

The Interconnection of Motivation and Self Regulated Learning Among University Level EFL Students

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Abstract

The main aim of this research is to investigate learners in higher education in a Turkish context, in terms of motivational components such as *goal orientation*, *self efficacy*, *intrinsic value*, *test anxiety* and self-regulated learning components such as *cognitive strategy usage* and *self regulation*. The study was carried out with 233 students in higher education enrolled in the English Language and Literature department. Descriptive, variance and correlation analyses were carried out to answer the research questions. The results showed that the participants were reported to have satisfactory level of *goal orientation*, *self efficacy*, *intrinsic value*, *test anxiety*, *cognitive strategy usage* and *self regulation*. ANOVA results indicated that there were statistically significant differences between the three types of students, regular (daytime), evening, and distance education, with regard to *goal orientation* and *self-efficacy*. Furthermore, correlation analysis suggested that there was a moderate level of correlation between *self-regulation* and *cognitive strategy usage*. This research on the whole, infers that self-regulated learning means empowering the student to take charge of their motivation and educational pathway, and that while doing so, teachers should keep in mind that the classroom remains a formal environment that still requires *self-efficacy* and *self-regulation* and these are all interrelated.

Keywords: academic achievement, goal orientation, self efficacy, cognitive strategy usage, self regulation

1. Introduction

Over the past decades, the dynamic field of learning and teaching has taken many steps forward in accordance with the progression of technology, economy and political situations in the world. In the field of language teaching and learning, research during 1970s and 1980s largely focused on pedagogy rather than on learning processes.

Being proficient in another language different from one's mother tongue is one of the academic, professional and social requirements of the twenty-first century, as the world is becoming smaller and many people have equal opportunities for international events. People from all around the world learn a second language in order to catch these international chances, however, it is not an easy task for everyone. It is a complex process involving a great number of variables (Brown, 1987), and a series of diverse learning behaviours (Dörnyei, 1990), thus, the outcome of L2 (second language) acquisition is different from the L1 (first language) and ranges from zero to native-like proficiency (Dörnyei, 2005). A language learner makes their own way to learn a language with their own goals, weaknesses and strengths. As Williams and Burden (1997) express, "learning is essentially personal and individual" (p. 96). Realising the importance of this fact, the concerns of research in SLA (Second Language Acquisition) shifted from teaching methods to learner characteristics in the early seventies (Wenden, 1987).

Regardless of success, all students use strategies to make their learning more effective (Hong-Nam & Leawell, 2006), however, more successful learners use more strategies and use them more appropriately (Chu, Lin, Chen, Tsai & Wang, 2015; Dörnyei & Chan, 2013; Kim, 2009; T. Y. Kim & Y. K. Kim, 2014).

Learners are aware of their abilities as to how they understand the process. On the assumption that it is fundamental to provide learners with a language education that makes sense to them and meets their needs, would in turn motivate students to learn, thereby developing competence to maintain this learning beyond the borders of the formal education context for English Language studies. According to Öz (2005), initially, beliefs influence the motivation of learners, then this motivation affects behaviour, lastly these cycles appear as

outcomes. In SLA research, there are two major dichotomies in motivation; that they are integrative/instrumental and intrinsic/extrinsic (Rivera-Mills & Plonsky, 2007).

2. Motivational Components and Self Regulated Learning

In human psychology, motivation deals with “energy, direction, persistence and equifinality” and most importantly, it is the basis of biological and psychological systems, which will result in production (Deci & Ryan, 1987). Motivation is present in every field where humans show progress such as language learning. When we examine major determinants in language acquisition, motivation appears among the most important ones. As Dişlen, (2013), Dörnyei (1994), and MacIntyre (2002), state, it is one of the most significant elements of language learning when individual differences are considered.

Motivational components are mainly comprised of the following features (Pintrich, Smith, Garcia, & McKeachie 1991);

Goal orientation can be defined as the learner's awareness of the reasons why s/he takes part in a learning task. It means learner's general goals or orientations to the course. *Goal orientation*, an important touchstone of self-regulatory learning, is described as students' goals or orientation to a lesson (Pintrich et al., 1991). Investigations show that goal orientation is very important in finishing a course. Beatty-Guenter (2001), for instance, referenced that goal orientation gives help to learners who finish courses successfully. Thompson (1998), holds that setting clear goals is a significant component of academic activities. All the same, Curry et al. (1999), indicated that effective goal setting in distance education students helps their effectual activities. *Intrinsic goal orientation* defines the degree to which learners conceive of taking part in an activity and why, such as challenge, curiosity, or mastery. If the learners have an intrinsic goal orientation to an academic assignment, it means that taking part in the assignment is at an end. The emotional responses of students to a particular task are viewed as intrinsic values, which are the affective items of motivation (Pintrich & De Groot, 1990).

The term *self-efficacy* means learners' beliefs in respect to their capability to realise an activity, and it is thought, between the expectancy elements of motivation (Pintrich & De Groot, 1990). Self-efficacy is one of the highly used investigative components in the language teaching area.

Self-evaluation is one of the important steps, where learners evaluate their effectiveness with regard to learning activities. It was stated in the past that when students are able to evaluate their own learning, they are self-regulated students (Winne & Hadwin, 1998). Self-evaluation is significant in guiding learning activities for learners in distance education as they are not working together with other learners, and they need to guide their own learning activities. As for Zimmerman's (2004), teachers are able to support students' self-evaluation by guiding them, and then making the changes needed to achieve goals.

Self-regulated learning, in terms of background, involves related concepts of self-regulation, self-efficacy and self-concept. One's self-efficacy can be understood as the degree to which one believes that one will succeed at a given task. Self-concept, on the other hand, is a more holistic overall consideration. The relationship between self-regulated learning and self-efficacy is vital to consider in terms of classroom dynamics in the context of issues of change and stasis within education as a whole. Education is often a domain where all is flux. Teachers need to appropriately plan to enable self-regulated learning, which is basically seen to empower the student to take their own direction, and evince internal motivation as they take control of the learning process.

Self-regulation refers to an activity in which the learner uses his/her initiative in determining their own needs, forming objectives, investigating relevant learning forms, and assessing the learning processes. Self-regulation denotes the initiation of an activity on students' part and contains goal setting and tries to carry out their objectives both in physical and social environments (Zimmerman & Risemberg, 1997). It is a major notion in cognitive theory and means there are three kinds of cognitive processes in usage to progress to targeted goals; these are, self-judgment; self-monitoring, and self-reaction (Bandura, 1986). According to Zimmerman, self-regulated learning is an activity that learners use as self-regulatory skills such as self-assessment, self-direction, control and adjustment to achieve knowledge (Zimmerman, 1989). According to Kırmızı (2014), self-regulation is process in which students have the initiative, and identify their own needs, formulate goals, explore resources, and focus on appropriate learning strategies.

In this respect, there is a mutual relationship between self-efficacy and self-regulation, and some prominent researchers (Bandura, 1986; Schunk, 1986; Zimmerman, 1986) maintain that self-efficacy is one of the most important variables that influence self-regulated learning. To conclude, self-efficacy can be determined as one's

belief in one's own capability to finish, and learners with high self-efficacy tend to learn better and have higher academic achievement.

Many studies have been done so far by several scientists in order to determine the academic achievement of individuals, and the variables such as motivation, learning style and goal setting on which they may have a great effect. Every student is a special individual so it is not proper to expect them to learn the same subject at the same level with the same teaching methods because of learner differences. There are a number of concepts that have ties with each other in learning activities and they are just like vessels that carry blood to the heart. If one does not perform its duty, it means that one of the ways that reaches success is hindered. This paper seeks to achieve to inform through Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ), how or to what extend goal orientation, self efficacy, intrinsic value, test anxiety, cognitive strategy use and self regulation play a part in the success of students in the Karabük University Department of English Language and Literature.

3. Research Questions

- 1). What are the perceptions of higher education students in terms of;
 - a) goal orientation,
 - b) self efficacy,
 - c) intrinsic value,
 - d) test anxiety,
 - e) cognitive strategy usage and
 - f) self regulation.
- 2). Are there any differences among regular, evening, and distance education students with regard to;
 - a) goal orientation,
 - b) self efficacy,
 - c) intrinsic value,
 - d) test anxiety,
 - e) cognitive strategy usage, and
 - f) self regulation?
- 3). What is the relation between self-regulation, goal orientation, self-efficacy, and cognitive strategy use at higher education level?
- 4). What is the correlation between academic success and;
 - a) goal orientation,
 - b) self efficacy,
 - c) intrinsic value,
 - d) test anxiety,
 - e) cognitive strategy usage, and
 - f) self regulation?
- 5). What are the predictors of academic success?

4. Method

4.1 Data Collection Tool

For collecting data, Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) was used in the study. MSLQ was developed by Paul Pintrich et al. (1991), at the National Centre for Research at the University of Michigan. MSLQ was used in this study to determine the relationship between students' academic achievement and goal orientation, self efficacy, intrinsic value, test anxiety, cognitive strategy use and self regulation. According to Amir and Kamal, the MSLQ is a means of assessing individuals' specific relationship between various variables by asking about their cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies for learning (Amir & Kamal, 2011). Originally, MSLQ included of 81 items separated into two categories; motivation and learning strategies. For the scope of this study, fifty-two items and six sub-dimensions were used. These sub-dimensions were *goal orientation, self efficacy, intrinsic value, test anxiety, cognitive strategy usage* and *self regulation*. The MSLQ makes use of a

5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (labeled “strongly disagree”) to 5 (labeled “strongly agree”). The survey research approach was implemented in order to collect data from the participants.

4.2 Participants

The survey was carried out in the spring semester of the academic year 2018-2019. The number of participants was 233 English Language and Literature Department students from all grades; regular (daytime), evening and distance education classes at Karabük University. It was compulsory for students to complete a 8-9 month English Preparatory Program successfully prior to proceeding to their departments. The students, both male and females voluntarily took part in the research and completed a survey by responding to the questionnaire.

5. Results and Findings

Research question 1: What are the perceptions of higher education students in terms of: (a) *goal orientation*, (b) *self efficacy*, (c) *intrinsic value*, (d) *test anxiety*, (e) *cognitive strategy usage*, and (f) *self regulation*?

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics regarding the participants’ self-reports on the variables of the study.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics about the variables of the study

Variable	Number of items	M	Median	sd	Range	Min-Max. points
goal orientation	4	14.09	14	2.78	14	6-20
self-efficacy	9	32.6	33	6.01	33	12-45
intrinsic value	9	34.69	35	6.44	29	16-45
test anxiety	4	11.84	12	4.07	16	4-20
cognitive strategy usage	13	49.32	50	8.46	47	18-65
self-regulation	9	29.62	29	5.09	30	15-45

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics about the central tendencies and distribution of the values of the self-reports as to the variables of the study. Depending on the results, we can say that the participants have a moderate level of *goal orientation* ($M=14.09$), *self-efficacy* (32.60), *intrinsic value* (34.69), *test anxiety* (11.84), *cognitive strategy usage* (49.32), and *self-regulation* (29.62).

Research question 2. Are there any differences among regular, evening, and distance education students with regard to (a) *goal orientation*, (b) *self efficacy*, (c) *intrinsic value*, (d) *test anxiety*, (e) *cognitive strategy usage*, and (f) *self regulation*?

In order to compare regular, evening, and distance education in terms of (a) goal orientation, (b) self efficacy, (c) intrinsic value, (d) test anxiety, (e) cognitive strategy usage, and (f) self regulation, one way variance analysis (ANOVA) was conducted. In order to determine which groups differ in terms of the stated variables, The Scheffe post-hoc test was applied. The descriptive statistics are presented in Table 2, and the results of ANOVA are presented in Table 3.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics as regards participant groups and the variables of the study

Variable	group	n	\bar{X}	SD
Goal Orientation	Regular	110	14.71	2.56
	Distance	40	12.93	2.9
	Evening	73	13.77	2.81
	Total	223	14.08	2.78
Self-Efficacy	Regular	109	33.97	5.47
	Distance	36	30.33	6.63
	Evening	73	31.62	6.04
	Total	218	32.58	6.02
	Regular	109	36.25	6.22

Intrinsic Value	Distance	36	31.81	7.16
	Evening	75	33.79	5.83
	Total	220	34.68	6.45
	Regular	111	11.6	4.18
Test Anxiety	Distance	39	11.23	4.32
	Evening	76	12.54	3.75
	Total	226	11.85	4.08
	Regular	97	50.63	6.78
Cognitive Strategy Usage	Distance	37	45	9.78
	Evening	73	49.74	9.21
	Total	207	49.31	8.48
	Regular	106	30.32	4.82
Self-Regulation	Distance	39	29.41	6.29
	Evening	75	28.71	4.7
	Total	220	29.61	5.1

Table 3. The results of ANOVA for participant groups

Variable		Sum of squares	sd	Mean Square	F	p	Statistically significant difference*
Goal Orientation	BetweenGroups	104.04	2	52.02	7.088	0.001	R-D
	WithinGroups	1614.507	220	7.339			
	Total	1718.547	222				
Self-Efficacy	BetweenGroups	460.836	2	230.418	6.694	0.002	R-D, R-E
	WithinGroups	7400.178	215	34.419			
	Total	7861.014	217				
Intrinsic Value	BetweenGroups	625.19	2	312.595	7.987	0	
	WithinGroups	8492.537	217	39.136			R-D, R-E
	Total	9117.727	219				
Test Anxiety	BetweenGroups	57.818	2	28.909	1.747	0.177	
	WithinGroups	3690.363	223	16.549			-
	Total	3748.181	225				
Cognitive Strategy Usage	BetweenGroups	869.519	2	434.759	6.355	0.002	
	WithinGroups	13956.694	204	68.415			R-D, D-E
	Total	14826.213	206				
Self-Regulation	BetweenGroups	116.305	2	58.152	2.263	0.106	
	WithinGroups	5576.077	217	25.696			-
	Total	5692.382	219				

*R: Regular, D: Distance, E: Evening.

One is able to infer from Table 3 that there is statistically salient variation between groups with regard to goal orientation ($F(2,220)=7.088, p<.05$). The results of the post-hoc test indicated that regular students ($\bar{X}=14.71, SD=2.56$) and distance education learners ($\bar{X}=12.93, SD=2.90$) differ in terms of goal orientation. We can see

that the mean score for regular students is higher than distance education students. Statistically important variance was seen among groups in terms of self-efficacy ($F(2,215)=6.694, p<.05$). The results of the post-hoc test indicated that regular students ($\bar{X}=33.97, SD=5.47$) distance education students ($\bar{X}=30.33, SD=6.63$), and evening students ($\bar{X}=31.62, SD=6.04$) differ in terms of self-efficacy. We can understand from the mean scores that regular students have a higher level of self-efficacy beliefs. Third, the ANOVA results also indicated that there are statistically important variations among the groups from the viewpoint of intrinsic motivation ($F(2,217)=7.987, p<.05$). The results of the post-hoc test indicated that regular students ($\bar{X}=36.25, SD=6.22$) distance education students ($\bar{X}=31.81, SD=7.16$), and evening students ($\bar{X}=33.79, SD=5.83$). The mean scores indicate that regular students have higher levels for intrinsic value compared to evening and distance education students. Fourth, the results of ANOVA also indicated that the participants differ from the viewpoint of cognitive strategy use ($F(2,204)=6.355, p<.05$). The results of the post-hoc test showed that there are statistically significant differences between regular students ($\bar{X}=50.63, SD=6.78$), distance education students ($\bar{X}=45.00, SD=9.78$), and evening students ($\bar{X}=49.74, SD=9.21$). Therefore, we can say that regular students have higher levels of cognitive strategy usage compared to evening and distance education students. The results of ANOVA also indicated that there are no statistically salient variations among the groups with regard to test anxiety ($F(2,223)=1.747, p>.05$) and self-regulation ($F(2,217)=2.163, p>.05$).

Research question 3: What is the relation among *self-regulation*, *goal orientation*, *self-efficacy*, and *cognitive strategy usage* at higher education level?

To investigate the connection between self-regulation, goal orientation, self-efficacy, and cognitive strategy usage, correlation analysis was realised. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. The correlation among self-regulation, self-efficacy, goal orientation and cognitive strategy use

	Self regulation	Self-efficacy	Goal orientation	Cognitive strategy usage
self regulation	-	.316*	.315*	.498*
self-efficacy	.316*	-	.426*	.442*
goal orientation	.315*	.426*	-	.453*
cognitive strategy usage	.498*	.442*	.453*	-

* $p<.05$.

As we can understand from Table 4, a moderate level of positive correlation was determined between self-regulation and goal orientation ($r=.315, p<.05$). Self-regulation skills increase as the reported level of goal orientation increases. Self-regulation accounts for the 9.92% of the variance in goal orientation. A moderate level of positive correlation was determined between self-regulation and self-efficacy ($r=.316, p<.05$). Self-regulation accounts for the 9.98% of the variance in self-efficacy. A moderate level of positive correlation came in view between self-regulation and cognitive strategy use ($r=.498, p<.05$). Self-regulation accounts for the 24.8% of the variance in cognitive strategy usage. We can gather from the results that self-regulation influences goal orientation, self-efficacy and cognitive strategy usage at varying levels.

Research question 4: What is the correlation between *academic success* and (a) *goal orientation*, (b) *self efficacy*, (c) *intrinsic value*, (d) *test anxiety*, (e) *cognitive strategy usage*, and (f) *self regulation*?

In order to indicate the correlation between the variables of the research and academic success, an analysis of correlation was realised. The results are given in Table 5.

Table 5. Pearson Product-Moment correlations between variable of the study and academic success

	ACA	GO	EGO	SE	IV	TA	CSU	SR
aca		.22**	.21**	.26**	.20**	0.01	.18**	.26**
Goalorient			.19**	.43**	.54**	-0.021	.45**	.32**
Extrgoalor				.27**	.35**	.24**	.39**	.29**
Selfefficacy					.54**	-0.08	.44**	.32**
Intrinsicvalue						0	.68**	.36**

Test anxiety	.14*	.30**
Cognitive strategy		.50**
Self-regulation		1

* $p < .05$; ** $p > .01$.

As can be seen from Table 5, there are positive relationships between academic success and goal orientation ($r = .22, p < .01$), extrinsic goal orientation ($r = .21, p < .01$), self-evaluation ($r = .26, p < .01$), intrinsic value ($r = .20, p < .01$), self-regulation ($r = .26, p < .01$), and cognitive strategy use ($r = .18, p < .01$). The highest correlation occurred between self-evaluation and academic success.

Research question 5: What are the predictors of academic success?

In order to understand which variables included in the study predict academic success, a regression analysis was carried out in addition to the correlation analysis. The results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Results of multiple regression analysis for academic success

Variables	B	SE	β	t	p
Constant	1.896	.307		6.184	.000
Goal orientation	.014	.017	.075	.847	.398
Extrinsic goal orientation	.012	.012	.085	1.023	.308
Self-efficacy	.018	.008	.204	2.255	.025
Intrinsic value	.004	.009	.053	.498	.619
Test anxiety	.006	.010	.051	.642	.522
Cognitive strategy usage	.002	.007	.085	1.98	.185
Self-regulation	-.018	.009	.182	2.073	.040

$R = .31$; $R^2 = .10$; $F(2, 52) = 6.18$; $p = .017$.

Table 6 shows the results of multiple linear regression for the research. The multiple correlation coefficient was .31, indicating that about 10% of the variance is able to be considered for the linear combination of variables in the research. T-test results for the important salient of regression coefficients indicated that self-evaluation ($\beta = .20, p < .05$) and self-regulation ($\beta = .18, p < .05$) were the significant predictors of academic success. The other variables were not important in academic success at higher education for Turkish, English language and literature students.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

The following results are founded as the response of the research questions;

Research question 1: What are the perceptions of students in higher education in terms of: (a) *goal orientation*, (b) *self efficacy*, (c) *intrinsic value*, (d) *test anxiety*, (e) *cognitive strategy usage*, and (f) *self regulation*? Although ANOVA results indicated that there were statistically significant differences between three types of student education, regular, evening, and distance, in terms of goal orientation and self-efficacy. From the results, it can be stated that the participants have a moderate ratio of *goal orientation*, *self-efficacy*, *intrinsic value*, *test anxiety*, *cognitive strategy usage*, and *self-regulation*.

Research question 2. Are there any differences among students receiving regular, evening, and distance education with regard to; (a) *goal orientation*, (b) *self efficacy*, (c) *intrinsic value*, (d) *test anxiety*, (e) *cognitive strategy usage*, and (f) *self regulation*? There were statistically substantial variations between the groups with regard to *goal orientation*. We can see that the mean score for regular students is higher than for students in distance education. The mean scores for regular students have a higher level of self-efficacy beliefs. ANOVA results also indicated that there are statistically significant differences among the groups in terms of *intrinsic motivation*. The mean scores indicate that students in regular education have higher levels for *intrinsic value* compared to evening and distance education learners. Therefore, we can say that regular education students have higher levels of *cognitive strategy usage* compared to students receiving evening and distance education. The

results also indicate there are no statistically significant differences among groups with regard to *test anxiety* and *self-regulation*.

Research question 3: What is the relation between *self-regulation*, *goal orientation*, *self-efficacy*, and *cognitive strategy usage* at higher education levels? The present study has also discovered that there is a close correlation between self-efficacy and student achievement. In this respect, it can be said that self-efficacy is considered to be one of the salient and important variables that indicate the self-regulation beliefs and achievement of the learners. A moderate level of positive correlation was also found between self-regulation and cognitive strategy use. We can also gather from the results that *self-regulation* influences *goal orientation*, *self-efficacy*, and *cognitive strategy usage* at varying levels.

Research question 4: What is the correlation between *academic success* and (a) *goal orientation*, (b) *self efficacy*, (c) *intrinsic value*, (d) *test anxiety*, (e) *cognitive strategy usage*, and (f) *self regulation*?

There are positive relationships between academic success and *goal orientation*, *extrinsic goal orientation*, *self-evaluation*, *intrinsic value*, *self-regulation*, and *cognitive strategy usage*. The highest correlation occurred between *self-evaluation* and *academic success*. Partially similar work on the relation between academic success and self-regulation, was investigated by Barnard-Brak et al. (2010). The findings of their research infer that students with moderate and high level may reach higher levels of *self evaluation* and *metacognition*.

Research question 5: What are the predictors of academic success? Lastly, concerning *the predictors of academic success* table 6 illustrates the analyses results of the regression of multiple linear for the variables of the research and academic success. The coefficient of the multiple correlation was .31, and it is quite acceptable.

On the other hand, literature is proliferated with studies that indicate that self-efficacy has a salient effect on self-regulated learning activities, like self-observation, self-judgment and self-reaction (Dembo, 2000; Schunk, 2001). The purpose of this research was to investigate higher education students in a Turkish context in terms of motivational components such as *goal orientation*, *self efficacy*, *intrinsic value*, *test anxiety* and self-regulated learning components such as *cognitive strategy usage* and *self regulation*. In this vein, within the Turkish context, Usta (2011), investigated self-regulation in relation to Internet based learning. Usta stated that the *self-regulated learning* facility levels of learners in an online learning atmosphere are quite high. Demirel and Turan (2010) hold that there is a connection between *self-regulation* and *academic achievement*. Tilfarlioğlu and Cinkara (2009, cited in Kırmızı, 2015), denoted a mutual relationship between *self-efficacy* and *academic performance*.

This study showed that there is an affirmative connection and ties between learners' *self-efficacy beliefs* and their *self-regulation*. Some of the previous researches denoted (Kitsantas & Zimmerman, 2009; Sikhwari, 2014), that self-efficacy had a great influence on academic activities rather than motivational variables. This research has discovered too, that there is a close correlation between *self-efficacy* and *student achievement*. To sum up, self-regulated learning and motivational components involve taking the focus away from the teacher's imposition of authority of a process that is meant to control the student's academic endeavours externally, and shifts it to an internal focus. In this manner, the theory is that education can be better aligned with students' actual motivations, rather than motivations that are imposed upon them by often ineffective labels.

7. Recommendations

Overall, this research infers that self-regulated learning means empowering the student to take charge of their motivation and educational path, and the teachers should keep in mind that the classroom remains a formal environment that still requires self-efficacy and self-regulation which are interrelated. At the end of the survey, some differences were found between the perceptions of students in regular, evening and distance education towards the motivational components and self regulation analysed, however further more detailed studies are needed to be conducted as it is very significant topic. The findings presented in the present study can be generalised.

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