effectively and professionally, then they start to add more value to their jobs. In addition, this leads to improving their personnel and social benefits (Bandura, 2000). Different studies have studied the relationship between self-efficacy and job

satisfaction. Majority of these studies found significant correlation (Brouwers & Tomic, 2000; Burić & Moe, 2020; Klassen & Chiu, 2011; Lai & Chen, 2012; Moè et al., 2010; Sarıçam & Sakız, 2014).

Over the years, it is identified that self-efficacy is important for the teaching because in teaching the teacher wants to adopt the study method according to his behavior, and satisfaction because he wants to provide comprehensive knowledge, to a large number of students, and at the same time, he is willing to work in a great way, to develop satisfaction (Regier, 2021). However, at the same time, it is also noted that those individual teachers who are not getting self-efficacy, by the administration they are failed to get job satisfaction due to their limitations in their field. It is due to the reason that they want to get the things done in their way, and they are working to ensure the things and make progress on it. Therefore, the teachers must be motivated for self-efficacy in their teaching method, to, enhance their satisfaction with the job.

Self-efficacy helps to ensure job satisfaction, because it is related to human behavior, and individuals in real-life observe things, and according to his observation, he passes the judgement by his emotions and cognitive association, to reach a conclusion. However, this self-efficacy must be provided to the teacher, and it is the core responsibility of the best and understanding administration to facilitate the teachers for job satisfaction (Bush et al., 2022).

In the jobs of teachers, the lack of job satisfaction is prominent, and at the same time, it is also observed that this job satisfaction is directly related to the observation, and the reaction of teachers according to their understanding, and cognitive association to the workspace (Duyar et al., 2013). In this way, the more self-efficacy would be provided to the teachers, the more they would be motivated to work in a suitable environment, and as the result, they would get job satisfaction. Hence, the hypothesis is stated thus:

H1: *Teacher's self-efficacy improves the job satisfaction*

Engagement of Teachers

The concept of engagement was introduced many years ago in different management researches. It has been used to explain some employee attitudes and how these attitudes are related to organizational outcomes like turnover, absenteeism, and productivity (Macey & Schneider, 2008). It is defined as the process of harnessing of organization's people selves to their duties and work roles (Kahn, 1990). The study on the engagement concept describes the engagement state and does not add the main strategies used by managers to improve employees" engagement. The concept reflects the degree to which individuals are personally committed to helping an organization by doing a better job than what is required to hold the job (Kowalski, 2003). Engagement is always connected to the sustainable level of workload, feelings of choice and control, appropriate recognition and reward, a supportive work community, fairness and justice, and meaningful and valued work (Saks & Gruman, 2014).

Many authors have studied the impact of employee engagement on job satisfaction and performance. In the teaching profession, studies have mentioned the main components of engagement which include the individual teacher characteristics; school demographics, and organizational features of the school (Rutter & Jacobson, 1986). The core of a teacher's engagement might include many activities like designing the learning activities, facilitation of instruction, motivating students. These behaviors reflect the level of teachers' satisfaction and engagement while doing their jobs (Al-Shammari, 2021; Borup et al., 2014; Jermsittiparsert, 2021).

Organization should formulate a clear engagement strategy to address the motivation, organizational identification and organizational commitment. Administration should help all employees to feeling attached to their organization and dedicated to their work. This done through effective administration strategy that align with the school and college strategy. When teaching professionals feel engaged, this might lead to improve their job satisfaction and performance. Different studies have found a significant correlation between teacher's engagement and the level of job satisfaction (Granziera & Perera, 2019; Han et al., 2020; V. E. Lee et al., 1991; Perera et al., 2018; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2014).

Teachers' engagement is also important because, if they present their mental and emotional attachment to their workspace behavior, and pattern to adopt, and deal with them (Fiorilli et al., 2019). In this regard, it is noted that the teachers who are full-time engaged with their work, and they are provided with the opportunity to understand the things and working interestingly, then it would be possible for them, to get satisfaction by their job (Mårtensson, 2020). Similarly, the level of engagement in the teacher increases, as result, their satisfaction increases (Bekale, 2021; A. Smith & Smalley, 2018).

On the other hand, it is also noted that teachers who are not satisfied with their jobs are less interested because they are not mentally or emotionally attached to the workspace environment, and due to this reason, they

lack the influence of their behavior, on the way, of their success in the terms of a job. In this regard, job engagement is important to provide a comprehensive understanding to the teachers to develop a sustainable relationship with their work environment and get job satisfaction (Alshuaybat, 2021; B. Lee et al., 2013). The second hypothesis of the study thus runs as follows:

H2: *Teacher's engagement improves the job satisfaction*

Stress of Teacher

Stress has a direct impact on employees' physical and mental health as well as their behaviour, performance and relationships with each other. Acute stress considered as the main causes of long-term absenteeism rate at organisation. It might affect employees mentally in many forms like anxiety, depression, and physically illness. The concept of stress in the teaching profession has been covered in different studies. Teacher stress is defined as the overall experience of teaching professionals of unpleasant emotions and events resulting in the working environment. The majority of these studies mentioned that teaching was one of the most stressful job (Kokkinos, 2007; Kyriacou, 1987). There is a need to conduct empirical studies on the impact of stress on the teaching profession, especially during the COVD-19 pandemic. The previous studies on teacher stress have provided different pieces of evidence of the main causes for stress. This evidence should be studied empirically to explore their impact on the teaching profession.

The role of administration at colleges and schools is to create a decent working environment where people interact and react without negative stressors. In addition, it is good practice to review and evaluate the main components of the working environment and involving all people to participate proactively. These stressors might change from time to time according to the environmental changes. Today, teachers faced with different implications of the COVID-19 pandemic that might add another important stressor to the future of the teaching profession.

Administration at schools and colleges can adopt different strategies to help people managing their stress. If this not happens, there will be a negative impact on teaching professionals. Administration should treat all employees and professional staff as human being and help them to create work-life balance while doing their jobs.

The main causes of stress at work include different factors. The workload is one of these factors. Some organizations fail to distribute their tasks fairly and equally among employees. Management should analyze and schedule job's tasks to help employees at schools and colleges feel of high satisfaction and little stress. There are additional sources of stress like management style adopted by the schools' leaders. A participative and democratic management style helps to improve the feeling of engagement and commitment. School management should involve teachers in the decision-making process.

Some studies have found correlations between the teacher's self-efficacy and the level of stress. It suggested eliminating stressors from the teaching environment to improve the teacher's engagement, satisfaction, and performance (Kyriacou, 1987). The majority of studies found a significant correlation between job stress and level of job satisfaction among teaching professions (Borg & Riding, 1991; Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1979; M. Smith & Bourke, 1992). When the teachers are suffering from stress and anxiety issues, then it would be completely difficult for them to develop their performance in their teaching (Ogbuanya & Yekinni, 2021). From this perspective, it is observed that stress and anxiety, are playing a prominent role in shaping the level of satisfaction of teachers when it comes to their job satisfaction (Hiep et al., 2021; Prewett & Whitney, 2021).

There are some teachers with emotional stability, they are getting the highest satisfaction from their jobs contrary to the teachers who are no emotional stability, but they are suffering from a different crisis to survive in the workspace mentally and psychologically (Melhe et al., 2021; Torsney et al., 2019). Indeed, an individual can't divorce the emotions, then at the same time, it is difficult to avoid stress and mental pressure in the workspace of job satisfaction (Taylor et al., 2019). The third hypothesis of the study runs thus:

H3: *Teacher's level of stress negatively impacts the job satisfaction*

Job Satisfaction of Teachers

Job satisfaction is one of the most important factors that affect learning goals directly. Teachers' job satisfaction is defined by Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2011) as the affective reactions to their work and their teaching role and responsibilities. It is defined as any combination of psychological, physiological, and environmental

circumstances that cause a person to say "I am satisfied with my job" (Hoppock, 1935). The concept is also defined as the affective orientation of employees toward their work roles (Ryan, 2021; Vroom, 1964). These definitions reflect the importance of job design to enhance teachers' satisfaction in their jobs.

Different factors shaped the level of teacher satisfaction like the working environment, teacher's perception, and cooperation with others (Ilyas & Afzal, 2021; Toropova et al., 2021). According to the motivation-hygiene theory, job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction produced by different work factors that include hygiene factors and motivators (Herzberg, 1974). Some of these factors improve the level of satisfaction and called motivators, while the others cause job dissatisfaction and called hygiene.

In the teaching profession, different factors cause satisfaction and dissatisfaction for teaching professionals like the level of interactions with students, relationships with other colleagues, and opportunities to participate in the growth of individuals and the development of society (Zembylas & Papanastasiou, 2006). The role of administration understands all these factors, create, and maintain a conducive working environment that encourages teachers to produce and innovate at their jobs. Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework according to the literature review:
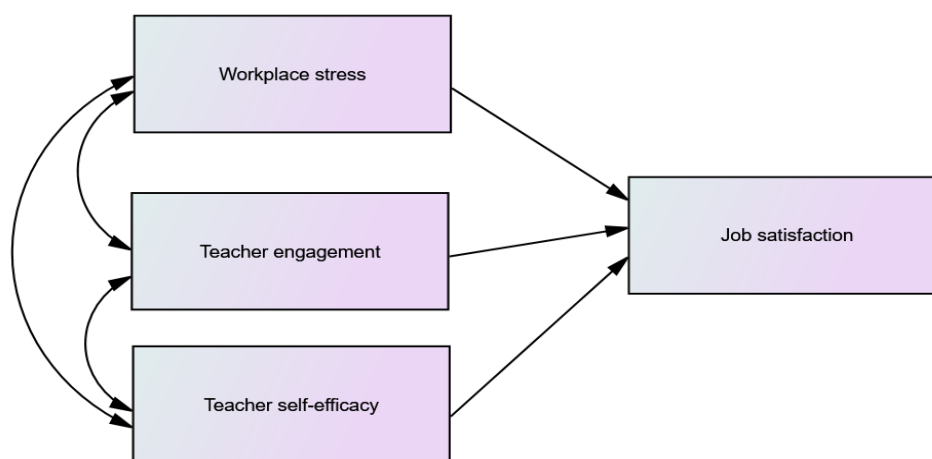

Figure 1: *Conceptual Framework*

Methodology

Procedures

This study is an empirical study that uses a cross-sectional design method. It uses international quantitative data of the Teaching and Learning International Survey TALIS (2019) a survey that has surveyed more than 1,000 teachers in nearly 20 countries and economies. The sample size of the TALIS survey was 10 schools per country. The instruments used by TALIS to collect the data consisted of two questionnaires, one for teachers and one for school principals.

The study surveyed lower secondary schools in all countries, the survey provides insights about the conditions in which teachers work and, more importantly, their perspectives on a wider range of educational matters. In addition, TALIS investigates the professional characteristics of teachers that influence their practices and performance.

Questionnaires and Instruments

The data was collected via online questionnaire (main data collection mode) as well as paper questionnaires administered to sampled teachers and their principals. The sample size in this study was 1000 teachers. The minimum school participation rate was 50% with a minimum teacher's participation rate was 55%. The main variables of this study measured by TALIS included job satisfaction, self-efficacy, engagement, and stress. Statistics of the study variables and correlational values between the dependent variable job satisfaction and the independent variable self-efficacy, engagement, and stress analyzed by SPSS, 22 as provided by TALIS database.

The main components of the job satisfaction dimension used by TALIS were teacher's satisfaction with target class autonomy, teacher's satisfaction with work environment, and teacher satisfaction with profession. The main components of the self-efficacy dimension used by TALIS are teacher's self-efficacy in classroom management, teacher's self-efficacy in instruction, teacher's self-efficacy in students' engagement, and teacher's self-efficacy in multi-cultural classroom.

The main components of the teacher engagement dimension used by TALIS were teacher's engagement with target class autonomy, working environment, and teacher the teaching profession.

The main components of the job stress dimension used by TALIS are teacher's reaction and perception with target class autonomy, work environment, and teacher teaching profession's challenges.

Results

First, this study examined the reliability and validity. Reliability was examined with the help of Cronbach alpha. According to literature, Cronbach alpha must be higher than 0.7. Table 1 shows that all the variables have Cronbach alpha above 0.7. Additionally, data statistics are also given in Table 1. Furthermore, validity is examined with the help of square root of average variance extracted (AVE). It is highlighted in Table 2. The achievement of reliability and validity allowed the current study to proceed further to examine the relationship between variables.

Table 1. *Data Statistics and Cronbach Alpha*

Mean	Std. Deviation	Variables	Cronbach Alpha
3.406	0.542	Teacher self-efficacy	0.791
3.465	0.618	Teacher engagement	0.821
3.752	0.677	Teacher stress	0.715
3.151	0.591	Job satisfaction	0.758

Table 2. *Validity*

Variables	Teacher self-efficacy	Teacher engagement	Teacher stress	Job satisfaction
Teacher self-efficacy	0.689			
Teacher engagement	0.562	0.562		
Teacher stress	0.621	0.598	0.523	
Job satisfaction	0.456	0.725	0.389	0.689

Correlation Analysis

The correlation analysis results between the variables of this study are presented in Table 3. Regarding the relationship between teacher's self-efficacy and job satisfaction, the study finds that teachers' self-efficacy is positively correlated with the level of job satisfaction ($\beta = .241$, $p < .01$). This result supports hypothesis (1) which states that teacher's self-efficacy improves job satisfaction. The role of administration at schools and colleges is to enhance teacher' beliefs about what they can do in their teaching profession and how they act in different actions. Management should involve teachers in decision-making and create an effective participation polices at work. Management should review the teaching roles, duties and responsibilities regularly to ensure the quality of teaching activities.

Table 3 also shows a significant correlation existing between teachers' engagement and the level of their job satisfaction ($\beta = .281$, $p < .01$). This result supports hypothesis (2) which states that Teacher engagement improves job satisfaction. Table 3 also shows a negative correlation between the teacher's stress and the level of job satisfaction ($\beta = -.039$, $p < .01$). This finding support hypothesis (3) which states that Teacher's level of stress negatively affects job satisfaction.

It is the responsibility of administration to enhance the pleasant emotions of teaching professionals through effective programs and events as well as a conducive working environment. The management should review regularly the sources of stressors. This can be done by involving all teaching professionals. Management can use regular surveys to collect data about the main causes of stress. Administration should formulate an effective strategy to eliminate the causes of stress among teaching professionals. In addition, especial care for the working environment need to consider by the top management.

Table 3. *Correlation Matrix*

		Teacher self-efficacy	Teacher engagement	Teacher stress	Job satisfaction
Teacher self-efficacy	Pearson Correlation	1	.281**	-.039**	.241**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	37110	36989	36888	36785
Teacher engagement	Pearson Correlation	.281**	1	-.032**	.209**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	36989	37190	36940	36834
Teacher stress	Pearson Correlation	-.039**	-.032**	1	-.282**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	36888	36940	37101	36894
Job satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.241**	.209**	-.282**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	36785	36834	36894	36974

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Discussion and Conclusion

Based on the data obtained by TALIS from about 50 different countries around the globe, the relationships between teaching professionals' self-efficacy and the level of job satisfaction analyzed and presented in the findings of this study. This study finds that teaching professionals' self-efficacy has a significant and positive relationship with job satisfaction. This finding is supported by many studies (Adebomi et al., 2012; Caprara et al., 2006; Klassen & Chiu, 2010). Therefore, it is highly recommended for administration at schools, colleges, and educational institutions to help the teaching professionals improving their self-efficacy. This can be done through the provision of professionals training programs to create strong beliefs, attitudes, and values among teaching professionals about their tasks, duties, and responsibilities.

In addition, administration can use different types of incentives to attain this objective. It is highly recommended to involve the teaching professionals in the development committees and provide them with indirect incentives for their contributions. This practical advice will help teachers to improve their self-efficacy when they start to believe in their value especially in the decisions making processes related to learning and administrative activities. Today, many schools and colleges have started to adopt this participative management style to improve the overall performance. Teachers with high self-efficacy can observe a link between their teaching effort and performance and their rewards.

The study also finds that the teaching professionals' engagement has a significant relationship with the level of job satisfaction. This finding is supported by different studies (Høigaard et al., 2012; Klassen et al., 2012; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2013, 2014). It is highly recommended to use effective administration strategies, policies, and procedures in the main administration functions like recruitment, selection, training, and reward. People's engagement will improve through fair and consistent decisions in the working environment.

By providing competitive rewards as an example, all teaching professionals will feel high satisfaction, engagement and they decide to retain for long years. In addition, administration should design meaningful jobs for all teachers to improve their engagement and commitment. In addition, this study finds a negative correlation between the teacher's stress and the level of job satisfaction. This finding is supported by many studies (Borg & Falzon, 1989; Chaplain, 1995; Collie et al., 2012; Klassen et al., 2010; Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 1979; Nathaniel et al., 2016). The role of administration at schools and colleges is to act in a socially responsible way in order to provide all teachers with a good quality-working environment. This might lead to reducing any negative impact of stress like dissatisfaction, illness, and high turnover.

Administration should also pay much attention to the job design, performance standards setting, career development, effective performance management, effective training, and counseling programs. This practical advice might lead to manage the level of stress effectively. The administration managers at schools should create

and sustain a decent working environment especially during the COVID-19 taking into consideration all working standards, procedures, precautions as advised by the international health and safety professional bodies. Teachers should feel of working in a healthy and safe environment and protected against any dangerous, diseases, illness, or infections. This might lead to reduce the overall stress of teaching professionals and improve job satisfaction.

On the other hand, it is also a fact that when logical empowerment is provided to the teachers by the administration, it would be suitable for the teachers to design their working method and implement it, to get the best results. However, this logical empowerment should be in the defined limitation, and the administration should supervisor, it because it is also noted that in the cases where the logical empowerment is provided to the teachers sometimes, it is used by mismanagement, and in result, all the things collapse. However, if this logical empowerment is working in a well-organized way, and the teacher are contributing to enhancing the teaching experience by scheduling and designing their study method and the mode of teaching, then it would be fine for them to deliver the knowledge appropriately. It is highly recommended that the teachers must be provided with the logical empowerment to improve their teaching skills and get the job satisfaction to be in mentally order to deal with such kind of things in the education system.

In the same way, self-efficacy is important for the teachers, because when they are provided with the opportunities to achieve in themself, and understand the situation to deal with, in result, they provide the best opportunities to understand the situation, and at the same time, they are more relax and attractive to their job, because their work experience is great. In this regard, it is the effect that self-efficacy must be a priority for the teachers, to understand the situation and do all the work in the best and attractive way for their job satisfaction as well as their delivery of education in the institutions.

Implications and recommendations

This study has theoretical importance because no study earlier has considered, stress to understand the behavior of teachers according to job satisfaction. Also, this study provides the relationship between different variables that would be helpful for future studies. This study has practical implications because to enhance the job satisfaction for the teachers, the administration should play a key role while having the responsibility to provide appropriate resources, and increments to the teacher to develop his positive behavior by maintaining long term relationships, with him and reducing health stress level. At the same time, another implication of this study is that the administration should provide a suitable environment in which the teacher should work and develop their self-efficacy, to maintain job satisfaction.

Importantly, this study considered teachers' engagement with the student, and the activities in the academic institute as important to make sure the teachers are getting their job satisfaction, and they are working in a comfortable environment and due to these all factors their productivity is increased. Educational institutes are working to maintain the integrity, and unity to provide the environment that would be suitable for the teachers to work. However, in this regard, the institutes that are failed to work on these issues, required to improve the overall things to provide a comfortable way to provide their services (Matzkin, 2022). This study emphasizes that the teachers must be provided with the opportunity to access to their job satisfaction like improve their way of teaching. This study is based on the role of self-efficacy, teachers' engagement, and stress at the workplace, in order to discuss teachers' job satisfaction. However, the future studies should identify the role of learners' attitude, and administrations' rules to understand the teachers' job satisfaction.

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