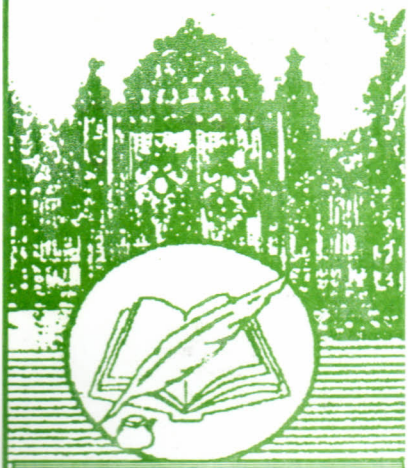

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EDITORIAL

This issue of GLJ presents eight well researched articles covering different aspects of the library and information science profession among which are organisational commitment, utilization of library journals, information seeking habits of bus drivers, records availability in archives, students' use of library resources, competencies required in information delivery, users' preference of books over e-materials and quality assurance in theses supervision and ethical decision making in academic library management..

In the particular case of organizational commitment, Ikonne and Ikonne examined issues affecting job satisfaction and organizational citizenship using some university libraries in southwestern Nigeria as case study and came up with some very useful recommendations on how to get the best out of library employees. The concern of Otunla and Bankole was under-utilisation of journals in Bowen University and how to surmount this problem which has over the years been the concern of librarians in this part of the world.

The article by Simisaye dug into the grassroot problem of how bus drivers in Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State go about seeking for information affecting their profession and personal lives. He came up with some recommendations that could be implemented to meet their demand for day-to-day functional information. On his own part, Onyeneke addressed the issue of accessibility to the National Archives, Enugu. He treated this issue comprehensively and suggested what could be done to attract more users to the facility.

Still on the use of library resources, Ebijuwa, Oyetola and Ogunmodede carried out a research on how the pre-clinical students of Ladoke Akintola University of Science and Technology, Ogbomosho in Oyo State, Nigeria make use of their library and recommended ways improvement could be brought to how they access information while Amalahu and Laoye looked into the competencies required in information service delivery using as case studies some selected university libraries also in southwestern Nigeria. Similarly, Onoyeyan and Awe carried out an investigation into the preference of print materials over e-materials by law students in some Nigerian university law schools and came up with suggestions on how improvement could be brought to e-material use.

Finally, we have these two very interesting articles bothering on ethical issues. The one by Unegbu looked into the issue of quality assurance in theses supervision in Nigerian universities from different perspectives touching on ethics, morality, inter-personal relationship and other salient angles that affect student-lecturer interactions at the graduate level thus providing serious food for thought for the two parties. The second one by Egberongbe examined the issue of ethics in decision making in academic library management from both the theoretical and practical angles. We hope that our readers will enjoy this issue of GLJ.

A.T. Agboola
Editor-in-Chief

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ETHICAL DECISION MAKING AND ACADEMIC LIBRARY MANAGEMENT: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

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ABSTRACT

The changing role of academic libraries enabled by rapid advances in information and communication technology (ICT) and changing user expectation has necessitated development of new competencies to improve service delivery. The changing environmental factors have spawned new ethical issues other than the existing ones. Ethical decision making is identified as essential to ensuring effective organisational performance as well as its success. Three fundamental theories of ethical decision making – Kohlberg's (1969); Trevino (1986); Rest's (1986) – are reviewed to establish variables that influence ethical decision making in Nigerian academic libraries. This is in light of the changing organisational developments occasioned by global advances in technology. A derivation of Shorb's (2004) model of ethical decision making is used to propose a model of library administration model of ethical decision making that seeks to connect basic values, interceding processes and final resulting actions for Nigerian academic libraries.

Key words: Ethics, Ethical decision making, Academic Libraries,. Library Management, Moral issues, values.

INTRODUCTION

Ethical decision making in organisations is important to the development of organisational science. It requires a careful consideration of priorities such as those that often require difficult decisions that challenge long held beliefs and priorities. Ethical decision making in organisations is regarded as an important means of ensuring successful organisational performance. Winston (2005) notes that the issue of ethical decision-making in organisations is highlighted by examples from nearly every facet of public life and professional life, which includes the educational and academic communities. Examples of public issues on ethical decision- making in business in recent years include incidents such as the Enron and Global Crossing scandals (Goles, et al., 2005); Non-profit organisations, such as the American Red Cross, the United Way and colleges and universities. Companies have been found to be involved in cases of misappropriation of resources, misrepresentation of financial performance, and bad marketing practices (Silverman & Schwab, 2004).

In higher education, Jacobson (2004) reports of how investigations into recruitment in the area of sports have revealed scandals involving colleges and universities. Simons (2011) also reports of a large-scale downloading of resources by Swartz, Havard University's Safra Center for Ethics research fellow. The academic community has consequently, focused on finding out what leads people to behave unethically in order to give advice to managers for formulating strategies that prevent unethical behaviour. For

academic libraries, there have been significant changes globally, due to the application of information and communication technology (ICT). As vital parts of institutions, academic libraries generally grow with their parent institutions. This changing role of academic life therefore requires new competencies in academic librarians to meet the growing range of services for their user communities.

However, despite the increased attention to ethics in higher education, there is very little theoretical and empirical examinations of ethical decision making, especially in academic libraries. Winston (2005) confirms the paucity of literature in ethical decision making in both library and information services and library and information science education. He however agrees that there is discussion on the professional values that are intended to guide decision making in the profession. Hernon *et al.* (2002, in Winston, 2005) highlight a number of the "attributes" needed by academic library leaders as those related to effective decision making, exhibiting "good judgement and integrity" and making "tough decisions".

Ethics is defined as "the study of standards of conduct and moral judgment" (Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary, 1983). It is described in this context as a concept of right and wrong behaviour that defines whether people's actions are moral or immoral. Shorb(2004) refers to ethics, as the philosophical reflection on morality which offers a standard by which to measure decisions. She emphasises an increasing use of ethical analysis and terms by public administrators in proffering workable solutions for organisational improvement. She concludes that 'these explorations may lead to a useful model for ethical decision-making in libraries.

An ethical decision is described as one that "is pursued irrespective of decision makers' subjective concerns, appearances, fear of retribution, or other personal consideration" (Bowen, 2008). Jones (1991) defines ethical decision as that which "is both legal and morally acceptable to the larger community", while an unethical decision is either that which is illegal or unacceptable to the larger community. This definition according to him is drawn from Kelman and Hamilton's (1989) "definition of crimes of obedience, which is consistent with the definitions used, either explicitly or implicitly, by some authors in the field of ethics" (Jones, 1991).

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Haines and Leonard (2007, p. 6) have identified several theories of ethical decision-making in organisations, three of which are discussed below. Kohlberg's (1969) model of cognitive moral development has been considered as the theoretical foundation for many theories of ethical decision-making in organisations. It is employed as a tool for exploring questions related to how organisational members think about what is right or wrong in a particular situation. It also addresses how the cognitive processes of ethical decision-making become more complex and sophisticated with development. Trevino (1986) extends Kohlberg's model by developing a theory of ethical decision-making that focuses on the characteristics of the individual making the decision. Trevino's decision-making model links moral judgment to moral action and proposes that individual characteristics influence links throughout the process of

decision-making rather than mere judgments of whether the behaviour was acceptable and ethical behaviour.

Five individual characteristics that affect the process of ethical decision-making were identified by Trevino as:

(i) moral reasoning level;
(ii) education;
(iii) ego strength;
(iv) field dependence; and
(vi) *locus* of control.

Rest's (1986) four-component model of ethical decision-making is also based on Kohlberg's model. The model proposes that individuals must first recognize a moral issue before making a moral judgment, then establish moral intent (choosing what to do), and finally engage in moral behaviour. Rest *et al* (1986) suggests, similar to Trevino, that demographic and personality characteristics affect the links between the four stages. Both Trevino (1986) and Rest (1986) identify moral evaluation through moral philosophy (deontological and teleological) support in making moral judgment.

Consequently, a number of ethical decision-making models have been developed in line with those of the three theorists mentioned above. The Jones model (1991) of ethical decision-making is described as very comprehensive and represents overall agreement regarding the variables that influence ethical decision making and introduces the concept of "moral intensity". Moral intensity is defined as the "extent of issue-related moral imperative in a situation" (Jones, 1991). The foundation of Jones' model lies in Rest's(1986) four-stage process. He assumes that ethical choices are not just individual decisions, but are determined by social learning in the organization. Ferrell and Gresham (1985) established that "moral intent" of the individual is moderated by significant others, individual moderators, and opportunity. Trevino (1986) identified both individual and situational moderators as affecting the relationship between making a moral judgment and engaging in moral behaviour.

Shorb (2004) proposed a simple model for ethical decision-making in library administration. Her model explains the relationship between the various components of ethical decision-making by creating a chain between the most basic underlying values, the intervening ethical processes, and the actions that finally result. Shorb (2004) holds the view that effective use of the model involves a progressive development from values to principles, to decisions and to actions. She further draws a distinction between intended action and the supporting principles. Shorb also draws comparison between ethical decision models and professional code of ethics such as the American Library Association (ALA) Code of Ethics (2004) and Ranganathan's five laws of library science. She regards both principles as making reference to professional values but offering very little guidance for decision-making on ethical grounds.

PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES

Philosophy divides assumptions about ethics into two basic schools of

thought – utilitarianism (teleological) or consequential and deontological or nonconsequential (Christians, *et al.*, 2001; Day, 1997; De George, 1999; Donaldson and Werhane, 1999; Ferrell and Gresham, 1999; Jaksa and Pritchard, 1994). These two approaches, according to Ferrell and Gresham, (1985) differ radically in terms of judging ethical behaviour. Teleological or consequential philosophy deals with the moral worth of behaviour determined by the consequences outcomes of the behaviour. Deontological or non-consequential philosophy on the other hand determines the ethics of a situation by the principles or duties involved rather than the consequences. In other words its decision making is based on its moral fortitude rather than the consequences

UTILITARIAN PHILOSOPHY

Utilitarianism is widely defined as a philosophical concept that is based on the utilitarian paradigm of making a decision to serve the greater good or the greater happiness by serving the greatest number of people (Bowen, 2004). Different forms of utilitarianism provide differing means of analyzing what is ultimately considered "good" or "bad". In the utilitarian calculation of potential outcomes, these are considered as happiness, pleasure, intrinsically valued virtues and knowledge. As further explained, utilitarianism bases decisions on maximizing good outcomes and while it minimizes bad outcomes for the greater good or the greater number of people (Bowen, 2004; Ferrell & Gresham, 1985), it. pursues the objectivity of a decision based on its moral fortitude rather than relying on its consequences.

DEONTOLOGICAL PHILOSOPHY

Deontological philosophy stresses the methods or intentions involved in a particular behaviour focusing on the justice and rights principles. The philosophy was founded by an eighteenth century German scholar Immanuel Kant (Sullivan, 1989). His theory is based on the understanding that people have a rational moral reason that is capable of "determining how we should act and... without relying on any prior desires". Those "prior desires" were labelled subjectivity, pure self-interest, or prudential concerns desires" (Sullivan, 1989). Kant (In Bowen, 2004) maintains that "morality necessarily presupposes freedom". Therefore, one component of deontology is the freedom to engage in moral analysis. According to Sullivan (1989), Kant regarded autonomy as "a moral absolute", meaning that it is a necessary condition for ethical decision making. Kant expounded the theory that one has the autonomous power to act as an independent decision maker; using one's will and reasoning as the only bases for an action. For an action to be ethical, one must desire to do the right thing and uphold one's moral duty. Kant's deontological philosophy therefore provides a clear guide to ethical decision making that can be implemented in counselling the dominant coalition on ethical issues. This paper however relies on both because of their relevance in application to library and information science.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

The conception of the paper was based on the following objectives:

(i) To bring to fore, awareness of effective library practise as an ethical imperative.

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libraries reflects on the cultural tide and reasserts the need for establishing core values as a basis for management practice.

In Nigeria, ethical decision making has bordered mainly on crimes such as mutilation, defacement and book thefts without first paying attention to environmental factors, i.e. internal and external factors as core values that contribute to effective and successful library management. Internal factors denote issues concerning personnel understanding of library ethics; while external factors concerns issues affecting users and other stakeholders. Secondly, without considering technological advancement that has challenged academic libraries to embrace approach to moral thinking, to enhance effective decision making. This paper therefore addresses the need for ethical decision making for academic library services in Nigeria for maximisation of organisational effectiveness in the changing professional environment. The objective of the paper is to bring to fore awareness of effective library practise as an ethical imperative. Consequently, the paper proposes a simple model based on Rest's (1986) four-component model of ethical decision making (recognising moral issues, making moral judgements, establishing moral intent, and implanting moral actions) as shown in Figure 1. The model proposes that individuals must first recognise a moral issue before making a moral judgement, then establish moral intent (choosing what to do), and finally engage in moral behaviour (Hanes, 2007). Johnson (2011) considers this constellation of components as forming 'the basis of most ethical decision making studies'.

FIGURE 1: REST'S (1986) FOUR- COMPONENT MODEL OF ETHICAL DECISION MAKING

Source: Haines and Leonard (2007, p.7).

Sims (1999) on the other hand indicates that previous studies merely concentrated on differences in ethical decision making but did not consider differences in personal and organisational factors which contributed towards those differences. It is equally noted that development of ethical norms often varies across different contexts and that consensus on ethical norms within each milieu helps define acceptable behaviour for that setting. Rest's model can therefore be made more relevant by identifying specific issues for specific work environments (See figure 2). Issues for consideration in ethical decision making in academic library settings could range from delinquent readership, book theft or mutilation, abuse of resources, staff dishonesty and other obsolete professional practices. These could be addressed in the models.

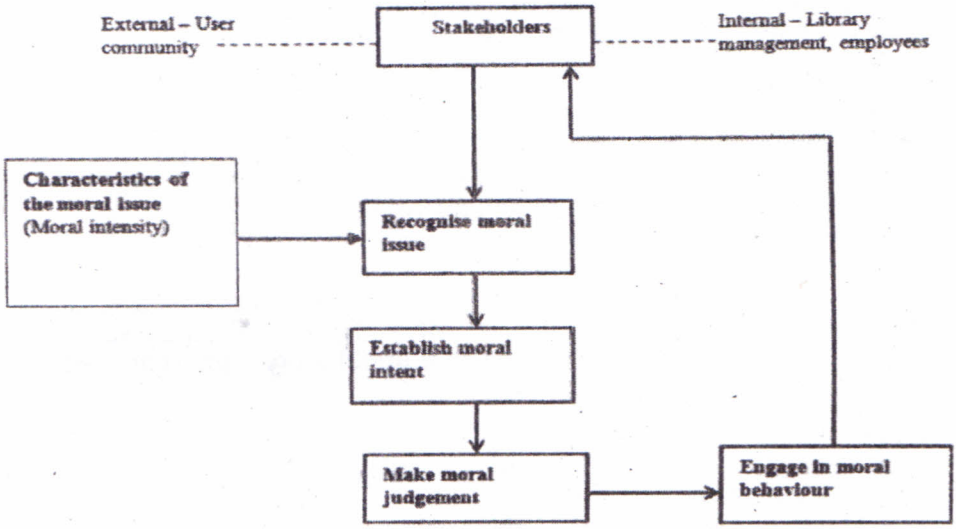

FIGURE 2: A MODEL OF ETHICAL DECISION MAKING FOR ACADEMIC LIBRARIES ADAPTED FROM REST'S (1986) FOUR COMPONENT MODEL OF ETHICAL DECISION MAKING

RECOGNISING MORAL ISSUES

The process of moral decision making begins with a problem, or recognition of the moral issue. A person must recognise that his or her decision or action will affect others. Jones (1991) asserts that "a moral issue is present where a person's action, when freely performed, may harm or benefit others. Therefore, recognising moral issues involves a person recognising that he or she is a moral agent. He emphasised that a person who fails to recognise a moral issue will fail to employ moral decision making schema. Schemas are described as networks of knowledge organized around life events (Rest *et al.*, 2006) and are used when encountering new situations or information. Jones (1991) further argues that a variable called moral intensity determines the degree to which the interests (effects of the decision) of individuals are considered. Butterfield *et al.* (2000) and Singhapakdi *et al.* (2000; 1999) agree with this assertion in separate studies in which they confirm that moral intensity is a significant predictor of ethical perceptions. They claim that individuals are more likely to recognize the moral nature of the issue when it has negative consequences and when the individuals perceive social consensus. They also believe that increases in perceived moral intensity increases the perception of an ethical problem.

MORAL JUDGEMENT

Recognition of a moral issue provides an avenue for a moral judgement. Kohlberg's (1976) model of moral development becomes relevant at this point. It addresses how the cognitive processes of moral decision making become more complex and sophisticated with development. Kohlberg (1986) postulated that individuals progress through a series of moral stages just as they do physical ones, with each stage more advanced than the one before. He explains that people do not only engage in more complex reasoning as they progress up the stages, but they also become less

self-centred and develop broader definitions of morality. Robin *et al* (in Haines & Leonard, 2007) also observe that moral judgement is influenced by the perceived importance of the behaviour. The philosophical foundation of Kohlberg's model and its reliance on concrete stages of moral development is however criticised (Rest *et al.*1999; Weaver, 2003). Critics hold the contention among others that Kohlberg based his post conventional stage on Rawls's justice-as-fairness theory and made deontological ethics superior to other ethical approaches. They also note that the model applies more to societal issues than to individual ethical decisions. A great many psychologists challenge the notion that people go through a rigid or "hard" series of moral stages, leaving one stage completely behind before moving to the next. They argue instead that a person can engage in many ways of thinking about a problem, regardless of age.

MORAL INTENT

According to Newman (1993), the ethical quality of a decision is a direct function of moral intent developed about the decision. Moral intent is manifested by the use of moral criteria in decision-making describing moral criteria as those that have to do with individual rights and values, adherence to social contract, norms of fairness and obligations to a profession or organisation to act consistent with cannons of ethical behaviour. He stresses that a participative decision climate is one way of enacting deontological values that, in turn, support the development of moral intent. Moral intent is also enhanced by individual characteristics, while cognitive moral reasoning is considered as the extent to which a decision maker is able to use ethical principles to work through ethical dilemmas (Kohlberg; Rest; in Newman, 1993).

Fiske and Taylor (In Jones, 1991) indicate that moral intensity may also play a role in establishing moral intent, citing proximity, an element of moral intensity, as likely to affect perceived control and in turn, attributions of responsibility. Similarly, Fishbein and Ajzen (1985) (In Jones 1991) tried to present a similarity between moral intent and moral behaviour arguing that "the best predictor of a person's behaviour is his intention to perform the behaviour" especially when the intention and behaviour are measured at the same level. Jones and Ryan (1997) extend this notion further, explaining that moral approval (probation) helps to establish moral intent with movement toward moral behaviour.

MORAL BEHAVIOUR

The fourth component of Rest's model involves acting on a person's moral intentions, that is, engaging in moral behaviour (Jones, 1991). Once an individual creates a moral judgment, or determines whether a particular action is just, fair, or morally right, the individual is bound to lean toward a particular path of action, either making an ethical or unethical choice. Rottig and Umphress (2011) observe that behavioural intention is the likelihood or tendency of an individual to lean toward one of these two choices. Sharing the views of Jones (1991); and Jones and Ryan (1997) argue that subsequent to behavioural intention, the individual will take action; and that based on the theory of reasoned action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) and the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1991), it can be argued that intention leads to actual behaviour. Recognizing an ethical issue and solving it

means determining whether a specific behaviour or decision is right or wrong (Trevino, cited by Rottig & Umphress, 2011). Hence, ethical or unethical decision making describes a situation in which a decision of right or wrong needs to be made based on ethical considerations. Rottig and Umphress therefore suggest the need for organizations to develop explicit and formal guidelines (such as codes of ethics and codes of conduct) specifying what behaviour is acceptable.

VALUES AND LIBRARIANSHIP

Library organizations are a good cultural "fit" to effect transformational change towards a learning culture. They play a critical role in the education of citizens, lifelong learning and the provision of free and equitable access to information to support full participation in society. The library profession has long been associated with professional values championing intellectual freedom, equity of access and privacy (Mavrinac, 2005). In order to guide and assist members in decision making a *Core Values Task Force* was set up in 1999 by the American Library Association (ALA) to recommend a clear statement of value for the profession (ALA, 2003). Eleven values identified by the *Task Force* were embraced by the library profession as follows:

- Access: equity of access to all library users.
- Confidentiality/Privacy: protects user privacy for intellectual freedom.
- Democracy: fosters an informed citizenry through free and equal access to information.
- Diversity: values and supports diversity through resources and services.
- Education and Lifelong Learning: supports a learning society and lifelong learning.
- Intellectual Freedom: champions intellectual freedom and resists censorship.
- Preservation: preserves information for future generations.
- The Public Good: asserts libraries are fundamental institutions in a democratic society.
- Professionalism: supports professionally qualified personnel in the provision of library services.
- Service: strives for the highest level of service to all through excellence in the profession and by encouraging professional development of co-workers.
- Social Responsibility: contributes to the improvement and solution of societal problems (ALA, 2003).

Values also provide a moral, intellectual and philosophical foundation for organizational decision making and the standards by which organizations assess what they do (Gorman, 2000; Stoffle *et al.,* 2003). They answer the question "How do we want to act, consistent with our mission, along the path toward achieving our vision?" It is thus important for organizations to develop agreed upon organizational values to guide decision making, assist in solving ethical dilemmas, assess outcomes and drive its change agenda. Congruency between values and an organization's actions, policies, processes, structure, etc., is vital because congruency builds trust, respect and authenticity (Sims, 2011).

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

A number of practical implications are embedded in the discussion of Rest's model. Jones (1991) rightly indicates that existing theoretical models have ignored the effect of characteristics of the moral issue on ethical decision making and behaviour in organisations. The foregoing philosophical perspectives indicate that academic libraries approach to ethical decision making is mainly deontological with the academic library administrator focussing more on values because of its influence on his or her actions. The rapidly changing technological environment of academic libraries requires that its administrators embrace more elements of the utilitarian or teleological approach to moral thinking which, according to Shorb (2004) 'would further consider the end effects of decision making in libraries'.

Robertson and Fadil (1999) proposed in their conceptual model the need for an organization to develop explicit and formal guidelines (such as codes of ethics and codes of conduct) specifying what behaviour is acceptable. Most importantly, communication of codes of conduct and codes of ethics along with other value systems are facets of the organizational ethical infrastructure, which facilitates moral awareness by activating and sensitizing an individual's moral radar. They stressed that these changes will engender increasing interaction with user community, providing more opportunities for ethical decision making, concluding that an organization's formal ethical infrastructure is a crucial antecedent of moral awareness.

The increasing pressure on academic libraries to demonstrate value for investment poses a challenge as their priorities are to meet and exceed the needs of the user, by providing them with optimal library experience. Academic libraries are faced with inability to maintain the status quo due to lack of formal training to address the prevailing unethical user behaviours.

To a large extent, essential areas of library services that provide ethical issues and which are unexplored are copyright, confidentiality and privacy. This underscores the essence of formal ethics training and education for the academic library personnel in Nigeria. This will ensure proper understanding of addressing ethical practices and challenges as well as handling of ethical situations for improved user services.

Different studies on ethical decision making have equally suggested the implementation of codes of ethics and implementing training programmes as a means for controlling unethical behaviour (Haines & Leonard, 2007) and understanding of ethical leadership and decision -making (Winston, 2006). Finally, inclusion of code of ethics model as surveillance and sanctioning mechanisms in academic libraries will enrich the model with both deontological and teleological approach to decision making.

CONCLUSION

An attempt has been made in this paper to address issues concerning ethical decision making and to propose a simple model based on Rest's four-component model of ethical decision making as a practical advice that can help academic libraries in Nigeria to make better and more effective ethical decisions. However, this is only a first step in the process. The challenge for professionals is to spend time working with this model,

considering what are the key ethical concerns that drive their own decisions, and practicing applying them in real decisions. Doing this would not only improve the way those particular decisions are taken, but would build awareness and ethical reasoning skills, so that ethical considerations become easier to recognise, analyse and address effectively. Future studies must also among others consider the relationship between each of the organizational factors and their effects on moral judgment and moral action.

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