



An Investigation about the Effectiveness of Core Self-Evaluation and Psychological Climate of Organization in Work Engagement among Teachers

Hosein Gholami^{1*}, Yousef Dehghani², Mohammad Behrouzi³

¹Master's Graduate, Department of Educational Sciences, Farhangian University, Bushehr Branch, Bushehr, Iran.

²Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Persian Gulf University, Bushehr, Iran.

³Assistant Professor, Department of Educational Sciences, Islamic Azad University, Bushehr Branch, Bushehr, Iran.

*Corresponding Author

Abstract: *The present study was conducted to investigate the effectiveness of core self-evaluation and psychological climate of organization in work engagement among teachers. The self-evaluation is one's inference that he makes about himself. Today, these evaluations are based on an individual's major beliefs, standards, and norms and determine the overall level of health, well-fare, and the individual's value. The statistical sample was estimated at 100 people selected randomly. The research instruments were core self-evaluation scale of Judge et al. (2003) and the UTRECHT work engagement scale of Salanova and Schaufeli (2007). The reliability was calculated using Cronbach's alpha; self-esteem is 0.84, self-efficacy is 0.75, locus of control is 0.75 and neuroticism is 0.70. The results of the simple correlation coefficient show that there is a significant and positive correlation between self-evaluation and teachers' work engagement ($r=0.34$, $p<0.01$). Moreover, the results obtained from repeated measures regression analysis show that the correlation between predictor variables and employees' work engagement for all specimens with the multiple correlation of $R=0.441$, is significant at $P<0.001$. This linear combination accounts for about 19% of the variance of the dependent variable. The results showed that there is a significant correlation between psychological climate, self-evaluation and work engagement. There is a significant relationship between the components of psychological climate and work engagement. The results showed that the components of the psychological climate can predict work engagement. The components of self-evaluation can predict work engagement, and among the variables, self-esteem and neuroticism components play the key role in the explanation of work engagement.*

Keywords: *Core Self-Evaluation, Work Engagement, Psychological Climate, Teachers.*

INTRODUCTION

Today, proper and optimal education can be considered as one of the basic pillars of each society in each country, and teachers and educators as practitioners of the issue are considered as one of the most important factors in the promotion of educational goals. The survival, sustainability, and development of each society depend on the quality of education. The disintegration, degradation and recession of any society can also be the undesirable outcome of poor education in that society.

Self-evaluation is considered as a useful instrument for enhancing the quality of employees and increasing the effectiveness of the organization. Today, to succeed in the ever-changing business environment, the organizations need knowledge, insights and creativity of their staff. Given the rapid development in human knowledge, everything is changing rapidly. Organizations as the open systems have external interactions with the environment and they need to respond to environmental changes in order to survive.

Since human resources are the most important factor in the organizations, the equipping and preparation of these resources is critical to face the change, and all organizations with any kind of mission should allocate the greatest amount of its capital, time, and program to cultivate humans in different dimensions (Jafarzadeh, 2007).

In recent years, research on positive psychology has created an innovative approach for many social psychologists. This approach focuses on the scientific study of positive experiences, happiness and psychological well-being and positive human resources rather than an emphasis on the symptoms of sadness and negative concepts. Core self-evaluation points to the inferences and fundamental conclusions made by individuals about who they are and how they perceive themselves. Self-evaluation is also defined as the fundamental and basic measurements that individuals make about their values, abilities, talents and competencies.

This concept consists of four dimensions: a) self-esteem: the overall value that a person considers for himself as a human being; (b) generalized self-efficacy: an evaluation that a person makes in different situations; c) neuroticism: the person's desire to have a sense of security and peace, being brave and strong, and to show less reaction to everyday events; (d) locus of control: beliefs that a person has about the causes of his life events. If people consider events as a result of their own behavior, the locus of control is internal. The common point about these four attributes is the core self-evaluation, which is a fundamental evaluation that a person makes of his value, effectiveness, and ability to act as an individual (Kasmar et al., 2009).

Schaufeli et al., (2001) believe that work engagement is defined as a positive mental state toward the work, which is characterized by characteristics such as being vigorous, devoted to work, and absorbed. Work engagement refers to a consistent and common psychological state rather than a specific and temporary state. The three dimensions of work engagement are: vigor, devotion, and absorption to work. Among the factors that have recently attracted the attention of researchers is core self-evaluation (Bakker and Demerouti, 2008).

Several studies have been recently conducted to investigate a great personality trait called core self-evaluation. This construct was first introduced by Judge et al. (1997). In their view, core self-evaluation is a broad, latent, and higher-order trait and is characterized with four personality traits in personality literature. These four attributes are self-esteem, generalized self-efficacy, neuroticism, and locus of control.

An individual's evaluation of self or his judgment about his own value is called self-esteem. Self-esteem is the total evaluations that an individual makes about his traits through disagreement or agreement in Coopersmith self-esteem inventory. Therefore, given the outstanding role of work engagement in increasing the productivity and morale of the workforce, this study seeks to investigate the relationship between the effectiveness of the core self-evaluation and the psychological climate of the organization in teachers' work engagement in order to provide a ground for improving the working conditions and releasing individuals from psychological pressures related to the workplace, family and in particular social environments.

Career and personal resources can affect the important outcomes at the workplace through the influence on work engagement (Rich et al., 2010). In the research by Bakker and Demerouti (2008), it is evident that tolerance, optimism, self-efficacy and self-esteem are personal resources that have been considered in the model of work engagement as causal factors in work engagement. Core self-evaluation which encompasses the four personality dimensions of self-esteem, generalized self-efficacy, neuroticism, and locus of control can be seen as an important personal resource that can estimate employees' work engagement (Rich et al., 2010). Core self-evaluation is the fundamental measures and assessments that individuals make about their values, competencies, qualifications (act, adaptability, success, and perseverance), and their talents and abilities (in control of life) (Judge et al., 2005). Judge et al. (1998) introduced the concept of core self-evaluation to explain employees' attitudes and behaviors. Core self-evaluation is defined as the fundamental and basic measures and evaluations that individuals make about their values, competencies, qualifications (act, adaptability, success, perseverance, and talents and abilities in control of life). These

evaluations range from positive to negative. People with higher core self-evaluations are more motivated to act better, they tend to select and maintain challenging businesses, they are more satisfied with their work and lives, they report lower levels of stress and fewer conflicts, and they can better adapt to changes and take advantage of opportunities. These people are looking for high challenges in their work, and they have more job opportunities and receive more rewards from their situations. They also work better in situations where positive interpersonal relationship is necessary, in stressful conditions, or in situations that requires stress tolerance and have better physical health status (Judge, 2009). Individuals with high core self-evaluation are able to adapt to external barriers and experience desirable emotions and attitudes, while individuals with low core self-evaluation believe that their actions are futile or they can do little to correct bad situations; therefore, they are prone to experiencing negative emotions and feelings. People with high core self-evaluation are optimistic, have self-confident, are effective, efficient, and adaptable, they believe in their power and causality and they highly value and respect themselves. Ultimately, employees with higher core self-evaluation have higher work engagement and experience less stress. The experiences of these states and attitudes would lead to their better performance and makes them reluctant to leave their jobs (Rich et al., 2010). Self-esteem, generalized self-efficacy, neuroticism, and locus of control are among the most important personal resources which have a positive effect on work engagement (Bakker and Demerouti, 2008). Therefore, career and personal resources can affect the important outcomes in the workplace through the influence on work engagement (Rich, 2010; Thayer, 2008; Saks, 2006). One of the main objectives of this research is to identify the effectiveness of psychological empowerment training in increasing the self-esteem and social adjustment of teachers, educators and so on. Social adjustment is a science that seeks to understand the nature and causes of individual behaviors in social situations. The term "behavior" is not just apparent behaviors but includes all latent behaviors, e.g. individual's feelings and thoughts (Bahadori, 2000).

Research on work engagement is one of the most important studies conducted in relation to teachers and educators in Iran, and various organizations and scholars in Iran and around the world considered this issue in order to resolve teachers' problem. In this research, the researcher attempts to investigate the relationship between core self-evaluation and work engagement among teachers and to determine the effectiveness of core self-evaluation as an independent variable in increasing teachers' work engagement as a dependent variable. In this research, the researcher is trying to investigate the effectiveness of psychological empowerment training in increasing the self-esteem and social adjustment of teachers and educators and determine the effectiveness of psychological empowerment as independent variable in increasing self-esteem, core self-evaluation and social adjustment as dependent variables.

Methodology

The research community includes 100 teachers and educators within the age range of 30 to 55 years old. Thus, 100 teachers were studied in Bushehr. The population was selected using availability sampling method. The sample size according to the size of community was determined to be 80 people based on sample size formula from the limited community and with an acceptable error value of 0.09. In order to be more reliable, an acceptable error value was considered as 0.07 with the sample size of 100 people.

The instruments used in the present study to measure the core self-evaluation were questionnaires developed by Judge, Erez, Bono and Thorsen (2003). The questionnaire consists of 12 items and has four subscales including: self-esteem, locus of control, self-efficacy and neuroticism. Answers were provided on a 5-point scale, which was set from 1 (totally disagree) to 5 (totally agree). The minimum score for each subscale in this questionnaire was 3 and the maximum score was 15. In the present research, the reliability was calculated using Cronbach's alpha and self-esteem was 0.84, self-efficacy was 0.75, locus of control was 0.86, and neuroticism was 0.75.

The validity of core self-evaluation questionnaire was obtained by correlating the total score of the components with question scores and the values of self-esteem, self-efficacy, locus of control and neuroticism were computed as 0.58, 0.56, 0.63, and 0.58, respectively. All of these coefficients are significant at $p < 0.001$.

A questionnaire related to the psychological climate used in the present research was developed by Kevin and De Cotiis (1991) and translated by Moradi and Na’ami (2007). The questionnaire has eight subscales of autonomy, cohesion, trust, pressure, support, recognition, fairness, innovation; the set of items related to these eight subscales has been set in 40 expressions. In the present research, the reliability obtained using Cronbach’s alpha was 0.56 for autonomy, 0.48 for cohesion, 0.52 for trust, 0.58 for pressure, 0.46 for support, 0.50 for recognition, 0.56 for fairness, and 0.62 for innovation. For the validity of psychological climate questionnaire with 8 subscales of autonomy, cohesion, trust, pressure, support, recognition, fairness, innovation, each subscale has been assessed on the basis of a five-point scale from the totally disagree to the totally agree (there are 5 items for each subscale). The validity of psychological climate questionnaire was obtained by correlating the total score of the components with question scores and the values of autonomy, cohesion, trust, pressure, support, recognition, fairness, and innovation were computed as 0.56, 0.48, 0.52, 0.58, 0.46, 0.50, 0.56, and 0.60, respectively. All the coefficients are significant at $p < 0.001$.

In the present research, work engagement was measured using a 17-item questionnaire developed by Salanova and Schaufeli (2001). The answers to this scale are set from totally agree to totally disagree, and the scoring scale is from 1 to 5. The minimum score in this questionnaire is 17 and the maximum score is 85. In this research, the researcher correlated the total score of the questionnaire with the total score to assess the validity of this questionnaire, and the results are represented in the table below. Moreover, using Cronbach’s alpha, the reliability of this questionnaire was 0.92 and the validity coefficient was 0.74. The reliability and reliability coefficients are favorable and they are significant at $P < 0.001$.

Research Findings

There is a significant correlation between core self-evaluation, psychological climate and work engagement of teachers.

The results of H_1 are represented in Table 1. As shown in Table 1, there is a positive and significant and positive correlation between core self-evaluation and work engagement ($r=0.34$, $p < 0.01$). There is a significant and positive correlation between psychological climate and work engagement ($r=0.30$, $p < 0.01$).

Table 1: Correlation Coefficients between Core Self-Evaluation, Psychological Climate and Work Engagement

Dependent variable	Predictive variables	Correlation coefficient (r)	Significance level (p)	Sample size
Work engagement	Core self-evaluation	0.34	0.001	100
	Psychological climate	0.30	0.001	

With respect to literature review, the results obtained from the correlation between core self-evaluations, and between core self-evaluation, psychological climate, and work engagement of teachers can be explained that teachers may have positive core self-evaluation with favorable perceptions of the psychological climate at the workplace, which have increased work engagement. They avoid their mental obsession with the weaknesses and dysfunctions and focus on their strengths and good qualities and increase their self-esteem, generalized self-efficacy, neuroticism, and locus of control, thereby increasing their career enthusiasm.

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant correlation between the dimensions of the psychological climate (autonomy, cohesion, trust, pressure, support, recognition, fairness, innovation) and work engagement of the teachers. The results of H_2 are represented in Table 2. As shown in Table 2, there is a significant correlation between the above mentioned variables. There is only a significant inverse correlation between pressure and work engagement.

Table 2: Correlation Coefficients between Psychological Climate and Work Engagement

Dependent variable	Predictive variables	Correlation coefficient (r)	Significance level (p)	Sample size
Work engagement	autonomy	0.44	0.001	100
	cohesion	0.38	0.001	
	trust	0.42	0.001	
	pressure	-0.26	0.001	
	support	0.37	0.001	
	recognition	0.42	0.001	
	fairness	0.21	0.001	
	innovation	0.39	0.001	

In general, it can be concluded that psychological climate perception is an important factor in promoting work engagement of educators, and taking it into account and the promotion of all such perceptions among teachers can increase their productivity. Personal resources are aspects of self that express individuals' perception of their own ability in controlling and affecting their environment successfully. Self-esteem, generalized self-efficacy, neuroticism, and locus of control are among the most important personal resources that have a positive effect on work engagement. Therefore, personal and career resources can affect important outcomes in the workplace through the influence on work engagement.

Hypothesis 3: The components of core self-evaluation (self-esteem, generalized self-efficacy, neuroticism and locus of control) have the potential to predict work engagement of teachers. Table 3 shows the regression results for the four dimensions of core self-evaluation with work engagement.

Table 3: Regression Results for the Four Dimensions of Self-Evaluation with Work Engagement

Dependent variable	Predictive variables	R	R ²	F P	Regression coefficients				Indices
					1	2	3	4	
Work engagement	Self-esteem	0.368	0.135	47.96 0.001	0.368 6.92 0.001				β t p
	Self-efficacy	0.386	0.149	26.69 0.001	0.328 5.87 0.001	0.123 2.19 0.029			β t p
	Neuroticism	0.432	0.187	23.31 0.001	0.282 5.02 0.001	0.068 1.20 0.229	0.212 3.77 0.001		β t p
	Locus of control	0.441	0.194	18.25 0.001	0.255 4.41 0.001	0.031 0.511 0.610	0.203 3.61 0.001	0.101 1.64 0.102	β t p

As represented in Table 3, according to the results obtained from repeated measures regression analysis show that the correlation between predictor variables and employees' work engagement for all specimens with the multiple correlation of R=0.441, is significant at P<0.001. The results also show that the linear combination accounts for about 19% of the variance of the dependent variable. According to this table, it is evident that the correlation coefficient in the first step that only the self-esteem component was entered in the regression equation was 0.368. The self-esteem component accounts for about 13% of the variance of work engagement. In the second step, by the addition of self-efficacy to the regression equation, the correlation coefficient was 0.386. The unique variance added by the self-efficacy variable was about 1%. In the third step, by adding neuroticism to the regression equation, the coefficient of multiple correlations was 0.432. The unique variance added by the neuroticism variable was about 4%. In the fourth step, the locus of control component was added to the regression equation and the multiple correlation coefficient reached 0.441. The unique variance added by the locus of control variable was about 1%. Based on the results, H₃ was also confirmed.

Hypothesis 4: The dimensions of the psychological climate (autonomy, cohesion, trust, pressure, support, recognition, fairness, innovation) have the potential to predict work engagement. Table 4 shows the regression results for the eight dimensions of psychological climate with work engagement.

Table 4: The Regression Results for the Eight Dimensions of Psychological Climate with Work Engagement

Dependent variable	Predictive variables	R	R ²	F P	Regression coefficients								Indices	
					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
Work engagement	autonomy	0.439	0.193	71.99 0.001	0.439 8.48 0.001									β t p
	cohesion	0.494	0.244	48.65 0.001	0.339 6.19 0.001	0.249 4.54 0.001								β t p
	Trust	0.548	0.300	42.84 0.001	0.321 5.06 0.001	0.108 1.79 0.073	0.279 4.88 0.001							β t p
	Pressure	0.604	0.365	42.89 0.001	0.309 8.11 0.001	0.117 2.04 0.042	0.276 5.05 0.001	-0.255 -5.51 0.001						β t p
	Support	0.607	0.369	34.78 0.001	0.308 6.10 0.001	0.113 1.97 0.049	0.200 2.58 0.010	-0.253 -5.48 0.001	0.100 1.37 0.172					β t p
	Recognition	0.624	0.390	31.61 0.001	0.289 5.76 0.001	0.091 1.60 0.109	0.156 2.02 0.044	-0.285 -5.67 0.001	0.023 0.299 0.765	0.198 3.21 0.001				β t p
	Fairness	0.625	0.390	27.05 0.001	0.290 5.77 0.001	0.092 1.61 0.107	0.157 2.01 0.004	-0.255 -5.56 0.001	0.025 0.330 0.742	0.208 3.17 0.002	-0.024 -0.45 0.653			β t p
	Innovation	0.627	0.393	23.83 0.001	0.289 5.74 0.001	0.091 1.60 0.110	0.143 1.81 0.070	-0.253 -5.52 0.001	-0.003 -0.04 0.968	0.190 2.80 0.005	-0.037 -0.67 0.503	0.079 1.07 0.284		β t p

As shown in Table 4, according to the results obtained from repeated measures, regression analysis show that the correlation between predictor variables and employees' work engagement for all specimens with the multiple correlation of R=0.627, is significant at P<0.001. The results also show that this linear combination accounts for about 39% of the variance of the dependent variable. According to the table, it is evident that the correlation coefficient in the first step that only the autonomy component was entered in the regression equation, was 0.439. The autonomy component accounts for about 19 percent of the variance of work engagement. In the second step, by adding cohesion to the regression equation, the coefficient of multiple correlations was 0.494. The unique variance added by the cohesion variable was about 5%. In the third step, by adding trust to the regression equation, the coefficient of multiple correlations reached 0.548. The unique variance added by the trust variable was about 6%. In the fourth step, the pressure component was entered in the regression equation and the coefficient of multiple correlations reached 0.604. The unique variance added by the pressure variable was about 6%. In the fifth step, by adding the support component to the regression equation, the coefficient of multiple correlations was 0.607. The unique variance added by the support variable was about 0.4%. In the sixth step, the recognition component was entered in the regression equation and the coefficient of multiple correlations, was 0.624. The unique variance added by the recognition variable was about 21%. In step seven, by adding fairness to the regression equation, the coefficient of multiple correlations has reached 0.625, and the unique variance added by the fairness variable was about 0.1%. Finally, in step eight, by adding the innovation component to the regression equation, the coefficient of multiple correlations reached 0.627.

The unique variance added by the innovation variable was about 3%. Based on the results, H₄ was also confirmed.

Discussion and Conclusion

As the results in simple correlation tables represent and using Pearson correlation coefficient, we conclude that there is a significant correlation between core self-evaluation and work engagement. The results of simple correlations showed that there is a significant and positive correlation between core self-evaluation and work engagement of women. The results of the hypothesis testing are consistent with the results of Edwin and Naomi (2012). The core self-evaluation of individuals affects their perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, decisions, and activities in different aspects of work and life. Although core self-evaluation is a relatively new approach, researches conducted on the theory of core self-evaluation have shown that this approach is related to many important occupational and non-occupational outcomes; it is related to issues such as job satisfaction, motivation, job performance, stress, happiness, life satisfaction, leadership, job search behaviors, and so on. It seems that this construct has a great value for researchers in different fields (Boyer and Muesli, 2007).

The results of simple correlations showed that there was a significant and positive correlation between the positive dimensions of psychological climate (autonomy, cohesion, trust, pressure, support, recognition, fairness, innovation) and work engagement, and there was a significant and negative correlation between the pressure component and work engagement of teachers. The results of testing this hypothesis are consistent with the results by Abraham (2012).

The results of multiple correlations showed that there is a significant correlation between core self-evaluations (self-esteem, generalized self-efficacy, neuroticism and locus of control) and work engagement of teachers, and the four dimensions of core self-evaluation can predict the work engagement of teachers.

The repeated-measure multiple regressions method was used to test H₄ that whether there is a significant correlation between the dimensions of the psychological climate (autonomy, cohesion, trust, pressure, support, recognition, fairness, innovation) and work engagement. The results showed that there are significant multiple correlations between the dimensions of the psychological climate (autonomy, cohesion, trust, pressure, support, recognition, fairness, and innovation) and work engagement, and the eight dimensions of the psychological climate can predict work engagement. The results of this hypothesis testing are consistent with the results by Abraham (2012). In the literature review of organizational sciences, the psychological climate perceptions have received great attention and these perceptions have been used to predict various types of organizational and individual variables. At the level of individual analysis, researchers have reported a correlation between employees' perceptions of the workplace and the outcomes such as job satisfaction, exhaustion, work engagement, organizational civic behavior, and job performance. Concentrating on the organizational or group level, psychological climate perceptions are used to predict group-level outcomes such as rate of accidents, customer satisfaction, and financial performance. Based on the assumption that employees' perceptions have had important effects on both organizational and individual outcomes, Joe's review has been widely used as a diagnostic tool for organizational improvement and changes in practical situations (Long Lin et al., 2010). The work engagement as a concept reflects the tendency to positive psychology. Being optimist at workplace and lack of negative outcomes such as job burnout, mistakes and vandalism in the workplace, and weakness are very remarkable with respect to the maintenance of human resources. Work engagement focuses on human resources' abilities, optimal performance, and positive experiences at work (Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

Although there are researches and theories about core self-evaluation of the organizations over the past three decades in other countries, not enough attention was given to this area of research in Iran. Therefore, one of the requirements of this research is to fill in the existing information gap about the relationship between core self-evaluation and work engagement of teachers. The information about these relationships, however, provides the necessary background for conducting experimental research and, subsequently, changes core self-evaluations of the organization, and thereby increasing work engagement

of teachers and educators; moreover, it increases the effectiveness, efficiency, and physical and mental health of the staff which are the ultimate goals of the organizations in the third millennium.

In general, people with higher core self-evaluations are more motivated to act better, they tend to select and maintain challenging businesses, they are more satisfied with their work and lives, they report lower levels of stress and fewer conflicts, and they can better adapt to changes and take advantage of opportunities. These people are looking for high challenges in their work, and they have more job opportunities and receive more rewards from their situations. They also work better in situations where positive interpersonal relationship is necessary, in stressful conditions, or in situations that requires stress tolerance and have better physical health status (Judge, 2009). Studies show that many organizations conduct surveys about the employees' feelings and attitudes towards their jobs every year. Work engagement is one of the most important research variables concerning the organization and it is also a key variable in researches and theories about the organizations and few studies have been conducted on work engagement so far.

According to the results of the research, core self-evaluation has been effective in increasing work engagement of employees. On the other hand, the self-esteem and the other components of core self-evaluations have been determined. It is suggested that core self-evaluations in predicting the work engagement will have a significant focus on the four dimensions of self-esteem, generalized self-efficacy, neuroticism, and locus of control, since any improvement in these four components will increase work engagement of employees.

Based on the findings, and given that there are significant and multiple correlations between the components of core self-evaluations (self-esteem, generalized self-efficacy, neuroticism and locus of control) and work engagement of employees, and considering the greater role of self-esteem and neuroticism in increasing work engagement, it is recommended that to improve work engagement of teachers and educators and provide the ground for enhancing these personality traits in the workplace. According to the findings mentioned in the same research that there is a significant correlation between the positive and negative dimensions of core self-evaluation and work engagement of the teachers and educators, it is recommended that to improve work engagement to an optimal level, they help individuals have a positive perception of the work environment and the dominant psychological atmosphere. One way to increase work engagement of employees is that managers show consistency in their behavior with employees since behavioral consistency ensures generalized self-efficacy, neuroticism, locus of control and self-esteem. It is also worthwhile to precisely determine the criteria that are the basis for judging employees, and to apply them without bias since this will protect the organization from the risk of falling on routineness, and it will lead to employees' trust and consistency of their behavior which in turn result in an increase in their work engagement. The variation in perceptions that make up the psychological climate is probably the result of individual differences between employees, different situations (such as organizational forms and practices), and differences in person-situation interaction. Perceptual bias and other individual factors may create different perceptions for different people from the same environment. It is suggested to the planners of the organization that, by adhering to the principle that human resources are the most important capital of each organization, and by the provision of the environment and conditions that individuals can select a job based on their knowledge and skills, enhance work engagement of employees and this way, increase the productivity of the organization.

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