

The Impact of Reward and Punishment on Teachers' Job Performance in Federal Unity Colleges in Southwest, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated the impact of reward and punishment on teachers' job performance and, consequently, improve students' academic performance. The study employed a descriptive research design, specifically a survey type. The sample consisted of twelve (12) colleges and two hundred and forty teachers on Grade Level 10 and above. The instrument, Reward, Punishment, and Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire (RPTJPQ), was used to obtain data. Descriptive statistics (percentages) were used to analyse research questions. The findings revealed that the levels of application of reward and punishment, as well as teachers' job performance, were high, with average ratings of 69.2%, 68.5%, and 76.2%, in Federal Unity Colleges in the Southwestern region of Nigeria. The study concludes that the fair and consistent application of reward and punishment can significantly enhance teachers' job performance if applied fairly, justly, and consistently by school management. The study recommends, among others, that teachers should be promoted as and when due without further delay and that the Federal Civil Service Commission resolve the stagnation caused by service elongation for teachers in these colleges. Community support should be encouraged to create a more reliable source of funding to reward teachers, and opportunities for in-service training and professional development should be provided.

Keywords: Reward, Punishment, Teachers' Job Performance, Federal Unity Colleges

Introduction

The school, like other social organisations is established to attain specific predetermined objectives. The attainment of these objectives depends mainly on the quality of the teachers and how effectively and efficiently they perform their jobs. The goals of the school cannot be achieved alone by the school principals; thus he/she need the cooperation of the teachers so that they can exhibit desired behaviours that would enhance attainment of the school objectives. According to Kadiri and Jayen (2021), the two fundamental factors that influence employees' behaviour in a work setting are reward or incentives and punishment. While rewards are a form of recognition and appreciation given by an organisation to its employees for specific job performance or achievement, punishment, on the other hand, is a form of sanction that an employee receives for failing to meet a predetermined performance standard or exhibiting undesirable behaviours that are inimical to the success of the organisation.

Though provision of secondary education is not part of items in the exclusive list of the Federal Government of Nigeria, the need to set a standard in the area of secondary education for other states to emulate made the then Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, move the idea for the establishment of Federal Government Colleges, otherwise known as Federal Unity Colleges in Nigeria. There are one hundred and fifteen (115) Federal Unity Colleges in Nigeria, with each state having at least three colleges. The predominantly boarding, made up of single sex and mixed-sex, comprising male and female. Some are technically oriented, with each state having at least one out of the three as a Science and Technical College. Apart from the general objectives of secondary education as stated in the National Policy on Education (2014), which are: preparation for higher education and preparation for practical living within the society, the objectives of Federal Unity Colleges, as stipulated by Ibukun and Balogun (2017) is to provide total education; promote mutual understanding and tolerance among people from varying ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds; enrich the value of patriotism and national unity; promote the pursuit of excellence in achievement and moral values; bring Nigerian children together so that they can develop a sense of unity as they appreciate each other's culture; and serve as models in every aspect of secondary education provision.

Omoyele (2024) reported that these colleges were very significant in the past, as many notable Nigerians are products of these colleges. He explained further that many concerned parents and stakeholders have expressed concern over the low level of students' academic performance in the Senior School Certificate Examination, as many of them could not achieve five credit passes, including English Language and Mathematics, which is the mandatory entry qualification for tertiary education. He stressed further that parents complained of spending extra money for their children to retake their papers after having already invested a significant amount in them over the past six years in these colleges. He concluded that these colleges were characterised by problems such as inadequate staff motivation and indiscipline on the part of both staff and students. Irregular attendance of teachers in the classroom and school, conflict between principals and teachers, irregular promotion of teachers, inadequate training and seminars for teachers and appointment of those at the Ministry of Education as principals at the expense of those in the school.

Most of these problems centred on the teachers, which means they are either not adequately rewarded or punished for their actions, resulting in poor job performance and jeopardising the academic performance of the students. The focus of this study, therefore, is to examine the effect of reward and punishment on teachers' job performance in Federal Unity Colleges in South-West, Nigeria. Successful governments had made efforts to improve the effectiveness of these colleges. For instance, former President Muhammadu Buhari extended the retirement age of teachers to sixty-five years, with forty years of service required, and also employed more teachers as a means of improving their job performance. It is therefore necessary to examine how fairly, justly and consistently rewards and punishments are applied and their consequent effect on teachers' job performance and students' academic performance. Several studies have shown that giving strict punishment for undesirable behaviours can improve teachers' job performance, and adequate rewards can boost employee performance.

The Concept of Reward

Reward refers to a form of recognition and appreciation given by an organisation to its employees for a job well done or an achievement. Alabi and Saidu (2019) described reward as anything that workers prefer in return for their contribution to the organisation, which, if granted, will always propel them to deliver their duties as effectively and efficiently as possible. Yusuf et al. (2023) defined reward as a form of compensation that an organisation gives to its employees in recognition of their positive contributions to the organisation's success. They explained that rewards can be in monetary terms, such as wages and salaries, bonuses, or in non-monetary terms, including verbal appreciation, public recognition, awards, and the issuance of a certificate of excellence. They concluded that rewards, either in monetary or non-monetary terms, serve as motivation for the employees to render their services in the interest of the organisation.

Syahmalini and Mummar (2022) pinpointed that rewards can only be effective when used judiciously and in collaboration with other motivational strategies. They argued that rewards should be used as informational feedback instead of controlling contingencies so that a balance can be struck between the use of rewards and the cultivation of intrinsic motivation, autonomy and a love for the job they are doing. Rashadi et al (2024) reported that rewards can be intrinsic or extrinsic. According to them, intrinsic rewards are those obtained from within the individuals and include feelings of pride and satisfaction with achievement, enjoyment of learning a new skill, valued and respected, etc. The extrinsic rewards are those that come from outside the individual, including bonuses, salary increments, promotions, and gifts. Therefore, irrelevant rewards should be avoided, and the criteria for receiving rewards should be clearly made known to all employees. Additionally, rewards must be frequent and consistently given to all deserving employees, ensuring they remain committed to their job performance and contributing to the organisation's success.

The Concept of Punishment

Punishment in this context refers to the use of disciplinary measures to discourage or correct undesirable behaviours among employees or teachers, to improve their job performance and enhance the success of the school as a social organisation. Nyinamasiko and Etoru (2022) described punishment as a form of corrective method that an organisation uses to decrease or eliminate unwanted behaviours that can hinder the achievement of the school's objectives. They emphasised that punishment is used as a tool to maintain discipline in the school and to ensure that both staff and students comply with existing rules and procedures, allowing them to discharge their duties efficiently for the betterment of the school. Fahleyi and Rahadi (2024) defined punishment as the application of unpleasant consequences or the removal of pleasant ones by a supervisor or manager to employees under their supervision, in response to undesirable or unacceptable behaviours or performance. They went further that negative or unpleasant consequences include things such as, verbal or written warnings, query, salary reduction, demotion, promotion delay, suspension, work without pay and termination of appointment depending on the gravity of the offence. It is evident from the above that punishment, when applied justly with fairness, without any form of favouritism or partiality, will encourage teachers to discharge their duties effectively, leading to a high level of job performance. It is therefore worth noting that school administrators should ensure that punishment given is commensurate with the level of violation or disobedience and that

punishment should be applied consistently regardless of who commits the offence, so that negative behaviours can be reduced while compliance with the rules will increase, which will positively impact the success of the school.

The Concept of Teachers' Job Performance

Performance is a concept that explains the work outcomes achieved by a person or group of people in an organisation in relation to the duties and responsibilities assigned. Milwa and Kulwa (2022) described teachers' job performance as the outcome of the work (teaching process carried out by the teachers, which shows how well they have carried out their duties to enhance the achievement of the school goals. Teachers' job performance refers to the degree to which teachers can carry out a particular responsibility assigned to them by a specified standard to attain the school's objectives. It should be noted, however, that a teacher's job is not static. According to Bwalla and Adenigba (2021), teachers' jobs change over time. They emphasised that newly employed teachers may have different levels of performance compared to experienced teachers. This justified the need to have a system in place to assess teachers' job performance continuously. There is no doubt that experienced teachers perform better than the new ones. The Federal Government of Nigeria realised this, and in 2021, President Muhammadu Buhari signed into law the service elongation bill, extending the service period for teachers in the Federal Unity Colleges to sixty-five (65) years, as a way to improve the quality of teaching and learning, as well as enhance students' academic performance. Shah et al. (2021) viewed teachers' job performance as a process through which teachers can achieve a maximum level of their job in order to attain the school's objectives.

Noorazem et al. (2021) equally described teachers' job performance as encompassing the entire classroom management, effective teaching, teacher motivation, good teamwork, as well as school and classroom punctuality. They stressed further that teachers' job performance is the extent to which teachers can accomplish the objectives of the school through adequate lesson preparations which has to do with marking, workable scheme of work, lesson plans, record of work done, actual classroom teaching, assessment and evaluation of learners, attending staff meetings, involvement in co-curricular activities, managing learners' discipline counselling and guidance. They concluded that the success of any school depends to a large extent on how teachers efficiently and effectively perform their jobs. Thus, they suggested that teachers should be motivated through an adequate reward and punishment system so that their job performance can be enhanced in order to attain the school's objectives. Pradhem (2022) supported this when he asserted that no organisation can grow and develop beyond the quality of its employees; therefore, the employees need to be encouraged to put in their best performance through an adequate reward system mechanism to appropriately motivate the employees for them to consistently put in their best for the betterment of the organisation.

Relationship between Reward, Punishment and Teachers' Job Performance

A reward and punishment system, when adequately applied by the school administrators, has the potential to revolutionise teachers' job performance as well as school effectiveness. This is because rewards and punishments greatly motivate employees to put in their best effort in any job assigned to them in the interest of the organisation. (Wibowo et al, 2022). Yusuf et al. (2023) investigated ways to improve teachers' performance in secondary schools by implementing a reward and punishment system. They discovered a significant relationship

between reward, punishment effectiveness and teachers' job performance in secondary schools. They concluded that teachers as social being needed to be adequately rewarded for their contributions towards the success of the school and that these rewards should be made known to them so that they can put in their best. They also concluded that behaviours found to be inimical to the success of the school should be sanctioned with every sense of seriousness to serve as a deterrent and encourage compliance with standard rules or behaviours among the teachers and other members of staff.

Makule and Otieno (2024) examined the influence of incentives on teachers' job performance in secondary schools in Tanzania and found that incentives have a substantial positive impact on teachers' job performance. Specifically, teachers in schools where incentives or rewards are adequately awarded tend to perform better than those in poorly rewarded schools. They concluded that the effects of the incentives on teachers' job performance were reflected in the academic performance of the students. According to their findings, students' academic performance in highly incentive schools was better than that in low-incentive schools in Tanzania. Additionally, Azazu (2023) in his study titled "Investigation within Real Estate Firms" found that an adequate incentive mechanism is a greater determinant of employees' job performance and satisfaction. He therefore recommended that every organisation must put in place a consistent incentive or reward system to boost employee morale, so that they can consistently and genuinely put in their best effort in any job assigned to them, thereby facilitating the accomplishment of organisational goals.

Syahmalin and Muammar (2022) conducted a study on the effect of reward and punishment systems and work culture on teachers' job satisfaction and discovered that rewards and punishments have a significant relationship with teachers' performance and satisfaction. They concluded that both must be positively applied before they can positively influence teachers' job performance and satisfaction. They recommended, among others, that school administrators should be adequately trained in the area of effective and efficient application of reward and punishment, as they are one of the key mechanisms that can motivate and encourage teachers to improve their job performance, ultimately benefiting students, the school, and education in general. Kadiri and Joyen (2021) also found a significant relationship between reward, punishment, and lecturers' job performance in the Economic High School of Banjarmasin. They concluded that no school can fully accomplish its objectives in the absence of an adequate reward and punishment system because employees will not put in their best except they are encouraged, and many may exhibit undesired behaviours unless there are strong sanctions against such actions. They recommended that lecturers should be well rewarded for their positive contributions, while the erring ones should be properly sanctioned according to rules, so that they can consistently put in their best in carrying out duties assigned to them and desist from undesired behaviours in the interest of the institution.

Nyinamasiko and Etoru (2022) investigated the relationship between teachers' rewards and performances in a case study of selected secondary schools in Kabale. They found that rewards have a significant impact on teachers' performance. They stressed that teachers' job performance was higher in schools with an adequate reward system than in those with an inadequate one. They concluded that an adequate reward system is one of the crucial mechanisms for improving teachers' job performance in secondary schools. Therefore, school administrators and other stakeholders should ensure that teachers are adequately rewarded

through prompt payment of salaries, regular promotions, awards of recognition, financial incentives, and national awards, so that they can continually perform their duties diligently for the betterment of the school.

There is no doubt that reward and punishment have significant effects on teachers' job performance, but the application of this mechanism (reward and punishment) varies from one organisation to another, depending on the leadership quality. It is therefore pertinent to find out the level of teachers' job performance and the effects of reward and punishment on teachers' job performance as a tool to improve students' academic performance in Federal Unity Colleges in the Southwest, Nigeria, based on the clamour of parents and other stakeholders.

Purpose of the Study

The objective of the study was to find out the relationship between reward, punishment and teachers' job performance in Federal Unity Colleges in South-West, Nigeria, Specifically, the study aimed at:

1. Finding out the level of application of reward and punishment as well as teachers' job performance in Federal Unity Colleges in South-West, Nigeria.
2. Finding out the standard type of reward and punishment that are applied in Federal Unity Colleges in South-West, Nigeria.
3. Finding out if these rewards and punishments' justly and fairly application has any significant relationship with teachers' job performance in Federal Unity Colleges in South-West, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised in the study:

1. What is the level of reward, punishment and teachers' job performance in Federal Unity Colleges in South-West, Nigeria?
2. What are the common types of reward and punishment applied in Federal Unity Colleges in South-West, Nigeria?
3. Does the just and fairly application of reward and punishment have any significant relationship with teachers' job performance in Federal Unity Colleges in South-West, Nigeria?

Methodology

A descriptive research design of the survey type was employed for the study. The population of the study consists of Nineteen (19) Federal Unity Colleges, two thousand one hundred and ninety-six (2,196) teachers on Grade Level 10 and above in Federal Unity Colleges in South-West, Nigeria. The sample was made up of twelve (12) colleges and two hundred and forty teachers on Grade Level 10 and above. A simple random sampling technique was employed to select two colleges from each of the six southwestern states. A proportional stratified sampling technique was used, with the assistance of the college administrative staff, to select male and female teachers. A purposive sampling technique was used to select some teachers who had served for over sixty years. A questionnaire titled Reward, Punishment and Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire (RPTJPQ) was used to obtain data from the 240 respondents.

The investigator interacted equally verbally with the respondents to get specific information from them about the study, which formed part of the discussion of the findings. Two experts validated the instrument, and the reliability testing was done through the test-retest method by correlating two sets of responses in the pilot study. A correlation coefficient score of 0.79 was obtained. Hence, the instrument was adjudged reliable. The instrument was administered during a personal visit by the researcher, with the assistance of three research assistants. A simple percentage was used to answer the research questions.

Results and Discussions

The results and discussion of the findings of the study are presented below:

Table 1:

Level of Teachers' Job Performance

S/N	Components of Teachers' Job Performance	N	Max. Score	Min. Score	Obtained Score	Mean	Percentage %
1.	Regularity and Punctuality in the School	240	1200	240	962	4.01	80.1
2.	Regularity and Punctuality in the Classroom	240	1200	240	1,013	4.22	84.4
3.	Involvement in Co-curricular Activities	240	1200	240	964	4.02	80.3
4.	Adequate Preparation of Lesson Plan and Scheme of Work	240	1200	240	995	4.15	82.9
5.	Assessment of Students through Test and Examination	240	1200	240	1,019	4.23	84.9
6.	Enforcement of Student Discipline	240	1200	240	890	3.71	74.2
7.	Involvement in Guidance and Counselling Service	240	1200	240	902	3.75	75.2
8.	Team Work Among Colleagues	240	1200	240	784	3.27	65.3
9.	Promotion of School-Community Relations	240	1200	240	792	3.30	66.0
10	Implementation of Educational Policies	140	1200	240	828	3.45	69.0
OVERALL AVERAGE		240	1200	240	914.9	2.81	76.2

For straightforward interpretation of the above table and subsequent ones in simple percentage, this Likert Scale should be noted as dictated by the scale stated initially in the methodology, Very High (VH) = 81-100, High (H) = 61-80, Moderate (M) = 41-60, Low (L) = 21-40 and Very Low (VL) = 1-20. From table 1 above, the present level of teachers, Job performance in the area of punctuality and regularity in the school was very high 80.1%, in the area of punctuality and regularity in the classroom was very high, 84.4%, in the area of involvement in co-curricular activities was very high, 80.3, in the area of adequate preparation of lesson

plan and scheme of work was very high, 82.9%, assessment of students through test and examination was equally very high, 84.9%, enforcement of discipline among students was high, 74.2%, involvement in students' guidance and counseling services was high, 75.2%, team work among colleagues was 65.3%, promotion of school-community relations was high, 66% and involvement in implementation of educational policies was high, 69%. The average score of teachers' job performance was high, 76.2%. Considering the above rating, as indicated by the responses of teachers in Federal Unity Colleges in South-West, Nigeria, it implies that the present level of teachers' job performance in achieving the objectives of the Federal Unity Colleges in South-West, Nigeria, was high.

Table 2

Fairly, Justly and Consistent Application of Reward

S/N	Types of Reward/Incentives Applied	N	Max. Score	Min. Score	Obtained Score	Mean	Percentage %
1.	Prompt Payment of Salaries	240	1200	240	980	4.08	81.7
2.	Promotion	240	1200	240	750	3.12	62.5
3.	Recognition during Speech and Prize Ceremonies	240	1200	240	880	3.11	73.3
4.	National Award	240	1200	240	650	2.71	54.11
5.	End of the Year Gifts	240	1200	240	1004	4.18	86.7
6.	Appointment for Duty Posts	240	1200	240	799	3.32	66.6
7.	Financial Gifts by PTA and the Principals	240	1200	240	747	3.11	62.3
OVERALL AVERAGE		240	1200	240	830	3.46	69.2

Table 2 above reveals how fairly, justly, and consistently rewards or incentives were applied in the colleges, based on the respondents' responses. Promotion received 62.5%, prompt payment of salaries 81.7%, which is very high, recognition during speeches and prize ceremonies 73.3%, national award 54.9%, end-of-year gifts 86.7%, which is also very high, appointment to a duty post 66.6%, and financial gifts 62.3%. The average rating score for just, fairly and consistent application of reward or incentive was 69.2%. Considering the above rating, as indicated by the responses of the teachers in these colleges, it implies that the influence of rewards on the teachers' job performance in achieving the objectives of Federal Government Colleges in South-West, Nigeria, was high.

Table 3*Fairly, Justly and Consistent Application of Punishment*

S/N	Types of Punishment Applied	N	Max. Score	Min. Score	Obtained Score	Mean	Percentage %
1.	Query	240	1200	240	782	3.26	65.2
2.	Verbal Warning/Warning Letter	240	1200	240	901	3.75	75.1
3.	Suspension	240	1200	240	761	3.17	63.4
4.	Demotion	240	1200	240	839	3.50	69.9
5.	Promotion Delay/Withheld	240	1200	240	860	3.58	71.7
6.	Reduction in Salary	240	1200	240	833	3.47	69.4
7.	Termination of Appointment	240	1200	240	780	3.25	65.8
OVERALL AVERAGE		240	1200	240	822.33	3.43	68.5

Table 3 above illustrates how punishments were applied fairly, justly, and consistently in these colleges. The query was rated 65.2%, verbal warning and warning letter 75.1%, suspension 63.4%, demotion 69.9%, promotion delay or withholding 71.7%, reduction in salary 69.4%, and termination of appointment 65.0%. On average, these colleges were rated 68.5% in the area of fairly, justly, and consistently applying punishment as the case arises, based on the responses of the respondents. It thus implies that the influence of punishment on teachers' job performance in achieving the objectives of Federal Unity Colleges in South-West, Nigeria, was high.

Discussion of Findings

The study revealed that the most commonly applied rewards or incentives in Federal Unity Colleges in South-West Nigeria by the Federal Ministry of Education being the proprietor, the college principals and Parent Teacher Association are; prompt payment of salaries, recognition during speech and prize ceremonies, national awards, end of the year gifts, appointment for duty posts such as Principals and Vice Principals and financial gifts. Commonly applied punishment as revealed by the study also includes: verbal and written warnings, query, demotion, suspension, promotion delay or withheld reduction in salary and termination of appointment. This corroborates the assertions of Fahleyi and Rahadi (2024). The national award was rated lowest, followed by promotion with 54.1% and 62.5% respectively. Interaction with the respondents revealed that promotions have not been regular and have remained stagnant since the commencement of service year elongation in 2021. The majority of those on Grade Level 14, 15, and 16, most of whom are the beneficiaries of service year elongation, were not promoted since 2021, and this may hinder their job performance and may invariably affect students' academic performance, which constitute the primary reason that made former president Muhammadu Buhari to initiate and approved the elongation of teachers' years of service. The procedure for the national award was cumbersome, and most of the teachers are not satisfied with the beneficiaries most of the time.

The levels of reward, punishment, and teachers' job performance were high, with average scores of 69.2%, 68.5%, and 76.2%, respectively. Thus, a significant relationship was found between reward, punishment, and teachers' job performance in Federal Unity Colleges in the

South-West, Nigeria. This finding corroborates the findings of Wibowo et al (2002); Kadiri and Jayen (2022); Syahmalin and Muammar (2022); Nyinamasiko and Etoru (2022); Pentiwi and Fehrianti (2022); Azazu (2023), Yusuf et al (2023); Fahleyi and Rahadi (2024) and Makule and Otieno (2024), which stressed a strong relationship between reward, punishment and teachers' job performance. While reward propelled the teachers to work harder to achieve better results, consequences of undesirable behaviours such as absence from school without permission, lateness to classroom and school, absence from the classroom, inadequate lesson plan and lesson note, immoral behaviour with female students, marks racketeering, falsification of records, non-involvement in co-curricular activities, insubordination, etc makes teachers to always be on their toes to avoid these unpleasant sanctions that may take any of the forms mentioned above. Interaction with the respondents equally revealed that ethnic and religious bias was not pronounced in these colleges, as members of staff are from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds. Furthermore, it was noted that any instances of wrongdoing would be addressed according to the ministry's guidelines for students and the civil service rules for teachers and other non-teaching staff.

Fairly, justly, and consistently applied reward and punishment influenced positive behaviours among the teachers, which consequently enhanced their job performance, as there is no hidden place for indiscipline. This was evident in their level of job performance, as the teachers scored above 80% in regularity and punctuality in school and classroom, involvement in co-curricular activities, adequate preparation of lesson plans and schemes of work, and assessment of students through tests and examinations. They scored 65.3% and 66% in teamwork among colleagues and promotion of school-community relations, respectively. There is a need for improvement in these areas.

Conclusion

Rewards or incentives have a significant positive effect on teachers' job performance, as indicated by the study's findings. It is glaring that when rewards are offered fairly, justly and consistently, it will enhance teachers' job performance positively. Also, punishment has a significant positive effect on the teachers' job performance as well. It may not be as direct as a reward, but it does have a consequential influence on teachers' job performance and students' academic performance. Just like rewards, fairness, justice, and consistent application of punishment enhance teachers' job performance because the fear of the consequences of undesirable behaviours makes them more compliant and cooperative. Conclusively, rewards and punishments have a significant effect on teachers' job performance in Federal Unity Colleges in the Southwest, Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following were recommended:

1. The reward and punishment mechanisms in these colleges should be strengthened by the Federal Ministry of Education, the college principals, the Parent Teacher Association, Old Students Association and other stakeholders.
2. State-owned schools should emulate the Federal Unity Colleges by applying reward and punishment fairly, justly and consistently to enhance teachers' job performance.

3. Teachers should be promoted as soon as due, and the stagnation caused as a result of service years' elongation should be resolved urgently by the Federal Civil Service Commission so that the purpose of the service elongation will not be jeopardised.
4. Teamwork should be encouraged among the teachers to enhance their job performance.
5. Outstanding principals in the area of application of reward, punishment and general staff welfare should be recognised and rewarded accordingly, and those with poor performance in this regard should be punished as well to serve as a deterrent to others. This is one of the steps to keep the tempo.
6. There is a need to encourage community support for the school management to create a more reliable source to reward or motivate the teachers for better job performance.

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