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ANALYSIS OF THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF UNITY, STATE AND PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN AKWA IBOM STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study is a comparative analysis of the quality of secondary school types; unity, state and private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The study adopted an ex-post facto research design, using 723 students comprising of 241 students from each type of schools which, in turn, were selected from 3 senatorial districts of the State using a stratified random sampling technique. The data collected through a research inventory namely; school evaluation scale was analyzed using one way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The results established that Unity, State and Private Secondary Schools significantly differ in the academic performance of students, provision of school facilities and infrastructures and level of discipline. To enhance equal opportunity to learning, the researchers finally recommended, among others, that policies and objectives of education should be made effective among others in all the school types.

Introduction

Education, according to Nigeria's philosophy of education, is a vehicle for the country's unity and development as well as the productivity of persons and ideas. In the same vein, Awan (2014) averred that education is essential for the success or failure of nations. In other words, every child is entitled to it and must acquire it at least to a reasonable extent for personality grooming. It would be an error to conclude that the growth and development of any educational system such as the Nigerian one is largely dependable on the quality of schools in the country. In Nigeria and even other parts of the world, learning takes place in school. Schools are categorized into primary, secondary and tertiary education. These schools have a triangle of three main pillars made up of teachers, students and curriculum. Due to this study's focus on secondary education, it is worth noting that secondary education is fundamental for a child's development as it links the knowledge of basic and higher education (Matthew, 2013). This enables a child to acquire needed skills and competence.

Secondary education is a major link to tertiary education and an indispensable stakeholder in manpower production in the country (Tabotndip, n. d.). To this end, one

can contend that secondary education is the strength of education in Nigeria. Ige (2011) and Chineto (2011) reported in their various articles that secondary education became necessary in order to compensate for the poor numerical and communicative literacy acquired by students at the primary school level.

Secondary education is meant to provide the learner with opportunities to acquire necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes for the development of self and nation and promote love for and loyalty to the nation (Mathew, 2013). Specifically, according to FRN (2008) the objectives of senior secondary education in Nigeria are to:

provide holders of the Basic Education Certificate with opportunity for education of a higher level, irrespective of gender, social status, religious or ethnic background; offer diversified curriculum to cater for the differences in talents, opportunities and future roles; provide trained manpower in the applied science, technology and commerce at sub-professional grades; provide entrepreneurial, technical and vocational job-specific skills for self-reliance, and for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development; develop and promote Nigerian languages, art and culture in the context of world's cultural heritage; inspire students with a desire for self-improvement and achievement of excellence; foster patriotism and national unity, with an emphasis on the common ties in spite of our diversity; and raise morally upright and well adjusted individuals who can think independently and rationally, respect the views and feelings of others and appreciate the dignity of labour; (19)

Secondary education is divided into junior and senior secondary levels. The first level is composed of three years. The major content learnt at this phase is often focused on prevocational and academic subjects, while assessment is often done through continuous assessment. The second phase is often wider than the first phase and involves more of academic subjects which are aimed at preparing a child for higher education studies. Furthermore, according to Mathew (2013), its broad focus on academic and vocational concepts has the possibility of making a connection between the primary and tertiary level of learning. The certificate obtained here is based on the national final examination of the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) and National Examinations Council (NECO).

As earlier mentioned, the security of any nation is highly dependable on its schools' quality. This has been a thorny issue in the educational sector both regionally and internationally. However, in determining quality assurance in secondary education, one should be concerned with: students' enrolment/completion, health/nutrition of students especially in school structures, availability and usage of facilities and instructional materials, appropriate teacher-student ration, and compliance with school rules (Shah, Ghazi, Shahzad and Ullah, 2015).

Anro (2013) asserted that school quality is determined by a multiplicity of factors including but not limited to school curriculum, relationship between student and teachers, and availability of instructional material.

Quality assurance in school enables the provision of high-quality educational content through the evaluation of the teaching and learning process. Badau (2015) asserted that quality assurance involves the process of identifying educational problems and developing strategies for resolving them in order to ensure continuous quality improvement. Furthermore, Ojogwu (2010) opined that quality assurance helps to raise standards, expectations, and levels of consistency across teachers and schools. It is a means whereby the quality of education provided to children are ascertained. Badau (2015) further states that within the Nigerian context, the National Educational Quality Assurance Policy (NAQAP) provided eight areas of focus for quality standard which are:

- a. Learners' achievement and standards
- b. Learners' welfare and participation
- c. Care guidance and support
- d. Leadership and management
- e. School-community relationship
- f. Learning environment
- g. Teaching and learning
- h. Curriculum and other activities

Therefore, the quality assurance of secondary education being the background of educational system cannot just be over looked, especially when coupled with the fact that improving secondary education means improving the whole educational system.

In Nigeria, there are many secondary education institutions owned and managed by different proprietors – the Federal Government, State Government, and private individuals. The federal government colleges, also known as unity schools, are institutions of learning established by the Federal Government to equip primary school graduates who wish to enroll in a secondary institution of education. These colleges are among the wide array of secondary institutions in Nigeria for exemplary education. According to Falade (2017), a federal government college is a secondary education established for the purpose of uniting children from all over Nigeria irrespective of their socio-economic background and ethnic group with a common motto: "PROUNITATE". In other words, it is an academic institution where children from the northern, southern, eastern and western parts of the country come for shelter to learn, play and love.

Other than the King's and Queen's colleges in Lagos which were established in the colonial era, the experimental establishment of the colonial colleges with three

colleges in different regions of Nigeria as far back as 1966 after independence, has since metamorphosed into 104 unity schools (Oladokun, 2017). These colleges today are tactically spread as Federal Technical Colleges for boys and girls and two other non-technical ones, both mixed and girls only, across the country. The schools were regarded as reliable role models of great places to study and meet new people from across the country and were used as measurable instruments for academic excellence in the country.

As further reported by Oladokun (2017), federal government colleges were lavished with many resources such as; good number of qualified teachers, good number of non-academic staff, good funds supply for smooth running of the colleges, and above all, a high level of discipline. All this was done in order to suit the National Policy of Education, guarantee national integration and national building among Nigerian children by giving them the opportunity at a tender age to live, learn and play together in an ideal educational environment.

Schools managed by state governments provide education without charge and funding is often provided through taxation. State schools are often inclusive in terms of admission opportunities and serve students close to their geographical locations. The standard of education is often determined by the state government policy. Before now, sometime in the 1990s, these schools were not lacking in good discipline, teachers and facilities. The schools were attended by children from different socio-economic backgrounds in the society. This enabled them to get along with people from different backgrounds, learn and play together. Consequently, this justifies the overall philosophy, goals and objectives of education which state that all individuals should live in unity and harmony. Students from high socio-economic backgrounds experience the challenges of their peers from low socio-economic background and this helps them maintain a well-rounded view of life. Furthermore, those from poor homes come to appreciate the need for hard work so that they can improve their economic standard and that of their parents (Udofia and Umoh, 2016). He also added that occasionally, the rich parents would intentionally render helping hands to the training of children who are willing to further their education but whose parents are unable to sponsor them.

The private secondary schools are those institutions that are being managed by either individuals, religious organizations, non-governmental associations, corporate bodies, or international donor organizations to complement government's efforts at ensuring quality secondary education. In private schools, parents seem to play the major role of dictating what the school offers their ward since they pay whatever cost it takes for educating their children. In such schools, education is not free and is often expensive (UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2005).

Private schools exist in different categories. The top-rated ones are usually attended by the children of highly placed individuals such as government officials, wealthy businessman and, of course, the elites profiting from the billions of oil revenue

accruing to the state. These classes of private schools are highly expensive which is why children from average or very poor homes cannot attend. The medium rated ones are mostly attended by children from middle-class homes. The fees of such schools are considered to be moderate. Another category of private secondary schools are the ones that are poorly-rated. These schools are sub-standard and a good number of them, including polytechnics and illegal schools, were closed down by the state governments in 2017 (Etokowo 2018). Such schools, according to the World Bank, are called budget schools and were mainly established to help children of the poor since everyone, including the poor, strive to send their children to private schools. This may be due to their convictions that private schools offer a higher quality of education than public schools.

With these distinctions in private schools, where is the place of our policy statement of unity and learning? Where is our mission and vision statement? How do we create a safe and caring environment where every child can grow and develop lifelong learning through quality and holistic educational approach? Generally, how many schools or which sectors of secondary education still maintain these qualities? How are these facilities and qualities obtained/maintained and used? These questions constitute the reason Aduke (2009) asserted that public schools do not live up to their standards any longer and are shadows of what they used to be. Aduke (2009) further stressed that, these days, the stakeholders of education and various researchers are conflicted about how to detect whether or not private secondary schools could be termed the best schools in terms of facilities and infrastructures, teacher-students ratio, curriculum, provision and utilization of instructional materials, school discipline, and number of teachers. This also prompted Kennedy (2017) to ask; Are you someone who is considering whether or not private schools are better than the public schools, especially when comparing the two sectors? Kennedy (2017) further asserts that the larger society also contemplates just how much the fees paid in private schools are worth the relative large amount, especially when compared to the services these schools render to learning, discipline and so on. This is the bone of contention for the comparative analysis of quality of secondary education in federal, state and private schools in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. In order to strengthen this study, the researcher considered it necessary to review some other relevant studies in this area with emphasis on students' academic performance in Mathematics, their attitude towards school discipline, and provision of infrastructural facilities.

This study also seeks to detect whether or not private secondary schools could be termed the best schools and sources of academic emulation at this level of education in terms of adequate and quality teachers, learning infrastructures, curriculum content and accomplishment, discipline and so on.

In the study on private sector participation in secondary school education in the Federal Capital Territory, Ehigiamusoe (2012) revealed that the reason why students in

private secondary schools might be better than those in public secondary schools could be their access to better infrastructure. Similarly, Udofia and Umoh (2016) conducted a comparative study on public and private secondary school performance in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. According to the result obtained, private school students performed significantly better than public school and had better equipped instructional facilities. Assessing primary school students' performance in core subjects, Adeyemi (2014) showed that in Osun State, private school pupils performed significantly better than those in public schools in the three subjects measured. A similar result was obtained by Olaschinde and Olatoye (2014) from secondary school students in Katsina State

Studying schools under government and private administration, Imam, Singh and Tiwari (2016) further showed that students in schools with private administration had a significantly better performance than those in public schools in India. However, the performance of students in both sets of schools were significantly lower.

Olasunkanmi and Odunayo, (2012) conducted an input-output analysis of administrative and managerial competence in educational quality in public and private schools in Lagos State. The input factors considered included teachers' competence, instructional materials and curriculum, while the output variable was students' performance in the Junior and Senior School Certificate Examinations. Analytical procedure using mean and standard deviation showed that private school students had a significantly better access to instructional facilities than those in public schools. However, no significant difference in academic performance was obtained at both the senior and junior secondary school levels. Furthermore, no significant difference was obtained regarding teachers' competence based on school type.

In Omoogun (n.d), the performance in Mathematics of students in public and private secondary schools in Ekiti East Local Government Area, Ekiti State was investigated. The study attempted to investigate the comparative analysis of students' performance in Mathematics. Using achievement test at the senior secondary school level, the result revealed that students in private schools performed significantly better than their peers in public schools.

The aim of this study is to perform a comparative analysis of the quality of secondary education in unity, state and private schools in Akwa Ibom State using academic performance, level of discipline, facilities and infrastructures.

Research hypotheses

To further guide the conduct of the study, the following null hypotheses were formulated;

- i. There is no significant difference between federal, state and private schools in terms of their students' academic performance.

- ii. There is no significant difference between federal, state and private schools in terms of their level of discipline.
- iii. There is no significant difference between federal, state and private schools in terms of facilities and infrastructure.

Methodology

This study adopted the ex-post facto research design. The population employed in the study comprised all the SS 2 students of the 2017/2018 session in federal, state and private secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. 5% of the total number of state and private schools present in the state were strategically and randomly selected respectively while the three federal schools located in the state were selected using purposive sampling technique. These sampled schools were selected based on the three senatorial districts in the state and they represent, rural and urban, top-rated and averagely-rated, single-sex and co-educational schools and boarding and day schools. In each school type, the data on discipline and facilities were derived from the students who were accidentally sampled with an instrument tagged school evaluation scale (SES) using 4-Likert scale. The students' Mathematics academic performance was derived from their second term's Mathematics examinations. These statistical data were first examined to construct validity and T-score respectively for standardization, after which they were analyzed using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to test for the statistical significance of the stabilized parameter at 0.05 level of significance, and to establish the differences in quality of secondary education among the federal, state and private schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Results

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between federal, state and private schools in terms of their students' academic performance.

TABLE 1: Mean and standard deviation on the influence of school affiliation on academic performance

School ownership	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Federal	241	56.98	12.09
State	241	50.90	9.68
Private	241	54.99	13.06
Total	723	54.29	11.95

From Table 1, it can be seen that the mean scores of the students in federal, state and private schools were 56.98 (SD =12.09), 50.90 (SD = 9.68), 54.99 (SD=13.06) respectively.

Table 2: One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of the difference in academic performance among students based on school affiliation (N = 723)

Source of variation	SS	Df	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4635.89	2	2317.95	16.94*	.000
Within Groups	98491.53	720	136.79		
Total	103127.42	722			

* $p < .05$; $df = 2 \& 720$, critical $F = 3.00$

Table 2 indicated that at .05 level of significance and degrees of freedom 2 and 720, the critical F-ratio was 3.00. The calculated F-ratio obtained in the comparison of difference in academic performance of students based on their school affiliation-federal, state and private was 16.94 ($p < .05$). The calculated F-ratio was seen to be greater than the critical F-ratio with the obtained significant value having less than .05 level of significance used in the study. With these results, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in academic performance among students in federal, state and private schools was rejected. It was alternately accepted that there is significant difference in academic performance among students in federal, state and private schools in Akwa Ibom State. Having obtained a significant F-ratio, a post hoc test was carried out to determine the groups in which the significant difference occurred. This was done by pair-wise comparison of the students based on their institution affiliation. The results are presented in Table 2

TABLE 3: Least Significant Difference (LSD) multiple comparison test of the difference in academic performance among students based on school affiliation

Dependent Variable: Academic performance

(I) School ownership	(J) School ownership	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
Federal	State	6.08*	.000
	Private	1.99	.062
State	Private	-4.09*	.000

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 3 showed the comparison of performance of students based on school affiliation. Comparison of performance of students in federal schools with those in state and private schools showed the following mean difference; Federal and State, 6.08 ($p < .05$); Federal and Private, 1.99 ($p > .05$). The comparison showed that there was significant difference between the performances of students in federal schools and that of those in state schools. The positive value showed that the significant value is in favour of students from federal schools. This indicated that students in federal schools performed better in their academics than those in state schools. Comparison of students in federal and private schools showed insignificant mean difference, indicating that there was no variation in their level of academic performance. Comparison of

performance of students in state and private schools showed significant mean difference of -4.09 ($p < .05$). The negative mean difference showed that the difference was in favour of the second comparison group; which were those in private schools. This indicated that students in private schools performed better than those in state schools.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference among federal, state and private schools in terms of their level of discipline.

TABLE 4: Mean and standard deviation on influence of school type on school discipline

School ownership	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Federal	241	28.66	2.67
State	241	26.54	3.61
Private	241	27.96	2.54
Total	723	27.72	3.10

From table 4, it is shown that the mean scores of the students in Federal State and Private schools are 28.66, (= 2.67), 26.54 (SD = 3.61), 27.96 (SD = 2.54), respectively.

Table 5: One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of the difference in level of school discipline based on school ownership (N = 723)

Source of variation	SS	Df	MS	F	P-value
Between Groups	560.56	2	280.28	31.60*	.000
Within Groups	6386.56	720	8.87		
Total	6947.12	722			

* $p < .05$; $df = 2 \& 720$, critical $F = 3.00$

Table 5 showed that at .05 level of significance and degrees of freedom 2 and 720, the critical F-ratio was 3.00. The calculated F-ratio obtained in the comparison of difference in level of school discipline based on school ownership, whether federal, state or private is 31.60 ($p < .05$). The P-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05, the chosen alpha level. With these results, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in the level of school discipline in federal, state and private schools were rejected. It was alternately accepted that there is a significant difference in level of school discipline in federal, state and private schools in Akwa Ibom State. Having obtained significant F-ratio, a post hoc test was carried out to determine the groups in which the significant difference occurred. This was done by pair-wise comparison of the schools based on their ownership, whether they were federal, state and private owned. The results are presented in Table 5.

TABLE 6: Least Significant Difference (LSD) multiple comparison test of the difference in level of school discipline based on school affiliation

Dependent Variable: Level of school discipline

(I) School ownership	(J) School ownership	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
Federal	State	2.12*	.000
	Private	.70*	.010
State	Private	-1.42*	.000

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 6 showed the comparison of level of school discipline based on school ownership. Comparison of level of school discipline in federal schools with those in state and private schools showed the following mean difference; federal and state, 2.12 ($p < .05$); federal and private, 0.70 ($p < .05$). The comparison showed that there was a significant difference between the level of school discipline in federal schools and that of state and private schools. The positive value showed that the significance was in favour of first comparison group: federal schools. This indicated that level of school discipline in federal schools is better than what obtains in state and private schools. Comparison of level of school discipline in state and private schools showed significant mean difference of -1.42 ($p < .05$). The negative mean difference showed that the difference was in favour of the second comparison group: private schools. This indicated that the level of school discipline is better in private schools than in state owned schools.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference among federal, state and private schools in terms of facilities and infrastructure.

TABLE 7: Mean and standard deviation on influence of school affiliation on provision of facilities

School ownership	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Federal	241	28.88	3.24
State	241	27.59	3.00
Private	241	29.61	3.13
Total	723	28.69	3.23

Table 7 shows the mean scores of the students in Federal, State and Private to be 28.88 (SD = 3.24), 27.59 (SD = 3.00), 29.61 (SD = 3.13) respectively.

Table 8: One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of the difference in provision of facilities based on school affiliation (N = 723)

Source of variation	SS	Df	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	508.71	2	254.35	26.05*	.000
Within Groups	7031.13	720	9.77		
Total	7539.83	722			

* $p < .05$; $df = 2 \& 720$, critical $F = 3.00$

Table 8 indicated 05 level of significance and degrees of freedom 2 and 720. The critical F-ratio was 3.00. The calculated F-ratio obtained in the comparison of difference in provision of facilities based on school ownership was 26.05 ($p < .05$). The calculated F-ratio was seen to be greater than the critical F-ratio with the obtained significant value less than .05 level of significance used in the study. With these results, the null

hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in provision of facilities in federal, state and private schools was rejected. It was alternately accepted that there is significant difference in provision of facilities in federal, state and private schools in Akwa Ibom State. Having obtained significant F-ratio, a post hoc test was carried out to determine in between what groups the significant difference occurred. This was done by the pair-wise comparison of the schools based on their ownership. The results are presented in Table 9.

TABLE 9: Least Significant Difference (LSD) multiple comparison test of the difference in level of school discipline based on school affiliation

Dependent Variable: Provision of facilities

(I) School ownership	(J) School ownership	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
Federal	State	1.29*	.000
	Private	-.73*	.010
State	Private	-2.03*	.000

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 9 showed the comparison of provision of facilities based on school ownership. Comparison of provision of facilities in federal schools with state and private schools showed the following mean difference; Federal and State, 1.29 ($p < .05$); Federal and Private, -0.73 ($p < .05$). The comparison showed that there was significant difference in the provision of school facilities in federal schools with state and private schools. Comparison of federal and state schools showed positive value indicating that the significance was in favour of the former. This indicated that provision of facilities in federal schools is better than as it exists in State schools. The comparison of federal and private schools showed negative significant value, indicating that the significance was in favour of the latter. This indicated that provision of facilities in private schools is better than as it exists in Federal schools. Comparison of provision of facilities in state and private schools showed significant mean difference of -2.03 ($p < .05$). The negative mean difference showed that the difference was in favour of private schools. This indicated that provision of facilities is better in private schools as opposed to state owned schools.

Discussion of findings

Findings from the test of the first hypothesis indicated a significant difference in academic performance among students in federal, state and private schools in Akwa Ibom State. The results revealed that students in federal and private schools significantly differ in their academic performance while those in state schools do not. On the other hand, the performance of those in federal schools does not significantly differ from those

in private schools. This implies that although students in federal and private schools are more academically sound than those in state schools, the students in private schools have better academic strength than their counterparts in federal schools. This may be as a result of the fact that federal and private schools are likely to have more efficient and adequate teachers, giving rise to adequate teacher-students ratio, unlike in state-owned schools that lack hands and usually have overcrowded classrooms. Having smaller number of students for teachers to attend to makes it easier for students to focus and participate in class activities. Furthermore, more teaching aids are likely to be provided in federal and private owned schools, making it easier for teachers to implement their teaching in a simpler and more understandable way.

Findings from the second hypothesis indicated that there is a significant difference in the level of school discipline in federal, state and private schools in Akwa Ibom State. The multiple comparison indicated a higher level of discipline in federal schools when compared to state schools and private schools. In addition, a higher level of discipline exists in private schools as opposed to state schools. The findings may be based on the fact that federal and private schools are usually small in population and have adequate staff students' ratio. This will foster adequate staff control over the students in their conduct and behaviour. Additionally, frequent academic and non-academic engagements may give little or no room for misconduct, leading to adequate school discipline in federal and private secondary schools.

Findings from the third hypothesis indicated that there is significant difference in provision of facilities in federal, state and private schools in Akwa Ibom State. The multiple comparison indicated that there is better provision of facilities in private schools than what obtains in federal and state schools. Furthermore there is a better provision of facilities in federal schools as opposed to state schools. These findings may be based on the fact that private schools are sponsored by individuals who are the proprietors of the school. They do their best to raise the school standard by making provision for most required school facilities. This is done in order to attract patronage from the public, especially the elite class, and to be able to compete favourably with other private schools. Additionally, federal schools, being sponsored by the federal government, have more facilities than state schools. The federal schools are fewer in number than the state schools. However, the federal government can provide the needed facilities to a reasonable extent.

The findings of this study is in line with the studies of Ehigiamusoe (2012); Udofia and Umoh (2016); which found that academic performance of students in private secondary schools is better than the academic performance of students in public secondary schools. Their studies also found that private secondary schools have better infrastructure than public secondary schools. In the same vein, Adeyemi (2014) study revealed that pupils in private schools performed better than their counterparts in the public schools. In relation to this finding, Bonsu (2016) investigated the reason behind

private basic schools doing considerably better than public schools. It was discovered that private schools were better resourced and that the students had parents with good socio-economic status who were always willing to be adequately involved in their children's education. It was also found that professionally qualified teachers were more in public schools than in private schools.

Conclusion and recommendations

Students in federal and private schools do not differ significantly in their academic performance. However, there is a considerable discrepancy between their performance and that of those of their counterparts in state schools. This study recommends that teachers in the state-owned institutions should be encouraged to teach effectively. While there is a higher level of discipline in federal schools than what obtains in state and private schools, students in private schools exhibited higher level of discipline than those in state schools. This is probably because the population of students in federal and private schools is relatively small, thus ensuring adequate staff students' ratio. This will foster adequate staff control over the students in their conduct and behaviour. In addition, frequent academic and non-academic engagements may give little or no room for misconduct, leading to effective school discipline in federal and private secondary schools. State institutions should endeavour to instill discipline in their students and to have adequate lecturer – students ratio.

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