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PERCEPTIONS OF ACADEMIC LIBRARIANS ABOUT KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT (KM): THE EXPERIENCE OF BAYERO UNIVERSITY, KANO, NIGERIA

Abubakar, Bappah Magaji & Auyo, Musa Abdu
Department of Library and Information Sciences,
Bayero University, Kano, PMB 3011, BUK, Kano, Nigeria
E-mail: bmabubakar.lis@buk.edu.ng, magaji02@yahoo.com,
bmagaji02@gmail.com & musaauyo@yahoo.com

Abstract
The purpose of the research was to examine the perception of academic librarians' about Knowledge Management (KM), including their awareness and its contributions to academic library services in Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria. The research adopted quantitative methodology with cross-sectional survey design. Four research questions were framed to guide the study. The population of the study was all the 30 academic librarians of Bayero University, Kano (BUK). A structured questionnaire that was self-developed and titled "Questionnaire for Bayero University, Kano (BUK) Academic Librarians" was used for the study. The data was analyzed through descriptive statistics with tables to further interpret the outcomes. Findings of the study indicate that majority of the respondents, 80% were aware of KM with a reasonable number of them indicating high level of awareness. The study similarly, revealed that majority of the respondents 62.5% became aware of KM through independent study. The results also showed that respondents had positive perceptions towards KM with majority of them 62.5% expressing that KM can encourage LIS professionals to gain new skills and experiences in addition to their traditional skills and so it is a welcome development in the LIS profession. Finally, the study concludes by stressing that integrating KM into academic library services has become inevitable for obvious reasons.

Keywords: Academic librarians, Perception, Knowledge management, Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria

Introduction
It is obvious that knowledge is gradually becoming the major factor of production over labour, land and capital. In other words, knowledge is an indispensable resource to any type of formal organization, i.e. whether public or private in nature. As a result, there is collective realization of the significance of knowledge to industry, institutions and the society in general. Knowledge Management (KM) has been considered over and over by institutions, governmental organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and corporations etc. Additionally, KM is regarded as one of the emerging and new phenomena in this 21st century. According to Sinotte (2004), KM arose from many different areas, and is concerned with multiple disciplines, is ever-changing, and has a most annoying habit of branching off into a myriad of directions.

Knowledge Management (KM) is somewhat a new area of study which integrates a wide range of concepts, theories and practices from different subject areas. The emergence of knowledge has led to the transformation of post-industrial information society into knowledge-based society (Roknuzzaman and Umemoto, 2008). According to Kordab and Raudeliūnienė (2018) KM started to be known as a discipline in the beginning of the 1990s, and over the years it became of interest to many scholars. According to Wang, Zhang, Zhang, Li and Wang (2018), "with the advent of the era of knowledge economy, knowledge management has become an irreversible trend in the global economy and has overwhelmingly challenged all traditional knowledge, values, thinking modes and survival strategies" (p.1317). Moreover, it is imperative to note that KM is multidisciplinary in nature stretching upon a number of concepts from diverse disciplines which has led to ownership debates among them.

Knowledge Management according to Husain and Nazim (2013) can be seen as an area of study that focuses on the various management processes that facilitate finding, identifying, capturing, creating, storing, sustaining, applying, sharing and renewing of knowledge to improve an organization's performance. In simple terms, Knowledge Management consists of passing the right knowledge to the right people at the right time. Furthermore, Knowledge Management has the functions of making tacit knowledge explicit by systemizing the massive amounts of knowledge and collectivizing personal knowledge

(Xiao, 2020). Al-yahya (2009) in Adeniran and Olorunfemi (2020) stated that KM is broadly perceived as a prototype that consists of unified policies and methods in organizations which enhances knowledge transfer and knowledge sharing within the organizational environment. Knowledge Management has several objectives particularly in academic libraries. Kude, Nalhe and Mankar (2012) have highlighted four objectives of KM in university libraries as follows:

i.   To promote the collection, processing, storage, and distribution of knowledge;
ii. To promote the relationship between library and users;
iii. To create knowledge repositories and manage knowledge as an asset; and
iv. To organize the value of knowledge and improve effective research with the library

From the foregoing, it is critical to note that the application and practice of KM has permeated various organizations such as the business sector, higher education, libraries and information centres, governmental agencies etc. Additionally, with the current transformation and development in all sectors including the information based organizations, application of knowledge management has become inevitable.

Bayero University, Kano (BUK) is one of the second generation universities in Nigeria. The University became a full-fledged university in 1977, when it was upgraded from Abdullahi Bayero College under the then Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria to full university status and was renamed (Abbas, 2016). The university library supports the University in achieving its goals of teaching, learning and research. Taking the Library as a case study, this research attempts to examine how academic librarians in BUK perceive Knowledge Management through quantitative research approach.

Statement of the Problem
Knowledge Management (KM) which is synonymous with innovation is an emerging area of study that is concerned with the identification, capturing, sharing and utilizing of organization's knowledge both explicit (recorded) and implicit (tacit). Additionally, KM brings about new innovations and improvement in organizations' services and

performance such as in the case of academic libraries. According to Sarrafzadeh (2008), Knowledge Management is now widely recognized as a key factor in organizational success. However, despite its significance as highlighted above, the awareness and acceptability of KM by librarians, particularly in developing countries is low, which could either lead to positive or negative perceptions as the case maybe. Moreover, little empirical researches have been conducted in academic libraries in Nigeria, and specifically in Bayero University, Kano to determine the perception of librarians regarding Knowledge Management. It is against this backdrop, that this study investigates how academic librarians perceive Knowledge Management in Bayero University, Kano.

Research Questions
The study was guided by the following research questions:
1. To what extent are academic librarians in Bayero University, Kano aware of Knowledge Management (KM)?
2. What are the sources of academic librarians' awareness about KM?
3. What is the perception of the academic librarians towards KM?
4. What contributions can KM make to academic library services?

Objectives of the Study
The specific objectives of the study are:
1. To find out the extent of awareness of academic librarians in Bayero University, Kano about Knowledge Management (KM).
2. To ascertain the sources of academic librarians awareness about KM.
3. To examine the perception of the academic librarians towards KM.
4. To determine the contributions of KM to academic library services.

Literature Review
The researchers identified some substantial body of literature on KM as it relates to libraries and information centres, particularly academic libraries. Although, Koloniari and Fassoulis(2017), cited in Wang and Wang (2020), have observed that the adoption of KM by the Library

and Information Science (LIS) professionals was very slow regardless of the potential of KM for the management of libraries and advancement of LIS. Nonetheless, KM is a valuable means through which libraries, university libraries in particular could improve their services in the knowledge economy. This can be achieved through creating an organizational culture of sharing knowledge and expertise within the library. This, however, dependedon positive perceptions. Additionally, organizations including academic libraries can also create and leverage on their knowledge resources through the initiation of suitable Knowledge Management programmes. Koloniari and Fassoulis (2016), stated that though KM has attracted the interest of the LIS literature since the early1990s, there was however, dispute as to whether LIS and KM are distinct fields of specialization. Meanwhile, Islam, Islam and Razzak (2020) observed that KM and LIS are interdisciplinary in nature, and are concerned with the identification, acquisition, capturing, processing, storage, retrieval, and use of knowledge. While KM dealt with tacit as well as explicit knowledge, LIS concentrated mainly on explicit or recorded knowledge.

Wellman (2009) stated that Knowledge Management involves setting an environment that allows colleagues and university constituencies to create, capture share and leverage knowledge to improve their performance in fulfilling institutional missions. Darkil (2005) also maintained that KM is the systematic coordination of people, technologies, processes and organizational structure through the use of knowledge and innovation. This coordination is achieved through creation, sharing, and application of knowledge. Similarly, Wang and Wang (2020) viewed KM as the process of identification, documentation, and sharing of both "explicit" and "tacit" knowledge. Ondari-Okemwa and Minishi-Majanja (2005) considered knowledge management as the use of information technology and tools, business practices, standardized and best processes and culture aimed at developing and sharing knowledge within an organization. According to Ali and Khan (2015) KM involves the management of explicit knowledge (i.e. knowledge that has been codified in databases, web pages, documents, etc.) and sharing of tacit knowledge (i.e. skills, expertise, or know-how).   According to Adetunji, Oladejo and David (2016), Knowledge Management is 'to have the right knowledge at the right time in the right format and at the right place.

Based on the foregoing definitions, Xiao (2020) argued that KM in libraries covered two aspects: (1) Knowledge Management for external users and (2) internal Knowledge Management by libraries. Various studies on diverse aspects of KM have been conducted by scholars particularly in recent years. For instance, Sarrafzadeh (2008) conducted a study that examined the implication of KM for the library and information professions found that KM has the capability to bring library services even closer to the users through adoption and application of latest KM tools such as web 2.0, social media, virtual and online reference services. From another angle, Islam, Agarwal and Ikeda (2017) investigated the effect of KM on service innovation in academic libraries in 39 countries. The study found that knowledge capture/creation and knowledge application/use both significantly impact service innovation in academic libraries. Also, the effect of knowledge/sharing and transfer on innovation was found to be insignificant. Similarly, a study conducted by Shah, Rizvi and Jumani (2018) determined the perception of Ph.D approved supervisors in Pakistani universities through a quantitative approach revealed that there was absence of definitions, plan, strategies, framework, unit and coordinated point for KM in universities in Pakistan.

In the same manner, Islam, Islam and Razzak (2020) explored the problems of KM practices in libraries and information centres in Bangladesh through survey method. The study found that a good number of respondents never tried to promote knowledge exchange and sharing programmes among staff and users. Likewise, half of the respondents were not interested in encouraging staff members in the talent competition in all categories. Al Ahbabi, Singh, Balasubramanian and Gaur (2019) examined employee perceptions of the impact of KM processes on public sector performance in the United Arab Emirates public sector. The study found that all four KM processes (knowledge creation, knowledge capture and storage, knowledge sharing and knowledge application and use) had a positive and significant impact on operational, quality and innovation performance of public sector in the UAE. From another perspective, Goddard (2020) conducted a literature based survey to assess the impact of KM tools on innovation within an academic library context in Canada. The study revealed that an effective KM strategy supported innovation and learning within an organization.

Kiwelu, Tibenderana and Ogbonna (2020) investigated professional tacit knowledge transfer among professional librarians at the Kampala International University (KIU) Uganda. The study revealed that mentorship, workshops, seminars, meetings, job rotation, consortia engagements, were the professional tacit knowledge transfer practices used by librarians at KIU. Similarly, lack of adequate tacit knowledge transfer infrastructure was identified as one of the major challenges confronting knowledge transfer among the librarians. Ajiferuke's (2003) investigation found out the role of information professionals in KM programmes in Canada and revealed that most of the information professionals working in Canadian organizations with Knowledge Management programmes were involved in such programmes. Besides, the major roles performed by the information professionals in Knowledge Management programmes included the design of information architecture, development of Knowledge Management taxonomies or classification system, as well as content management of their organization's intranet.

In another study, Krishnamurthy and Arali (2015) reported that 98.2% of academic librarians of engineering colleges, Coinbontore, India were aware of the KM practice through many sources such as conference attendance, discussion with colleagues etc. For their part, Sarrafzadeh, Martin and Hazeri (2010), reported that 82.2% of LIS professionals perceived and regarded KM as the survival factor to libraries to respond to challenges they faced in a continuously changing environment.

From the Nigerian perspective, Abubakar and Abubakar (2018) investigated the awareness of academic librarians about KM in three (3) selected federal universities in North-western Nigeria through quantitative approach. The research found that, majority of the librarians were aware of KM and its undertakings mostly through personal readings and research. In a related study, Abubakar (2017) explored the awareness and perception of library schools managers' about KM in universities in North-east and North-west geo-political zones of Nigeria through qualitative methodology. The study which involved seven (7) heads of LIS schools, established that participants had high level of awareness about KM as an emerging development in the LIS profession. Equally, majority of the participants agreed that KM is a welcome development in the LIS profession. Umar, Hassan, Sani,

Mohammed, Kokami and Bello (2018) also conducted a study that examined the awareness of LIS professionals in federal university libraries in North-western states of Nigeria have about KM through quantitative technique. The study found that majority of the libraries covered by the study had no formal KM structure for knowledge sharing. It was also found that there was high level of awareness among academic librarians about the word KM.

Methodology
This study used quantitative data gathering techniques to understand the perceptions of academic librarians about KM. Quantitative research methodology with cross-sectional survey design was employed to collect data for the study. The population of the study was 30 academic librarians of Bayero University, Kano. Total sampling technique was used because all the 30 academic librarians were used as sample size for the study. A set of questionnaire entitled "Questionnaire for Bayero University, Kano (BUK) Academic Librarians" was used for data collection. The questionnaire was self-developed by the researchers in accordance with the objectives of the study and was based on literature and views of colleagues. Furthermore, the instrument was subjected to Cronbach Alpha reliability test and a reliability coefficient of 0.79 was found. Copies of the questionnaires were personally administered by the researchers and were retrieved accordingly. Data gathered from the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages to further elucidate the findings.

Findings and Discussion
Based on the objectives of the study, this section presents the results of the investigation. The data collected shows that a total of thirty (30) copies of the questionnaire were administered on the respondents (see Table 1).

Bio-data of the Respondents
The respondents were asked about their demographic information. The summary of their responses is presented in table 1.

Table 1: Bio-data of the Respondents

Gender of the Respondents		
Gender	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Male	14	46.7%
Female	16	53.3%
Total	30	100%
Rank		
Assistant Librarian	05	16.7%
Librarian II	16	53.3%
Librarian I	07	23.3%
Senior Librarian	-	-
Principal Librarian	02	6.7%
Total	30	100%
Highest Educational Qualification		
Qualification	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Ph.D	02	6.7%
MLIS/MLS	21	70%
Bachelor's Degree (BLIS)	06	20%
Others	01	3.3%
Total	30	100%

The study captured the general bio-data of the respondents based on gender, rank and educational qualification. Table 1 showed that majority of the respondents 16 (53.3%) were female compared with males who were 14 (46.7%). Hence, it is obvious from the table that female librarians were the majority. The table also showed the rank of the respondents, it was found that those at the Librarian II cadre were higher in number with 16 (53.3%); followed by those in Librarian I cadre with 7 (23.3%). The findings also showed that those at the Assistant Librarian Cadre were 5 (16.7%), whereas the least was from the Principal Librarian Cadre with only 2 (6.7%) respondents. This clearly indicated that there are younger academic librarians in the University library.

The qualification of the respondents indicated that those with MLIS/MLS were higher in number with 21 (70%); followed by bachelor's degree holders with 6 (20%). While only 2 (6.7%) were in possession of

Ph.D degree. The table clearly indicated that most of the respondents were Master's degree holders.

Awareness of Academic Librarians' about Knowledge Management (KM)
Respondents were asked to indicate whether they were aware of KM or not. The summary of their responses is in table 2.

**Table 2: Awareness of Academic Librarians about Knowledge
              Management (KM)**

Respondents Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	24	80%
No	06	20%
Total	30	100%

Table 2 showed the awareness of academic librarians regarding KM. As presented in the table 2. Majority 24 (80%) of the respondents answered in the affirmative that they were aware of KM, while only 6 (20%) of the respondents indicated that they were not aware of KM. This results revealed that majority of the academic librarians in the BUK Library were aware of KM. This perhaps could be due to the fact that contemporary LIS professionals always try to keep abreast with the latest developments in the LIS profession mainly through attending conferences, workshops, and seminars and other related gatherings where new advancements in LIS profession are mutually and intellectually discussed.

Extent of Awareness about KM by Academic Librarians
Academic librarians were asked to indicate the extent of their awareness about KM. The summary of their responses is provided in table 3.

Table 3: Extent of Awareness about KM by Academic Librarians

Extent of Awareness	Frequency	Percentage
High awareness	09	37.5%
Moderate awareness	10	41.7%
Low awareness	05	20.87%
Not aware	-	-
No comment	-	-
Total	24	100%

Table 3 showed the extent of awareness about KM by the academic librarians. The data collected revealed that 10 (41.7%) of the respondents indicated high awareness, 9 (37.5%) were moderately aware of KM. In the same vein, 5 (20.8%) of the respondents indicated low awareness. It can be deduced from the above analysis that a reasonable number of the respondents were moderately aware of KM which was a positive development.

Sources of Awareness of KM by Academic Librarians
Respondents were also asked to indicate the sources through which they became aware of KM. The respondents were requested to tick as many options as appropriate on how they became aware of KM. The summary of their responses is presented in table 4.

Table 4: Sources of Awareness of KM by Academic Librarians

Sources of Awareness of KM by Academic Librarians	Frequency	Percentage
Through LIS academic courses	10	41.7%
Through other academic courses	05	20.8%
Through independent readings	15	62.5%
Through the activities of professional bodies	05	20.8%
Through friends and colleagues	05	20.8%
Through conferences and other similar gatherings	01	4.17%
Others	-	

The results represented in table 4 indicated that more than half of the respondents 15 (62.5%) showed that they became aware of KM through independent study, 10 (41.7%) through LIS academic courses. While in the same manner, 5 (20.8%); 5 (20.8%) and another 5 (20.8%) became aware of KM through other academic courses, through professional associations, and through friends and colleagues. Similarly, those that became aware of KM through conferences appeared to be the least with only 1 (4.17%) respondent. This finding revealed that majority of the academic librarians became aware of Knowledge Management through their personal independent study. However, perhaps, due to the fact that the academic librarians are required to

publish journal articles as a basis for their promotion in most academic libraries which may results into that.

Opinions and Perception of Academic Librarians about Knowledge Management
Academic librarians were asked to indicate their opinions and perception about KM. The respondents were asked to respond to the statements represented in table 5 regarding their opinions and perception about KM in academic library services.

Table 5: Opinions and Perceptions of Academic Librarians about Knowledge Management

Opinions and Perceptions towards KM	Strongly Agree		Agree		Don't know		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
KM is a term for what information professionals have been doing	13	54.2	11	45.8						
KM involves the identification, capturing, sharing and utilizing of organization's knowledge	16	66.7	06	25	02	8.3				
It is difficult to indicate the differences between information management and KM	04	16.7	08	33.3	03	12.5	05	20.8	03	12.5
KM is a welcome development in the LIS profession	14	58.3	08	33.3	01	4.17	01	4.17		
KM poses a threat to LIS profession	02	8.3	01	4.17	03	12.5	09	37.5	09	37.5
KM can encourage LIS professionals to gain new skills and competencies	14	58.3	08	33.3	01	4.17			01	4.17
LIS professionals should	03	12.5	03	12.5			11	45.8	07	29.2

concentrate on their traditional skills and neglect KM									
LIS professional associations should make KM a priority in the information profession	10	41.7	11	45.8	02	8.3	01	4.17	
KM should form part of the curriculum of LIS schools	14	58.3	10	41.7					

Table 5 revealed that more than half 13 (54.2%) of the respondents strongly agreed that KM was a term for what information professionals have been doing, 11 (45.8%) of the respondents agreed. In the same vein, 16 (66.7%) of the respondents strongly agreed that KM involved the identification, capturing, sharing and utilizing of organization's knowledge; 8 (33.3%) of the academic librarians agreed that it was difficult to indicate the differences between information management and knowledge management. The findings further indicated that 14 (58.3%) strongly agreed that KM was a welcome development in the LIS profession, 8 (33.3%) of the respondents agreed with the statement; while 9 (37.5%) strongly disagreed that KM poses a threat to LIS profession.

Delving deeper, table 5, additionally showed that more than half of the academic librarians 14 (58.3%) strongly agreed that KM can encourage LIS professionals to gain new skills and competencies. However, it is interesting to note that almost half 11 (45.8%) agreed that LIS professional associations should make KM a priority in the information profession; while more than half 14 (58.3%) of the respondents strongly agreed that KM should form part of the curriculum of LIS schools. One can infer from the above analysis that majority of the respondents have positive perception about Knowledge Management.

Contributions of KM to Academic Library Services
The respondents were asked to respond to the statements represented in table 6 regarding the contributions of KM to academic library services. The summary of their views is in table 6.

Table 6: Contributions of KM to Academic Library Services

Contributions of KM to Academic Library Services	Strongly Agree		Agree		Don't know		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
KM can bring new and improved services to library users by academic libraries	17	70.8	07	29.2						
KM can make academic libraries more relevant to their users and their parent organizations	17	70.8	07	29.2						
KM can significantly contribute to an improvement in the future prospects of academic libraries and that of LIS professionals	15	62.5	08	33.3	01	4.17				
KM can encourage LIS professionals to gain new skills	15	62.5	09	37.5						
The major contributions that academic librarians can make to KM is through their information management skills	12	50	10	41.7	01	4.17	01	4.17		
KM can enhance academic librarians' performance	16	66.7	07	29.2	01	4.17				

According to the findings on table 6 regarding the contributions of KM to academic library services high proportion of the academic librarians 17 (70.8%) strongly agreed that KM can bring new and improved

services to library users, another 17 (70.8%) also strongly agreed that KM can make academic libraries more relevant to their users and parent organizations. Similarly, more than half 15 (62.5%) of the academic librarians believed that KM can significantly contribute to an improvement in the future prospects of academic libraries and LIS professionals.

Table 6 further indicated that 15 (62.5%); 12 (50%) and 16 (66.7%) of the academic librarians strongly agreed that KM can encourage LIS professionals to gain new skills, the major contributions that academic librarians can make to KM is through their information management skills, and, KM can enhance academic librarians' performance. This indicated that the respondents were optimistic about the contributions knowledge management can make to academic libraries.

Discussion
The findings of this study revealed that there was reasonable level of awareness of KM by the academic librarians of the BUK Library as vast majority of the respondents indicated that they were aware of KM, but for the extent of their awareness, nearly half of the respondents indicated high level of awareness. This indeed was a positive development and corroborated the findings of Abubakar and Abubakar (2018) who found that majority of librarians in three (3) federal universities in North-western Nigeria were aware of KM and its activities. Similarly, Krishnamurthy and Arali (2015) reported that majority of academic librarians of engineering colleges in Coinbontore, India were aware of the KM practice. This implies that KM is gradually gaining ground among librarians as more librarians are becoming aware about it and its activities.

In terms of the sources of awareness about KM, the findings of the research showed that majority of the respondents indicated that they were aware about KM through independent readings, while nearly half of them indicated that they came to know about KM through LIS academic courses. The foregoing finding corroborated that of Ajiferuke (2003) who studied the role of information professionals in KM programmes in Canada and found that most of the respondents first read about Knowledge Management in the literature, but very few had taken a course on it.

The findings about the perception of academic librarians about KM indicated that more than half of the respondents held positive perception about Knowledge Management with many of them recommending that it should form part of the curriculum of LIS schools in the country. This was in consonance with the findings of Sarrafzadeh, Martin and Hazeri (2010) who reported that 82.2% of LIS professionals perceived and regarded KM as the survival factor to libraries to respond to challenges they faced in a continuously changing environment. Likewise, Abubakar (2017) who investigated the awareness and perception of library schools' managers' about Knowledge Management in universities in North-east and North-west geo-political zones of Nigeria and reported that majority of the participants to that study agreed that KM was a welcome development in the LIS profession.

Finally, with respect to the contribution of KM to academic library services, the findings of the study showed that a vast majority of the respondents were expectant about the contributions Knowledge Management can make to academic libraries through strongly agreeing that KM can brought new and improved services to library users. This was in harmony with the findings of Goddard (2020) who conducted survey to assess the impact of KM tools on innovation within an academic library context in Canada and found that an effective KM strategy supported innovation and learning within an organization. Also, Islam, Agarwal and Ikeda (2017) who surveyed the effect of KM on service innovation in academic libraries in 39 countries found that knowledge capture/creation and knowledge application/use both significantly impacted positively service innovation in academic libraries.

Conclusion

The present study explored how academic librarians in BUK perceived KM. The study established that academic librarians' respondents were aware about KM although with some differences in their extent of awareness. Overall, the study points to a positive perception of KM by the respondents. However, the study has a limitation. Perhaps, a bigger sample than 30 could yield more facts. Hence, the perception about KM may not actually represent academic librarians' views in Nigerian universities. Future researches could involve academic librarians in

Nigerian universities and even beyond. Finally, the study concludes by stating that in order to weather the storm, the BUK library and other academic libraries in Nigeria must embrace and incorporate KM so as to add value to library services as KM can significantly improve service delivery.

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