

## **An Investigation Of The Connection Between Mentorship And Job Satisfaction In Academic Libraries Of Public And Private Universities And Colleges In China**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The intention of this study is to answer the question of whether or not mentorship programs in university libraries throughout China, both public and private, contribute to the level of work satisfaction experienced by faculty members. In the ever-changing environment of higher education, the happiness of staff members is essential to the continued existence of institutions, the retention of employees, and the quality of products produced by scholars. Research on the relevance of mentoring programs to the academic library context in China is lacking, despite the fact that these programs are often considered to be strategic human resource tools owing to their capacity to increase employee engagement and professional growth. This qualitative research project included the participation of managers, library staff, and mentors who were chosen via the process of purposive sampling. These individuals provided significant contextual insights through the use of topic analysis and semi-structured interviews. individuals's levels of work satisfaction may be improved by the use of strategies such as career guidance, skill development, and emotional support. Mentoring that is both professional and personal, characterised by trust, well-defined objectives, and institutional support, helps individuals feel more satisfied with their jobs. However, the most evident hurdles were found in regions with little resources. Due to the widening of the divide between public and private sector businesses, differences in organisational culture, access to resources, and mentorship techniques have evolved. The research contributes to an explanation for why there is a dearth of material on mentoring in Chinese university libraries, as well as highlighting the need of specific mentoring strategies that are fully supported in order to improve employee happiness. According to the findings of the study, educational institutions should prioritise the development of mentoring programs and strive to foster continual professional growth..

**Keywords:** Universities, China, Public Universities, Private Universities, Libraries....

### **1. INTRODUCTION:**

In today's highly competitive academic market, human capital plays a pivotal role for universities. Because of their pivotal position in the production, dissemination, and consumption of information, academic libraries are very reliant on the enthusiasm, fulfilment, and professional growth of its employees. Despite difficulties stemming from regulations, technology, and patron expectations, libraries—both public and private—will keep serving the public by providing a welcoming and interesting space for research and study. Enforcing higher moral standards is becoming more commonplace, and mentorship programs that promote engagement and career progression are among the many strategies that have been shown to increase employee happiness. From its modest origins as a means of linking more seasoned persons with less experienced ones, mentoring has blossomed into a versatile and dynamic tool for professional and personal

development. Mentorship programs that help library staff manage their responsibilities and contribute significantly to the institution's objectives would be very beneficial for them, especially when their job may be more demanding and specialised at times. Neither the differences between public and private libraries nor the effects of mentorship programs on staff satisfaction have been the subject of any studies examining Chinese university libraries. Conversely, mentorship programs are often used by Western educational systems. This research investigates the correlation between mentorship programs and staff satisfaction in Chinese university libraries with the aim of creating a more equitable work environment. The purpose of this qualitative study is to learn how library employees perceive mentoring, how much of an effect it has on morale on the job, and what institutional variables influence these perceptions. Researchers used both public and private organisations to get a better grasp of how mentoring strategies and results were affected by structural and cultural differences. With any luck, this

research will help illuminate the inner workings of Chinese university libraries and give some pointers on how to make mentoring programs more effective by making them fit the needs of certain sectors. Therefore, workers should have more opportunities to progress in their jobs (Liu, 2023).

## **BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

As research methods, writing styles, and patron expectations have evolved over the last several decades, academic libraries have also evolved. China is especially susceptible to these changes because of its rapidly developing higher education sector, its growing need for digital resources, and the worldwide drive to boost competitiveness. It is crucial for academic libraries, whether public or private, to foster an environment where staff members are enthusiastic and skilled. Staff happiness has evolved into a key indicator of productivity, retention, and efficiency in today's dynamic library setting. Employees who love what they do for a living are more likely to go above and beyond, come up with novel solutions to problems, and care deeply about the success of their employer. Mentoring programs are becoming more popular as a means to increase employee happiness via professional and personal growth. Relationships centred on mentoring increase morale and belonging by facilitating learning, self-assurance, and professional networking. Research done at Western universities shows that mentorship programs increase professionalism, career advancement, work happiness, and company loyalty. The relevance of mentorship programs is becoming more recognised, although Chinese university libraries still haven't prioritised them as much as academic programs. The institutional and cultural setting of China makes it difficult to understand the history, viewpoint, and experience of mentoring programs there. Factors including organisational structure, conflicting business objectives, and a lack of resources might make mentoring less accessible and less successful. Furthermore, due to variables such as financing, autonomy, and leadership style, mentoring programs and outcomes may vary across public and private companies. Mentorship and other forms of internal support have the ability to improve staff morale and institutional performance, which is crucial to study since academic libraries have a substantial influence on information management and instructional assistance. Keep yourself updated on the most recent developments on China's plan for higher education and employment. The purpose of this research is to fill a large information vacuum by investigating if and how mentoring programs in Chinese university libraries affect employee happiness. This qualitative research aims to better understand the inner workings of library professionals and how they may enhance the cultural relevance and efficacy of mentoring programs. It will analyse both public and private university libraries (Liu et al., 2020).

Academic libraries in China, like their counterparts across the globe, have seen a dramatic shift in the functions and services they provide over the last several decades. The most important institutions in China's knowledge

economy are universities and colleges, whether public or private, due to the country's fast economic development and increased investment in education. This is true for schools that are owned by the public and those that are privately run. There is a lot of demand on academic libraries to change, innovate, and adapt so they can better support research, instruction, and student learning. These actions would not be possible without the pressure that has been placed on them. Due to the ever-changing nature of the environment, human resources, and librarians in particular, have become more important. Academic librarians' responsibilities have expanded beyond the conventional duties of cataloguing and collection circulation. Rather, they should lend a hand with duties related to this area, such as teaching information literacy, facilitating scholarly communication, and overseeing research data management and digital archives. One needs the capacity to adapt to new situations, participate actively in professional activities, and continue one's education in order to meet these obligations (Lu et al., 2020).

## **PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH**

More specifically, the purpose of this study is to investigate whether or not mentoring has an impact on the level of job satisfaction experienced by Chinese academics who are employed by private colleges. The primary objective of this study is to determine the specific ways in which official and informal mentors have an impact on the levels of job satisfaction, motivation, and participation that teachers have in the tasks that they are given. By conducting this study, the researchers want to get a better understanding of the many dynamics that are involved in mentoring at private institutions and the effects that these dynamics have on the overall job satisfaction of faculty members. In particular, it draws attention to their respective groups. Institutional policies and professional development programs in China's private higher education sector will be driven by the outcomes, with the goal of improving teacher effectiveness and retention within the sector.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The importance of mentorship programs for professional growth and work satisfaction has been widely recognised for a long time in numerous settings, including universities. Research on the effects and applications of such programs in Chinese university libraries is becoming more popular among academics in the country. The primary goal of this literature review is to compile the most important conclusions drawn from studies conducted over the last five years concerning mentorship programs and their effect on employee happiness in university libraries throughout China. Academic librarians in New England did not participate in formal mentorship programs, according to a pilot research, even though professional associations do so. The efficacy of mentoring programs is heavily impacted by participants' good past experiences with mentors and organisational norms, according to research. Institutional support for mentoring relationships is important globally, according to the conclusions of this study, which was conducted in a

Western environment. Researchers in China looked at how prospective master's degree recipients who were actively involved in the arts responded to mentorship programs designed to help them succeed. Their research shows that a good mentoring method has a major influence on innovation. Academic goals influence this connection. These findings point to the fact that mentees are more likely to demonstrate originality and innovation—essential for professional and personal growth—when mentors provide both practical and emotional support. Reverse mentorship is another modern fad. Students in China often help their professors improve their research methods and come up with new ideas, which boosts their mentors' careers and boosts their own self-esteem, according to an analysis of informal mentoring relationships between Chinese professors and students (Luo et al., 2021). The two-way street of these connections highlights how mentorship ties may improve classroom settings. Researchers in China examined university libraries' approaches to information management in a qualitative study as part of their quest of digital transformation. In order to enhance library services, they stressed the need of user interaction and the difficulties of managing huge digital databases. Mentoring isn't included in the report, but continuing professional development is a must for library staff if they are to stay up with technology changes and their growing workloads. The research looked at how virtual mentoring systems are built around student engagement incentives, and it showed how important it is to take participants' motivational traits into account when designing mentoring programs. This will make the programs more effective and increase participation. The digitalisation of several operations and the increasing need for adaptive coaching solutions have made this study more relevant. In the end, this study's results show that mentoring programs are crucial for university libraries in China to help their staff members grow professionally and love what they do. They stress the need of organised mentoring relationships that are disciplined, communicative, and adaptable to the changing needs of higher education. To meet the unique requirements of Chinese library staff, further research on the institutional and cultural elements impacting the success of mentoring programs is necessary (Mason, A., & Hickman, 2019).

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

What is the impact of advice on work satisfaction at private institutions in China?

What is the impact of guidance on job satisfaction at China's public universities?

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Research Design:

The aim of qualitative and quantitative research is to ascertain statistically significant connections between variables by collecting numerical data on those variables and incorporating it into statistical models. Quantitative studies aim to get a more profound understanding of

society. Researchers often use quantitative methodologies while examining events that have a human significance. Quantitative studies provide actual data shown via tables and graphs. Quantitative research relies heavily on numerical data, necessitating a methodical approach to data gathering and interpretation. It may be used for several purposes, including data averaging, forecasting, analysing relationships, and extrapolating results to broader populations. Quantitative studies are fundamentally different from qualitative investigations, which rely on extensive interviews and observations. Quantitative research approaches are widely used across several academic disciplines, including biology, chemistry, psychology, economics, sociology, and marketing.

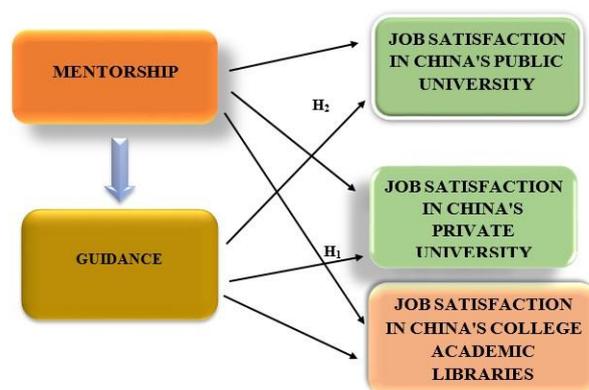
**Sampling:** A preliminary investigation was conducted using a questionnaire with a cohort of 20 consumers from China, followed by a conclusive study utilising the questionnaire on a sample of 1200 customers. A total of questionnaires was sent to customers selected by stringent random sampling. All completed questionnaires were included into the study, but any incomplete questionnaires will be eliminated by the researcher.

**Data and Measurement:** Primary data for the research study was collected through questionnaire survey. The questionnaire was divided into two parts – (A) Demographic information (B) Factor responses in 5-point Likert Scale for both the online and non-online channels. Secondary data was collected from multiple sources, primarily internet resources.

**Statistical Software:** MS-Excel and SPSS 25 will be used for Statistical analysis.

**Statistical tools:** Descriptive analysis was applied to understand the basic nature of the data. Validity will be tested through factor analysis.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



## RESULT

### Factor Analysis:

Factor Analysis is often used to verify the latent component structure of a measurement set. Latent factors may affect the scores of observable variables. Modelbased

accuracy evaluation (FA). It outlines causal linkages between observable events, unseen variables, and measurement errors. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test evaluates the appropriateness of data for factor analysis. The model and its variables are assessed for sufficient sampling. Statistics measure the common variance among several variables. Factor analysis is more efficacious with diminished percentages. The KMO statistic produces values ranging from 0 to 1. Sampling is considered adequate if the KMO value falls between 0.8 and 1. If the KMO statistic falls below 0.6, the sample is inadequate and requires remedial action. Exercise your judgement within the parameters of 0.5 to 0.6. Some authors choose a KMO of 0.5. A number around 0 indicates minimal overall correlations relative to partial correlations. Substantial correlations hinder component analysis. Kaiser's criterion for acceptance: Kaiser's approval criteria: 0.050 to 0.059. 0.60–0.69 is poor; middle grade is 0.70–0.79. Quality point value: 0.80 to 0.89. A range of 0.90 to 1.00 will be outstanding.

**Table 1: KMO and Bartlett's**

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.865
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3252.968
	df	190
	Sig.	.000

The first phase of Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) involves evaluating the suitability of the data for factor analysis. Kaiser recommended deferring factor analysis until a sample adequacy coefficient above 0.5 is attained, as shown by the KMO measure. The KMO value obtained from the data used in this investigation is 0.865. Bartlett's test of sphericity produced a significant result of 0.00.

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

How accessible is your mentor when you need support or guidance?

Is there a formal mentorship program in your institution, and how effectively is it implemented?

Have you noticed any differences in mentorship practices between public and private university libraries?

Do you think mentorship influences the recognition or value of your contributions within the institution?

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS EXPLAIN

Out of the 1,200 academic library workers polled (576 males and 624 females), regarding the structure of the program, 97.0% (n=1163; M=557, F=606) agreed that there is a structured mentoring program at the institution and that it works well. Only 3.0% did not see it that way. 88.0% (n=1062; M=523, F=539) of workers agreed that

mentors should be available when required, while 12.0% disagreed. This shows that this area might need some work. Ninety-five percent (n=1135; M=547, F=588) of those who answered said that there are variations between public and private university libraries when it comes to mentoring procedures. Only five percent said there is no difference. When asked about mentoring's role in recognising employees, 95.0% (n=1139; M=557, F=582) said that mentorship affects how the institution recognises the employee's accomplishments. All of these results show that people in China's university libraries strongly believe that mentoring is linked to staff growth, contentment, and integration into the institution.

## Test for Hypothesis:

### DEPENDENT VARIABLE Job Satisfaction in China's Public University

Teachers at public universities in China report high levels of "job satisfaction" when it comes to their work-life balance, motivation, and happiness on the job. This indicates that faculty members at universities see their work, their duties, the institution they work for, and the chances for personal and professional development in a favourable light. Various factors, both internal and external, influence this degree of enjoyment. These include compensation, opportunities for promotion, support from leadership, working environment, job security, and institutional restrictions. When academics speak about intrinsic characteristics, they often imply things like a love of learning, the ability to think critically, a desire to be autonomous in the classroom, and a drive to make a difference in the world. Employee happiness in China is affected by the distinctive features of the country's higher education system. Among these features are changes in education spearheaded by the state, an emphasis on research output and international rankings, and evaluations based on performance. Publications, research funding, and meeting stringent assessment criteria are all areas where faculty members are expected to perform well. Depending on the strength of institutional support and the objectivity of performance evaluations, their response to this pressure can be good or bad. Administrative systems that put a premium on hierarchy and restrict teachers' capacity to have a say in workplace decisions may also affect teachers' impressions of support and appreciation. When workers are content in their roles, it reflects in the quality of their output (McLeod & Benson, 2022).

### Job Satisfaction in China's Private University

One definition of job satisfaction is the level of contentment, motivation, and engagement felt by faculty members working within the institutional framework of privately managed higher education institutions in China. This includes their professional roles, responsibilities, and work environment. In China's private colleges, this is the accepted definition of job satisfaction. That which is said here is especially relevant to the professors employed by private universities. Specifically, it encompasses both

subjective feelings and objective assessments of key facets of academic life. Teaching duties, salary, perks, career progression prospects, administrative support, and interactions with students and coworkers are all part of the job. Academic freedom, the degree to which one's own ideas match with the institution's objective, the stability of the institution, and the acknowledgement of triumphs are all factors that contribute to faculty members' work satisfaction in China's private universities. All things considered, contentment in one's job is a direct result of these elements. Private colleges and universities may not have the same resources, employment opportunities, or reputation as public institutions. The amount of autonomy faculty members have in curriculum creation, the level of recognition they receive for their accomplishments, and the level of support they feel from the institution's leadership are all factors that impact the level of pleasure they experience personally. In this context, job satisfaction is more than just a measure of how much fun researcher have at work; it's a crucial factor that determines many things, including whether or not teachers stay, how well they teach, the outcomes for students, and the sustainability of China's private higher education system. Put simply, the private higher education industry in China benefits from employee happiness on the job (Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021).

### FACTOR Guidance

This is not the same as providing instructions. The act of trying to impose one's beliefs on another is not what it is. To put it simply, researchers shouldn't take orders from higher-ups and should instead work autonomously. Those doing research in the scientific community are not taking over someone's life. Helping individuals of all ages become more independent in their life management, opinion formation, decision-making, and responsibility taking is the goal of competent and well equipped men and women who provide advice. The term "guidance" refers to a strategy for assisting individuals in reaching their academic, occupational, or personal objectives by providing them with the knowledge and skills to confront obstacles directly and make informed choices. People with more life experience (e.g., teachers, counsellors, or supervisors) may assist others with less life experience (e.g., students, workers, or parents) overcome obstacles and realise their full potential by sharing what they've learnt. Academic advising, career counselling, life coaching, and vocational aid are just a few examples of the various official and informal types of support that are accessible. These are just a few of the many options that may be considered. Achieving objectives, fostering employee professional development, and enhancing overall performance all need outstanding leadership. In their never-ending quest for contentment, humans are always learning more about who they are, considering many options, and ultimately making calculated decisions. The goal of advice in all contexts—personal, academic, and professional—is to help individuals realise their full

potential by illuminating their strengths, weaknesses, and possibilities (Ren, 2024).

### Relationship between Guidance and Job Satisfaction in China's Private University

The correlation between good mentorship and contentment in the workplace is crucial at China's private universities because of their fast-paced and results-oriented culture. This is a result of how these organisations are structured. Employees at private universities are expected to be more productive, creative, and sensitive to market requirements, even though private colleges often have more operational independence than public institutions. The right guidance from superiors, department heads, or senior co-workers could make a big difference in improving job satisfaction in these kinds of situations. When employees get detailed instructions, they are better equipped to comprehend their roles, connect with the organization's goals, and confidently and efficiently do their work. Helping the academic and administrative staff at private universities adjust to the often less structured and more fast-paced work environment could be very beneficial. A sense of success and the growth of professional abilities are both aided by the giving of direction, the setting of performance goals, and the offering of constructive criticism. In addition to reducing job-related stress, fostering a healthy work environment, and improving communication within teams, helpful and consistent guidance is essential. Staff members are more likely to report high levels of motivation, engagement, and job satisfaction when they feel guided and supported in their work. Conversely, a high turnover rate, dissatisfaction, and uncertainty could emerge from an absence of leadership. Work satisfaction and institutional effectiveness at China's private universities might be greatly enhanced with the deployment of structured guidance systems and leadership training (Schwartz-Shea, 2020).

On the basis of the above discussion, the researcher formulated the following hypothesis, which analysed the relationship between Guidance and Job Satisfaction in China's Private University.

***H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant relationship between Guidance and Job Satisfaction in China's Private University.***

***H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant relationship between Guidance and Job Satisfaction in China's Private University.***

Table 2: H<sub>1</sub> ANOVA Test

ANOVA					
Sum					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	39588.620	512	5653.512	1057.521	.000
Within Groups	492.770	687	5.346		
Total	40081.390	1199			

In this investigation, the results will be substantial. The F value is 1057.521, attaining significance with a p-value of .000, which is below the .05 alpha threshold. The hypothesis "***H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant relationship***

*between Guidance and Job Satisfaction in China's Private University."* is accepted, whereas the null hypothesis is rejected.

### Relationship between Guidance And Job Satisfaction In China's Public University

The correlation between good direction and contentedness on the job is a major predictor of employee engagement, productivity, and loyalty in China's public sector. Clear and consistent direction helps personnel, particularly new or junior staff, understand their duties and responsibilities in public university environments, which are characterised by hierarchical structures and bureaucratic processes. Academic and administrative staff report higher levels of job satisfaction when they get clear guidance, have their goals explained, and are encouraged to grow in their careers. This guidance might originate from upper-level management, department chairs, or senior co-workers. When it comes to the mental and emotional aspects of things, mentoring is crucial because it helps students overcome self-doubt, build selfassurance, and feel like they belong at school. Employees are more likely to be satisfied with their job and committed to their institution when they believe their organisations are guiding, supporting, and mentoring them. However, in large, traditional public organisations where communication gaps may be prevalent, a lack of direction might lead to confusion, annoyance, and disengagement. Consequently, it is highly recommended that China's public universities implement strong systems of professional guidance. These systems should include structured orientation, ongoing supervision, mentoring, and feedback mechanisms. By doing so, we can increase job satisfaction, boost work efficiency, and create a more positive and supportive organisational culture (Shang et al., 2022).

On the basis of the above discussion, the researcher formulated the following hypothesis, which analysed the relationship between Guidance and Job Satisfaction in China's Public University.

***H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant relationship between Guidance and Job Satisfaction in China's Public University.***

***H<sub>2</sub>: There is a significant relationship between Guidance and Job Satisfaction in China's Public University.***

Table 3: H<sub>2</sub> ANOVA Test

ANOVA					
Sum	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	39588.620	387	4955.517	920.947	.000
Within Groups	492.770	812	5.381		
Total	40081.390	1199			

In this investigation, the results will be substantial. The F value is 920.947, attaining significance with a p-value of .000, which is below the .05 alpha threshold. The hypothesis "***H<sub>2</sub>: There exists a significant relationship between Guidance and Job Satisfaction in China's***

***Public University"*** is accepted, whereas the null hypothesis is rejected.

### DISCUSSION

Research conducted among Chinese academics working at private universities found a strong link between mentorship and job satisfaction, highlighting the significance of both in influencing faculty contentment throughout their time at the university. Scholars' job satisfaction, self-esteem, and connections within the academic community are all improved by structured and informal mentoring programs. Teachers in private colleges and universities may face different problems than those at public universities, including a heavier course load, less money for research, and a greater feeling of social inequality. Mentors may make a big difference in people's lives by helping them overcome obstacles, gain perspective in their careers, and improve their mental health. Extensive research supports the idea that mentoring fosters stronger personal and professional relationships in the workplace, leading to increased motivation and cooperation. Students that took part were more alert to the expectations of the school, more driven to succeed academically, and more open to criticism from their teachers and classmates. The results showed that students just starting out in college benefited the most from having a mentor. When they step foot in the academic world for the first time, first-time students greatly benefit from the guidance, encouragement, and affirmation provided by mentors. Because the mentoring style and efficacy are affected by the institution's structure and the professors' talents, a personalised plan would be better than a generic one. Reduced teacher turnover and increased institutional engagement are two ways in which intentional mentoring benefits retention and student achievement. These results may be of special interest to Chinese lawmakers and officials engaged in the expanding private education industry due to the severe competition for outstanding teachers and the critical need of maintaining good staff morale.

### CONCLUSION

Finally, this study's findings highlight the significance of mentoring programs in improving job satisfaction for academic library faculty members working at public Chinese institutions. Qualitative research based on anecdotal evidence shows that mentoring has positive effects on mentees' emotional well-being, level of engagement with the institution, and growth as professionals. In the right contexts and with the backing of upper management, mentoring programs may create a more interactive and cooperative work environment. Having a mentor at work increases people's satisfaction levels in both types of schools. For a mentoring relationship to be successful, the mentor's presence isn't enough; they also need to provide constant, high-quality assistance. According to the study's findings, assisting others is the most crucial aspect of mentoring. Some instances of this support include helping people in

institutional settings learn social graces, providing psychiatric support, and guiding them in selecting a career decision. Researchers reported greater levels of work satisfaction when they had a mentor who often supplied excellent advice, according to the quantitative section of the study. Having a mentor who could provide them helpful criticism and advice increased librarians' job happiness, career advancement opportunities, and sense of library purpose. These endeavours may not be able to realise their maximum potential due to issues with time limitations, muddled goals, and inflexible organisational structures. As academic libraries adapt to new ways of teaching and learning made possible by technology advancements, culturally sensitive mentoring programs are taking on more importance. Future initiatives should aim to enhance existing programs so that they are more accessible, user-friendly, and adaptable to the evolving needs of library personnel. Improved morale and output in the workplace are the desired results.

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