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Community Focused Corporate Social Responsibility Activities and Their Perceived Effect on Employee Motivation: A Case of Sugar Manufacturing Firms in Western Kenya

Wasike Martin Shikuku

Adjunct Lecturer, Department of Management, Masinde Muliro University,
University of Science and Technology, Kenya

Dr. Janet Nangila Manyasi

Lecturer, Department of Business Administration,
Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, Kenya

Abstract:

Purpose – The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of the community focused CSR activities on employee motivation. A number of past studies done in the western world have established that there is a significant relationship between the CSR activities in the company and employee motivation. However, studies that support these propositions in an African setting and specifically Kenya are scarce. This paper therefore investigated the effect of community focused corporate social responsibility activities on the motivation of employees in sugar manufacturing firms in the western Kenya region.

Design/methodology/approach – The study employed a descriptive survey and correlation designs. Stratified random sampling was used to obtain a sample of 306 respondents from the research population. A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect primary data. Data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical tools with the help of the SPSS software 20.0. Reliability and internal consistency of the study was tested using Cronbach's alpha.

Findings - The results from the hypothesis testing indicated that there is a significant positive association between the community focused CSR activities and employee motivation. The study also sought to establish associations existing between the community focused CSR activities and different indicators of employee motivation in the company as identified by intrinsic motivation theories and the findings of the study pointed at there being positive associations. Five indicators of employee motivation namely job satisfaction, job achievement, job responsibility, job recognition and job growth were correlated with the community focused CSR activities in the company and the findings clearly showed some significant positive associations among the variables. Only two indicators of employee motivation which are job recognition and job growth showed some low associations between them and the community focused CSR activities in the company.

Originality/value – This paper addresses an important area that is under-researched academically and provides a basis for further research on the relationship between the CSR activities and employee motivation.

Keywords: Employee motivation, corporate social responsibility, local community

1. Introduction

The growing interest in Corporate Social Responsibility practices by business organizations around the world has seen many theorists and practitioners propose several approaches to understanding it. Despite this effort, research regarding the effect of CSR activities on employee motivation is still scarce. This study sought to examine the effect on community focused corporate social responsibility actions on employee motivation in the company.

1.1. Background

According to the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) report (1999), the definition of corporate social responsibility has been summarized as “the ethical behavior of a company towards society”. In particular, this means management acting responsibly in its relationship with the stakeholders who have a legitimate interest in the business, not just shareholders.

According to the council, business must accept greater accountability with corporate social responsibility, priority issues being human rights, employee rights, environmental protection, supplier relations and community involvement. The report favorably comments about Bill Gates of Microsoft Corporation amongst others, for their philanthropic work as part of their civic obligations and social responsibility behavior in giving back to society.

Several approaches to understanding corporate social responsibility practices have been proposed by several theorists and practitioners. Cochius (2006) has suggested that they be viewed from the various stakeholder perspectives i.e. employees, customers, suppliers and the local community, while Longo et al. (2005) have proposed an integrated approach with the reference to the creation of the moral value for all stakeholders.

The community focused corporate social responsibility actions are those practices related to the local community or the community within which the business operates. As part of their social responsibility, companies make infrastructural investments in roads, water systems, schools and hospitals (Aguilera et al. 2007).

Other community-related CSR activities include philanthropic activities such as helping the needy children, helping the diseased or handicapped in society or ethnic minorities by recruiting socially excluded people (European Commission, 2001; Ligeti and Oravec, 2009), providing financial support to social and other non-commercial community projects (Graafland and van de Van, 2006), launching community development activities and encouraging employees to participate in community projects (Papasolomou-Doukakis et al., 2005). These practices are seen as not only creating value for the community, but also for the company.

These community-related corporate social responsibility actions by companies are driven by different reasons and as a result they are classified as economic, legal, ethical or discretionary practices (Schwartz and Carrol, 2003).

People are always more willing to work for the companies whose strategies and policies are consistent with their moral standpoint and leads to employees' willingness to initiate, participate and contribute to social change initiatives, effects employee retention, inspires team work and boosts employee morale (Aguilera et al., (2007). Melynyte and Ruzevicius (2008) in their study carried out in 50 Turkish companies established that corporate social responsibility inspired team work. Based on their study, they further observed that employee initiatives are used as a strategic tool in order to encourage and strengthen cooperation and team work as well as improve the interrelations between employees and create a better working environment.

Turban and Greening (1997) found out that those corporate social responsibility activities that a company engages in are the factors that motivate people to choose that company as their employer. Also the company's appeal as a prospective employer is influenced by "the labor relations, relations with the society, environmental protection and the quality of production" (Strautmanis, 2008).

Heslin and Ochoa (2008) found out that the majority of students preferred a company that pays much attention to corporate social responsibility. Their study established that corporate social responsibility aspects were considered by jobseekers as their criteria for choosing a company to work for. According to Viswesvaran et al. (2004) in their contributions to the signaling theory which explains the importance of a good company's image, job applicants use social reputation to judge the working conditions in a company.

Aguilera et al. (2007) found out that employees care about socially responsible actions because they find that they share the same socially conscious values with the company. This is an important factor for most people because according to the social identity theory, working for a socially responsible company strengthens employees' self-image, helps them to identify themselves with the organization and fulfills their need for belonging and membership by encouraging social relationships both within the organization and between organizations (Turban and Greening, 1997). This study also demonstrated that socially responsible organizations are usually perceived as fair organizations and therefore employees are more likely to trust their company, feel the support, perceive high quality exchange relationships with the company and its management, feel pride and affiliation and behave in a similar way that is beneficial to the company.

According to Skudiene and Auruskeviciene (2012) both internal and external corporate social responsibility practices impact positively on internal employee motivation. People are also more motivated when they have a feeling that their work is important and see the positive impact of their work on the external environment (Armstrong, 2006).

Heslin and Ochoa (2008) found out that some employees are willing to get low salaries for a chance to work for a socially responsible company, while Turban and Cable (2003) established that a favorable company reputation raises employee morale, increases productivity and improves employee recruitment and retention.

Corporate social responsibility activities can also enhance employee satisfaction, commitment and loyalty (Viswesvaran et al., 2004; Brammer et al., 2007). Employees are also more loyal to their organization and are better motivated when the company engages into socially responsible actions (Melynyte and Ruzevicius, 2008).

Brammer et al. (2008) examined the impact of corporate social responsibility activities on organizational commitment and found out that the contribution of corporate social responsibility to organizational commitment is as great as job satisfaction. According to the findings of their empirical study, organizational commitment is especially influenced positively by the external corporate social responsibility activities.

It is however clear that some past studies that have examined the relationship between corporate social responsibility activities and employee motivation have not clearly distinguished between intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation for example as a form of autonomous motivation according to the self-determination theory (Deci and Ryan, 1985) has not been clearly distinguished from some form of internalized extrinsic motivation that arises from the process of "internalization" by some of these studies. Skudiene and Auruskeviciene (2012) for example have used the terms 'internal' employee motivation and 'intrinsic' motivation without attempting to bring out any differences that do exist between the two types of motivation.

"Internalization" as a process is defined as people taking in values, attitudes or regulatory structures, such that the external regulation of a behavior is transformed into an internal regulation and thus no longer requires the presence of an external contingency e.g. I work even when the boss is not watching (Gagne and Deci, 2005). The more fully a regulation has been internalized, the more autonomous will be the subsequent, extrinsically motivated behavior. According to the self-determination theory, internalization is a term that refers to three different processes namely introjection, identification and integration.

A regulation that has been taken in by the person but has not been accepted as his or her own is said to be introjected and provides the basis for introjected regulation. With this type of regulation, it is as if the regulation were controlling the person. Examples of introjected regulation include contingent self-esteem, which pressures people to behave in order to feel worthy and ego involvement, which pressures people to behave in order to buttress their fragile egos (Ryan, 1982). Introjected regulation is seen to be particularly interesting because the regulation is within the person but is a relatively controlled form of internalized extrinsic motivation (e.g. I work because it makes me feel like a worthy person). Being autonomously extrinsically motivated requires that people identify with the value of a behavior for their own self-selected goals.

With some identified regulation, people feel greater freedom and volition because the behavior is more congruent with their personal goals and identities (Gagne and Deci, 2005). They perceive the cause of their behavior as reflecting an aspect of themselves e.g. If nurses strongly value their patients' comfort and health and understand the importance of doing their share of the unpleasant tasks for the patients' well-being, they would feel relatively autonomous while performing such tasks e.g. bathing patients even though the activities are not intrinsically interesting.

According to Gagne and Deci (2005), the fullest type of internalization, which allows extrinsic motivation to be truly autonomous or volitional, involves the integration of an identification with other aspects of oneself that is, with other identifications, interests and values. With integrated regulation, people have a full sense that the behavior is an integral part of who they are, that it emanates from their sense of self and is thus self-determined. For example, if integrated, the nurses would not only identify with the importance of the activities for maintaining their patients' comfort and health, but regulation of the activities would be integrated with other aspects of their jobs and lives. Thus, the profession of nurses would be more central to their identity, they would be more likely to act in ways that are consistent with caring for people more generally, and they could come to appreciate the importance of doing uninteresting activities.

Integrated regulation according to (Gagne and Deci, 2005) is theorized to represent the most developmentally advanced form of extrinsic motivation and it shares some qualities with the other type of autonomous motivation, namely, intrinsic motivation. Integrated regulation does not, however, become intrinsic motivation, but is still considered extrinsic motivation (albeit an autonomous form of it) because the motivation is characterized not by the person being interested in the activity, but rather by the activity being instrumentally important for personal goals. In short, intrinsic motivation and integrated extrinsic motivation are the two different types of autonomous motivation (with identified extrinsic motivation being relatively autonomous).

Internalization is therefore a source of autonomous extrinsic motivation according to the self-determination theory, where an employee internalizes an external regulation and its underlying value. This type of motivation needs to be differentiated from intrinsic motivation which is derived from the work itself.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Quite a number of organizations in Kenya and around the world do engage in corporate social responsibility actions. Some reasons for this growing practice are legal while others are ethical or economical. But mostly, evaluations of corporate social responsibility activities have pointed out that the real motive for the company's corporate social responsibility behavior is only to attract more customers and sell more products rather than create some social value to its stakeholders (Skudiene and Auruskeviciene, 2012).

The increased interest in this area of corporate social responsibility activities by many organizations like the sugar manufacturing firms located in the Western part of Kenya has seen most of them develop some corporate social responsibility initiatives and policies to guide their social responsibility agenda and efforts. However, research in this area is still scarce and insufficient, more so, within the Kenya context. This scenario has led to lack of sufficient information concerning the effect of the community-related corporate social responsibility activities on the motivation of employees in these companies.

Also, although some previous studies have attempted to investigate the corporate social responsibility practices in companies and have demonstrated that these actions do impact positively on employee satisfaction, team work, self-image, their loyalty, their retention and trust, they have failed to address the question of the type of motivation and the type of social responsibility actions that affect it.

Without this information being made available, it will not be possible for these firms and others to consider the motivational value attached to their corporate social responsibility programmes and their efforts will not go beyond economic, legal and ethical considerations. This study therefore sought to establish how the community-related corporate social responsibility activities affect the motivation of employees in sugar manufacturing firms located in the Western Kenya region. External corporate social responsibility activities are those ones that involve socially responsible behavior related to the company's external stakeholders such as the local community.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Local Community-related CSR Activities

These are corporate social responsibility practices related to the local community. They comprise of all philanthropic activities such as sponsorship activities which include local sports and other cultural events. Also as part of their social responsibility, companies make infrastructure investments in roads, water systems, schools and hospitals (Aguilera et al. 2007). Other community-related CSR activities include helping the needy children, helping the diseased or handicapped in society or ethnic minorities by recruiting socially excluded people (European Commission, 2001; Ligeti and Oravec, 2009), providing financial support to social and other non-commercial community projects (Graafland and van de Van, 2006), launching community development activities and encouraging

employees to participate in community projects (Papasolomou-Doukakis et al., 2005). These practices are seen as not only creating value for the community, but also for the company.

2.2. Work Motivation

Work motivation has been defined as “a set of energetic forces that originate both within and as well as beyond an individual’s being to initiate work related behavior and to determine its form, direction, intensity and duration” (Latham and Pinder, 2005, p. 486). This definition clearly highlights the two types of motivation highlighted by Vroom’s Expectancy Theory (1964), namely intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

2.3. Extrinsic Motivation

Extrinsic motivation is the type of motivation based on extrinsic rewards which are external to the work and are associated with the company’s remuneration system that involves rewards such as a salary, some fringe benefits and performance related payments like bonuses. This kind of motivation only helps to keep a person on the job (Minbaeva, 2008).

2.4. Intrinsic motivation

Intrinsic motivation is that type of motivation based on the intrinsic rewards which are not external, but are embedded in the work itself. They include a feeling of satisfaction, a feeling of accomplishment, a sense of achievement, enjoyment of the task, meeting challenges, positive recognition, receiving performance feedback and being involved in the decision making process (Mosley et al., 2005; Greenberg and Baron, 2008; Mullins, 2006). This motivation is believed to result into a person’s effective job performance and it is a good reason why the relationship between the community-related corporate social responsibility activities and employee motivation in socially responsible companies should be established. This will make such organizations to maximize on the provision of such activities to the local community and use it as a strategic tool to boost the motivation and effective job performance of their employees.

According to Amabile (1993), a person is intrinsically motivated in the work when he/she seeks self-expression, enjoyment, interest, personal challenge or satisfaction of curiosity. In this case a person identifies with the value of the work. Also the people’s need to feel competent and self-determined forms the basis for intrinsically motivated behavior (Deci, 1973). Intrinsic motivation does not depend on external regulation or reinforcement because by engaging in an interesting activity, it is itself rewarding (Deci and Ryan, 2000).

The feeling of satisfaction with the activity, the work itself and accomplishment is derived from engaging in or doing what an individual like, meeting the challenge or finding an activity interesting (Ryan and Deci, 2000; Gagne and Deci, 2005; Deci and Ryan, 2008).

According to Armstrong (2006), other factors that influence intrinsic motivation include the feeling that the work is important, having control over one’s own resources, scope to use and develop skills and abilities, freedom to act and having opportunities for advancement. Intrinsically motivated people do become “ego-involved with their jobs, emotionally committed for doing well and take pride from the evidence that they are effective in furthering the objectives of the company” (Minbaeva, 2008, p. 8).

Intrinsic motivation is also a function of three basic psychological needs namely autonomy, competence and relatedness (Deci and Ryan, 2000). According to Reis et al. (2000), autonomy and competence are essential needs and are the most powerful on intrinsic motivation, while relatedness is considered as a fundamental social need.

Vansteenkiste et al. (2006) support the argument that relatedness plays a key role in the maintenance and enhancement of intrinsic motivation among employees. They claim that intrinsic motivation among employees can be enhanced by satisfying the need for relatedness, which is highly connected with values and beliefs of a group. This implies that intrinsically motivated employees do not engage in work because they expect extrinsic rewards, but because they feel a close relationship with and trust a company that they work for. Also intrinsically motivated employees are more emotionally engaged with the company they work for and as a result tend to relate their advancement to their work and the company’s advancements. In this sense, a positive attribution towards a company’s corporate social responsibility activities leads to the positive evaluation and response of employees.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey and correlation designs to investigate the effect of the community-related corporate social responsibility actions on employee motivation. The quantitative research approach was employed to investigate this relationship. Data was collected, coded and analyzed statistically to determine how the independent variable affects the dependent variable before drawing some reliable conclusions.

3.2. Target Population

The target population of the study comprised all the employees of the five Sugar Manufacturing Companies located in the Western part of Kenya.

3.3. Sample Design

The study employed the stratified random sampling technique in selecting respondents in order to come up with a representative sample of the target population. A sample of 306 respondents was selected using the precision rate of 5% and the confidence level of 95%. This technique boosted the validity and reliability of the study findings.

3.4. Research Instruments

Data was collected by use of questionnaires. The main questionnaire items were designed as statements (Likert items) on the research tool and measured on a five-point Likert scale. The Likert items sought to capture employees' feelings on the relationship between community-related CSR activities and employee motivation.

3.5. Data Collection Procedures

Before giving respondents questionnaires, a pilot test was done to sample information. In order to maintain efficiency, the questionnaire was self-administered by the help of research assistants.

3.6. Data Processing and Analysis

Data was cleaned before being coded. Descriptive statistics e.g. frequency tables were used to present, describe and examine relationships and trends within data. To test the reliability of this study, the SPSS software 20.0 was used to run a reliability test on the questionnaire items. A Cronbach's Alpha of 0.77 was obtained as shown in Table2 This gives a strong indication of the study reliability.

	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
Community-related CSR activities	0.77	10

*Table 1: Reliability Statistics
Source: Research Data (2015)*

In testing the hypothesis and measuring the associations between variables, inferential statistics was used. Correlation analysis was performed using the SPSS software 20.0 in order to examine the associations between the independent variables and the dependent variable. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient is a measure of linear associations between two variables and has the advantage of yielding a small standard error (Gall and Saunders, 2003). The coefficient of correlation (r), determines the degree (strength) of relationship and its value is between (-1) and (1). A value (0) implies no relationship, (1) implies a perfect positive relationship, (-1) means a negative relationship. An absolute value of (r) between 0.5 and less than 1 implies a strong relationship between variables. If the value of (r) is greater than 0.3 and less than 0.5, then the relationship is moderate. The relationship is weak if the value of (r) is less than 0.3.

4. Research Findings and Discussion

4.1. Introduction

Out of the sampled 306 respondents, 304 filled and returned the questionnaire. This yielded a response rate of 99.35% which is a high response rate.

4.2. Descriptive Statistics on the Variables

The respondents' views on the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable are presented in Table2 below with respect to frequencies and percentages.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	DISAGREE	7	2.3	2.3	2.3
	NEUTRAL	40	13.1	13.2	15.5
	AGREE	171	55.9	56.3	71.7
	STRONGLY AGREE	86	28.1	28.3	100.0
	Total	304	99.3	100.0	
Missing	System	2	.7		
Total		306	100.0		

*Table 2: Response Rate on the Effect of Community-related CSR Activities on Work Motivation
Source: Research Data (2015)*

4.3. Inferential Statistics on the Variables

The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to establish the associations between the independent variable and the dependent variable. Correlation was performed and the results are presented in Table 3 below.

Correlations			
		WORK MOTIVATION	COMMUNITY CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY ACTIVITIES
WORK MOTIVATION	Pearson Correlation	1	.671**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	304	304
COMMUNITY CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY ACTIVITIES	Pearson Correlation	.671**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	304	304

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

Table 3: Correlation Coefficients between Community-related CSR Activities and Employee Motivation

Work motivation as a dependent variable was correlated with the local community-related CSR activities as an independent variable and had a correlation of 0.671. The local community-related CSR activities were also correlated with the indicators of work motivation as identified by intrinsic motivation theories to identify the one with the highest correlation. The results showed that job achievement had the highest correlation at 0.707. This was followed by job responsibility at 0.680 and job satisfaction at 0.662. Other indicators of work motivation which are job recognition and job growth had a correlation of 0.237 and 0.219 respectively.

4.4. Hypothesis (H_0) Testing

The hypothesis of this study states; 'There is no significant statistical relationship between the local community-related CSR activities and employee motivation'. To test this hypothesis, the results of correlation shown in Table 3 above were used. The results in the table show that there is a significant positive correlation between the local community-related CSR activities and employee motivation at 0.671. Also results of correlation had shown that there is a significant positive correlation between the local community-related CSR activities and job satisfaction at 0.662, job achievement at 0.707 and job responsibility at 0.680 as indicators of work motivation. However, the results of correlation indicate no significant relationship between this independent variable and job recognition as well as job growth as indicators of work motivation. Job recognition had a correlation of 0.237 while job growth had a correlation of 0.219.

These results indicate that the local community-related CSR activities in the company have a positive association with employee motivation. Hence the null hypothesis was rejected. This shows that as the company engages more in community-related CSR activities, employee motivation is increased.

5. Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

Statement of Hypothesis	Correlation	Decision	Conclusion
H_0 . There is no significant statistical relationship between the local community-related CSR activities and employee motivation	($r=0.671$)	H_0 rejected	Significant positive association was found at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 4: Hypothesis Testing

5.1. Summary of Findings

The objectives of this study were realized by collecting data using a self-administered questionnaire and analyzing it using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The SPSS software 20.0 was used to prepare and organize data for analysis and to test the significant levels of correlation existing between the variables of the study. In order to achieve the purpose and meet objectives of the study, a descriptive design was used. A sample of 306 respondents was obtained statistically using a precision rate of 5% and a confidence level of 95%. Out of 306 sampled respondents, 304 participated in the study. The study established that the local community-related corporate social responsibility activities had a positive influence on employee motivation hence the study rejected the null hypothesis (There is no significant statistical relationship between the local community-related CSR activities and employee motivation). The correlation was positive at ($r=0.671$). In summary, the findings of the study indicated that there is a significant positive relationship between the two variables, thus failing to support the hypothesis.

5.2. Conclusion

This study is significant as compared to other studies conducted in the same area. It has looked at the community-related CSR activities and how they affect employee motivation in the company. From the literature reviewed, many studies generally considered the relationship between the CSR activities and employee motivation without any proper categorization being done. This study has therefore shed some more light on how this type of CSR activities can be used to promote and improve employee motivation in the company.

Corporate social responsibility behavior has also in most cases been misinterpreted and misunderstood to mean a company just being responsible to the community that it operates in, so that to reduce its negative externality effects on the community. This study

however has demonstrated that corporate social responsibility is something more than that and indeed a very important strategic tool that can be used to motivate employees in the company. According to the findings, there should be a comprehensive corporate social responsibility policy in the company which addresses all the community-related CSR activities if the company has to achieve any total motivation for its employees.

5.3. Recommendations

The study has demonstrated the existence of a significant positive association between the local-community-related CSR activities and employee motivation in the company. This therefore suggests that a low level of the community-related CSR activities in the company hurts employee motivation, while a high level of the same activities in the company promotes employee motivation and performance in the company.

Employee motivation being a very important ingredient for employee performance and hence overall corporate performance, this study recommends that socially responsible companies should seek to promote and create more employee motivation through adopting appropriate corporate social responsibility strategies and policies. Apart from engaging in these activities for legal, economic and ethical reasons, these companies can also push their employee motivation agenda through good corporate social responsibility policies and behavior.

Secondly, cooperation is encouraged between the government at all levels and the socially responsible companies on corporate social responsibility issues. In the light of the above findings, the study makes the following policy suggestions and further research recommendations:

First, government legislation and policies should aim at promoting the efforts of companies engaging in corporate social responsibility behaviour. The study highly recommends that the government encourages and supports the corporate social responsibility activities in socially responsible companies through appropriate tax cuts.

This move will also encourage those companies that are not fully socially responsible to come on board by coming up with appropriate corporate social responsibility policies and strategies that will boost their performance and at the same time make a contribution to community development. In addition to this, the government can also encourage socially responsible behavior in companies by rewarding highly socially responsible companies so as to boost their performance and as a result contribute to national economic development.

Also from the limitations identified in this study, a number of possible research openings arise which when explored have the potential to shed some more light on the impact of corporate social responsibility activities on employee motivation in the company.

It has been noted from the literature reviewed, that not many studies have been undertaken on the issue of the relationship between CSR activities and employee motivation in the company particularly within an African context. Therefore, more research in this area should be encouraged especially in the Kenyan context. This may include the replication of this study but in a different industrial setting.

The next opportunity for further research lies in the target population used for this study. The study used employees of the five sugar manufacturing firms located in the western Kenya region as its target population, but further research could focus on a much larger population drawn from other companies in the region or even the whole country. Apart from employees, further research could also focus on students as prospective company employees and other job seekers to determine whether the CSR activities in the company influence their choice of a company they wish to work for or whether the CSR activities in the company contributes to the positive image of the company in the eyes of its prospective employees.

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