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Effect of Teachers' Emotional Resilience on Well-being at Secondary Level

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ABSTRACT

The present research investigated the association between emotional resilience and well-being among secondary school teachers, with particular attention to the extent to which emotional resilience influences teachers' well-being. The study adopted a correlational research design and focused on a total population of 8,911 secondary school teachers working in the Lahore division. From this population, a representative sample of 395 teachers was drawn using a multi-stage random sampling technique. Data were obtained through two adapted instruments, both structured on a five-point Likert scale to ensure consistency in measurement. For statistical analysis, several inferential methods were applied, including the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient to determine relationships between variables and linear regression to assess predictive influence. The analysis demonstrated a statistically significant and positive relationship between emotional resilience and well-being, signifying that higher levels of emotional resilience contribute directly to improved well-being among teachers. Overall, the study highlights the critical role of emotional resilience as a determinant of teachers' psychological and professional well-being. Consequently, it recommends the cultivation of resilience-building practices and interventions within educational settings as a means to support and strengthen teachers' capacity to cope with professional challenges and enhance their overall quality of life.

Key Words: Emotional Resilience, Well-being, and Secondary School Teachers



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Introduction

The growing concern of scholars and practitioners with education particularly in relation to teachers and their pedagogical practices stems from the recognition that the advancement of society is fundamentally dependent on a well-structured and effective educational system. Within this system, teachers serve as indispensable and adaptable agents whose performance significantly influences educational outcomes. Consequently, it is imperative to continuously examine the factors that enhance their professional effectiveness. This study specifically centers on the construct of emotional resilience in teachers, which can be understood as their inherent ability to endure, regulate, and effectively manage emotionally demanding circumstances. Teaching as a profession inherently involves what is termed “emotional labor,” which refers to the process of managing one’s emotions and outward expressions to align with institutional expectations, particularly within the realm of interpersonal interactions. Teachers are not only responsible for transmitting knowledge but are also tasked with motivating and engaging students including those who may demonstrate disinterest or resistance toward learning. Such responsibilities often create a mismatch between the emotions teachers are expected to display and the emotions they genuinely experience, resulting in what is known as emotional dissonance. This emotional dissonance is recognized as a key contributor to stress, fatigue, and burnout in the teaching profession. In addition, educators frequently confront challenges that extend across personal, professional, social, and psychological domains. These include persistent misunderstandings, emotional exhaustion, diminished motivation, feelings of isolation, and heightened stress. Fulfilling both explicit and implicit behavioral expectations requires substantial cognitive and physical effort, which, in turn, elevates their susceptibility to stress-related difficulties and professional burnout. Within this context, emotional resilience emerges as a critical protective factor. It is broadly defined as the capacity to generate positive emotions while simultaneously recovering swiftly from adverse emotional experiences. As a core dimension of psychological resilience (Conway & McDonough, 2006; Davidson, 2000), emotional resilience enables teachers to engage in emotionally oriented coping strategies those involving the regulation of one’s emotional responses during periods of strain. Such adaptive mechanisms are instrumental in restoring and sustaining equilibrium in emotional functioning when individuals are confronted with significant life or professional stressors (Zhang & Lu, 2010).

Emotional intelligence is considered an inherent human attribute. It has been defined as “the ability to perceive, evaluate, and express emotions with accuracy; to access or generate emotions that facilitate thinking; to understand emotional information and knowledge; and to regulate emotions in ways that promote emotional and intellectual growth” (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Scholars such as Goleman (1995), Saarni (1999), and Salovey & Mayer (1997) emphasize that higher levels of emotional intelligence are strongly associated with improved emotional well-being. In addressing professional burnout, emotional intelligence has been identified as a vital factor, as it represents a measurable psychological strength and an essential non-technical competency within professional domains (Cao, 2022). Within the teaching profession, a substantial body of research has focused on the role of emotional intelligence in shaping educators’ professional lives. Findings consistently highlight that emotional intelligence contributes positively to desirable work-related outcomes such as job satisfaction, work engagement, and professional effectiveness. At the same time, it plays a mitigating role in reducing negative occupational experiences, particularly stress and burnout (Sun et al., 2017; Yin et al., 2013).



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Empirical evidence highlights a strong positive relationship between teacher well-being and their effectiveness in classroom performance. The overall wellness of educators is closely tied to dimensions such as self-actualization and job satisfaction, both of which contribute to reducing the prevalence of mental health concerns among teachers while simultaneously motivating initiatives for school improvement. Research further suggests that teacher well-being can be significantly enhanced through structured professional development programs, particularly those designed to strengthen collaborative practices and provide access to social support systems within educational institutions (Corrente et al., 2022; Muñoz, 2019).

Moreover, studies consistently show that students are highly perceptive of their teachers' emotional states. Despite teachers' efforts to conceal stress or emotional difficulties, learners are often able to detect these underlying feelings. Such emotional dynamics are not only influential in shaping students' engagement and academic achievement but also play a vital role in determining the overall classroom climate. This influence becomes especially critical during periods of heightened demand or uncertainty for instance, when schools undergo changes in teaching staff, during high-pressure assessment phases, in managing extracurricular responsibilities, or when teachers encounter unforeseen external challenges. Recognizing teachers as integral and interconnected members of a complex educational ecosystem is essential. Their well-being has profound implications for the quality of instruction and the broader learning environment, underscoring the necessity of placing teacher welfare at the core of educational development strategies (Culshaw & Kurian, 2021; Hascher & Waber, 2021).

Since teacher well-being and mental health exert a profound influence not only on educators themselves but also on students and the broader educational community, it becomes imperative to adopt academic practices that actively promote mental health within schools. Such practices should also highlight the role of teachers in establishing and sustaining support networks. These networks, grounded in principles of safety, professional autonomy, reflective practice, and dialogic learning, foster reciprocal support systems that enhance the well-being of both teachers and students, thereby cultivating a more nurturing and resilient school environment (Billaudeau et al., 2022; Glazzard & Rose, 2020). Scholarly evidence further emphasizes that teachers must be equipped with strategies and tools that enable them to cultivate a pedagogical style focused on effective classroom management and emotional regulation. This involves recognizing and responding to the emotional dynamics that emerge within group interactions, maintaining a long-term commitment to advancing the emotional competencies of the educational community, and adopting knowledge-based pedagogical approaches that reinforce emotional safety and confidence among learners (Pozo-Rico & Sandoval, 2020; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Such competencies are fundamental for designing engaging classroom environments, stimulating positive motivation among students, and establishing secure, trust-centered learning relationships.

Research consistently indicates that educators with higher levels of emotional competence report greater personal well-being and demonstrate more proactive and adaptive teaching practices. This underlines the significance of developing emotional competence not only as an individual skill but also as a collective asset that strengthens the overall functioning of the educational community (Muñoz, 2019). Moreover, teachers' emotional intelligence has been shown to significantly affect student academic performance (Llorent et al., 2020). Similarly, enhancing teachers' emotional, interpersonal, and intercultural capabilities contributes to the creation of inclusive,



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respectful, and effective classroom environments. Such environments not only optimize student learning outcomes but also facilitate their social development, particularly in fostering values of diversity, mutual respect, and intercultural understanding (Iglesias-Diaz & Romero-Pérez, 2021).

Research highlights that when schools are built upon positive emotional goals and aligned educational values, teachers experience greater levels of belonging, enhanced well-being, improved mental health, reduced susceptibility to emotional burnout, and higher job satisfaction (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). Similarly, students' perceptions of their teachers as consistent sources of emotional support, and of classrooms as secure and inclusive environments, are strongly associated with increased intrinsic motivation and a more positive disposition toward academic engagement. Such perceptions are also linked to the strengthening of academic self-concept, the adoption of constructive help-seeking behaviors during times of difficulty or discouragement, and an overall sense of belonging and integration within the school community (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2013). Furthermore, instructional approaches that deliberately integrate emotional intelligence into the educational process are shown to enhance individuals' abilities to identify, interpret, and regulate emotions effectively. These approaches provide a framework that equips both teachers and students to cope with stress, adapt to ongoing educational transformations, and cultivate resilience in the face of challenges (Nathanson et al., 2016). Consequently, a growing body of scholarship emphasizes the importance of embedding emotional competence training into teacher professional development. Such training not only refines teaching practices but also contributes to more effective instructional outcomes, particularly when implemented through comprehensive and well-structured educational development programs (Chen & Guo, 2020; Van-der-Vyver, 2016).

Research Objectives

Following were research objectives of the study to:

Explore the association between secondary school teachers' emotional resilience and their well-being.

Analyze the effect of emotional resilience on the well-being of teachers at the secondary level.

Research Questions

Following were research questions of the study:

What is the relationship between secondary school teachers' emotional resilience and their well-being?

What is the effect of emotional resilience on the well-being of teachers at the secondary level?

Literature Review

Teachers' Emotional Resilience

The concept of resilience has been defined in multiple ways, with meta-analyses of resilience research offering diverse perspectives (Britt et al., 2016; Hartmann et al., 2020). Despite these variations, most definitions converge on three essential dimensions. First, resilience reflects the ability to recover and bounce back after experiencing stress or adversity (Luthans, 2002). Second, it involves the effective use of resources, adaptability to change, and demonstration of constructive behavioral adjustments when confronted with challenges (Luthar et al., 2000). Third, resilience is regarded as a dynamic and evolving personal strength, not a fixed trait, which can be cultivated and strengthened over time (Baker et al., 2021). Within the teaching profession, resilience has become a central focus of scholarly interest because teaching itself demands a high degree of emotional engagement. Day (2017) asserts that teaching is an emotionally



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intensive form of work, where factors such as moral purpose, self-efficacy, and agency are vital in shaping teachers' professional identities, sustaining their well-being, and enhancing their overall effectiveness. Consequently, research on teacher resilience has significantly expanded in recent years (Beltman, 2021).

However, within this broader discourse, the specific dimension of emotional resilience defined as the capacity to sustain or restore emotional stability and maintain a positive outlook in the midst of emotionally demanding circumstances have not received equal attention. Emotional resilience plays a critical role in both personal and professional contexts. In the face of complex challenges, individuals with strong emotional resilience can regain equilibrium more rapidly, channel their psychological, emotional, and physical resources effectively, and adapt to shifting demands (Lloyd et al., 2016). Murden et al. (2018) highlight that emotional resilience encompasses the ability to cope with change, manage occupational stress, and progress from mere resistance to active growth and development. Similarly, Grant and Kinman (2014) describe it as a multidimensional process involving self-motivation, regulation of impulses, and effective management of mood and emotions.

Mansfield et al. (2012) proposed a four-dimensional framework of teacher resilience, which categorizes resilience into four interrelated domains: social, motivational, professional, and emotional resilience. This model was developed through research conducted with pre-service and beginning teachers at the point of graduation, providing a structured lens for understanding how resilience manifests in the teaching profession. Within this framework, the emotional dimension of resilience is described as the capacity to manage stress effectively, regulate emotions, and respond constructively to the emotional demands of teaching experiences (Mansfield et al., 2012, p. 362). Evidence from diverse occupational contexts indicates that emotional resilience contributes significantly to employee well-being, job satisfaction, engagement in work, overall performance, and long-term retention within organizations (Grant & Kinman, 2014; Hartmann et al., 2020). Moreover, research suggests that resilience is not only an individual attribute but also a process supported by various enabling conditions. Hartmann et al. (2020) emphasize that protective and promotive factors such as supportive relationships, coping strategies, and positive work environments are central to the development and sustainability of resilience. Given these insights, it becomes particularly important to investigate the influences on teachers' emotional resilience, which may arise from their personal characteristics (e.g., coping styles, self-efficacy, personality traits) as well as the contextual conditions of their professional environment (e.g., collegial support, leadership practices, and school culture). Understanding how these factors interact is crucial for fostering teachers' capacity to manage the emotional demands of their work and, in turn, enhancing their well-being and effectiveness in educational settings.

Teachers' Well-being

The concept of well-being is inherently complex and challenging to define, as it encompasses multiple dimensions and perspectives (Dodge et al., 2012). Contemporary literature generally recognizes three key structural characteristics as central to its conceptualization: multidimensionality, dynamic nature, and context dependence. In line with this, Seligman (2011) advanced a multi-component model of well-being, known as the PERMA framework, which identifies five essential elements required for a fulfilling and meaningful life: positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment. Building on such models, scholars widely agree that well-being is not a



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singular construct but rather a multifaceted and intricate phenomenon composed of various interrelated components (Dodge et al., 2012; Hascher & Waber, 2021). Although no universally accepted or “ideal” model exists, several theoretical approaches provide useful frameworks for understanding the abstract nature of well-being while also offering measurable, validated, and enduring dimensions that support its assessment (Butler & Kern, 2016).

Researchers have also argued that well-being exhibits features commonly associated with complex dynamic systems, such as situatedness, interconnectivity, and continuous change (Oxford, 2018; Lomas et al., 2020). For instance, Day and Gu (2010) highlighted how teachers’ well-being emerges from the interplay between situational, professional, and personal factors across different phases of their personal lives and professional careers. Similarly, individuals’ daily experiences reflect the coexistence of both positive and negative emotions, rather than being limited to one emotional state at a time (Trampe et al., 2015). Given its dynamic nature, understanding teachers’ well-being particularly in emotionally demanding contexts such as foreign language classrooms is essential for designing effective interventions and nurturing supportive, prosocial learning environments. However, empirical evidence remains limited. Only a small number of studies have adopted classroom-based approaches to explore specific antecedents of teacher emotions, typically focusing on just two or three variables (Becker et al., 2015; Frenzel et al., 2015; Goetz et al., 2015). Likewise, relatively few investigations have employed repeated or longitudinal measures to capture the moment-to-moment fluctuations and variations in teachers’ well-being (Aldrup et al., 2018; Lavy & Eshet, 2018; Simbula, 2010; Tadic Vujcic et al., 2017). Instead, the majority of existing research tends to conceptualize teacher well-being as a stable, enduring trait, overlooking its fluid and context-sensitive nature (Hascher & Waber, 2021).

Emotional Resilience and Well-being

From a psychological perspective, well-being is not regarded as a fixed or permanent condition, but rather as a fluid and adaptable state. Yin et al. (2016) describe it as a broad, positive internal experience that can fluctuate in response to both individual factors and environmental circumstances. In recent years, the issue of teacher well-being has received growing scholarly attention, largely due to the profound transformations occurring within teaching practices and working environments (Sacré et al., 2023). These changes require teachers to adapt to evolving educational contexts, which involves not only accepting and adjusting to new demands but also reinterpreting their professional roles. This adaptation process often influences teachers’ self-concept, mental health, and overall sense of well-being. It also entails critically reflecting on and sometimes abandoning previously established practices that no longer align with current demands. Furthermore, teachers must acquire new professional skills, such as competence in the use of digital and information technologies, to meet contemporary educational challenges (Sá et al., 2021).

A systematic review of the literature reveals that teacher well-being exerts a significant impact on multiple professional and personal outcomes. Specifically, enhanced well-being has been associated with greater job satisfaction, improved instructional practices, stronger interpersonal relationships with students and colleagues, and higher overall teaching effectiveness. Moreover, maintaining a healthy sense of well-being contributes to reducing occupational stress and mitigating the risk of burnout, thereby supporting teachers’ long-term engagement and retention in the profession (Dreer, 2023; Burić et al., 2019).



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A considerable amount of research has examined the interconnectedness of teacher resilience and well-being, highlighting the complexity of their relationship. In a comprehensive review of 46 studies published between 2010 and 2020, Hascher et al. (2021) identified four distinct strands of research that collectively outline how resilience and well-being are interrelated in the teaching profession. Despite these valuable contributions, it remains important to note that the specific relationship between teachers' emotional resilience and their well-being has not yet been sufficiently explored, leaving a significant gap in the literature. Existing evidence suggests that job-related resources such as supportive working conditions, professional development opportunities, and positive organizational climates play a vital role in sustaining teachers' motivation, engagement, and overall well-being (Benevene et al., 2020; Granziera et al., 2023; Han et al., 2020; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2018). However, these associations may not always be straightforward. Instead, they often reflect a more nuanced interplay between personal characteristics and professional factors, both of which shape the experience of well-being. Supporting this perspective, Chen and Lee (2022) demonstrated that teachers' emotional resilience exerts both direct and indirect effects on their well-being, particularly in the context of school support. Their findings underscore the idea that emotional resilience functions as a mediating mechanism, enabling teachers to draw upon available resources more effectively while also buffering the negative impact of workplace stressors.

Methods and Procedures

Research Design

The study was carried out within the framework of the positivist paradigm, which emphasizes objectivity, empirical observation, and the use of scientific methods to generate valid and reliable knowledge (Kumatongo & Muzata, 2021; Phillips et al., 2000). Guided by this philosophical stance, the research adopted a quantitative approach aimed at producing measurable and statistically analyzable data. More specifically, the design was descriptive-correlational and non-experimental, meaning that the study sought to describe existing conditions, examine relationships among variables, and identify patterns or associations without manipulating or controlling them. This methodological choice allowed the researcher to explore naturally occurring variations in the data while ensuring that the findings were grounded in systematic and empirical evidence.

Population and Sampling Procedure

In research methodology, the term "population" refers to the complete group of individuals or respondents from which a study seeks to draw its sample (Hutchings, 2021; Wallen & Fraenkel, 2013). For the present study, the population comprised all secondary school teachers working in the Lahore division. Administratively, the Lahore division is organized into four districts, and together these districts accounted for a total of 8,911 secondary school teachers. To ensure that the findings would be representative and generalizable, a multi-stage random sampling technique was employed (Lodico et al., 2010). The sampling procedure was carried out in four distinct stages. In the first stage, two districts were randomly selected out of the four that constitute the Lahore division. At the second stage, two tehsils were randomly chosen from each of these districts. During the third stage, a total of sixty secondary schools thirty for boys and thirty for girls were randomly selected from each of the identified tehsils. Finally, in the fourth stage, seven secondary school teachers (SSTs) were randomly chosen from each



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selected school. This number was determined based on the fact that most secondary schools in the region employ at least seven to eight SSTs, ensuring adequate representation. Following this systematic procedure, the final sample consisted of 395 secondary school teachers drawn from the selected schools across the chosen districts of the Lahore division. This sample size was considered sufficient to reflect the diversity of the larger population and to support the reliability of the statistical analyses undertaken in the study.

Research instruments

For the purpose of data collection, two standardized close-ended questionnaires were employed, which were adapted to suit the context of the study. In addition to scales designed to assess the study's key variables, the questionnaires also incorporated items related to the demographic characteristics of the respondents, including gender, job designation, years of teaching experience, academic qualifications, professional qualifications, and age categories. To measure teachers' emotional resilience, the Teachers' Emotional Resilience Scale developed by Mansfield and Wosnitza (2015) was utilized, while teachers' well-being was assessed using the 18-item Teachers' Well-Being Scale proposed by Zheng et al. (2015). The administration of the questionnaires was carried out through a combination of direct postal mailing and personal visits to schools to ensure a broader and more representative response rate. Once the data had been collected, it was subjected to inferential statistical analysis. Specifically, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (r) was applied to identify the strength and direction of relationships between variables, while linear regression analysis was employed to examine the predictive influence of independent variables on the dependent variables.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1

Correlation between Emotional Resilience and Teachers' Well-being

Variables	N	r-value	Sig.
Emotional Resilience and Teachers' Well-being	395	.848**	.000

** $p < .001$ (2-tailed)

Table 1 illustrates the results of the correlation analysis conducted to examine the association between teachers' emotional resilience and their overall well-being. The findings revealed a statistically significant and strong positive correlation ($r = .848$, $n = 395$, $p < .001$). This indicates that higher levels of emotional resilience among teachers are consistently associated with greater levels of well-being. The double asterisks (**) denote that the correlation is significant at the 0.01 level, while the p-value less than .001 further confirms the robustness of the relationship, suggesting that the likelihood of this result occurring by chance is extremely low.

Table 2

Effect of Teachers' Emotional Resilience on Well-being

Variables	B	t-value	Sig.	Model R Square
Emotional Intelligence & Well-being	.848	31.698	.001	.718

Table 2 presents the results of the linear regression analysis, which examined the predictive influence of teachers' emotional resilience on their overall well-being. The



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coefficient of determination ($R^2 = .718$) indicated that emotional resilience explained approximately 71.8% of the variance in teachers' well-being, demonstrating a very high level of explanatory power. The standardized beta coefficient ($\beta = .848$) was found to be statistically significant at $p = .001$, confirming the strength of this predictive relationship. These results clearly suggest that emotional resilience serves as a substantial determinant of teachers' well-being, with higher levels of resilience strongly contributing to enhanced well-being among secondary school teachers. The significance of the beta value highlights that this effect is unlikely to have occurred by chance, thereby reinforcing the critical role of emotional resilience in shaping teachers' psychological health and professional satisfaction.

Discussion

The present study explored the influence of teachers' emotional resilience on their overall well-being, revealing that emotional resilience functions as a significant and direct positive predictor of well-being. While the broader relationship between general teacher resilience and well-being has been extensively documented in prior research (Burić et al., 2019; Gray et al., 2017; Gibbs & Miller, 2014; Mansfield et al., 2016), the more specific construct of emotional resilience has not yet received equivalent scholarly attention. Research that explicitly addresses the impact of emotional resilience on teacher well-being remains relatively limited. Among the few contributions in this area, Chen and Lee (2022) demonstrated that emotional resilience not only directly predicts teachers' well-being but also mediates the relationship between well-being and institutional support. The results of the current study lend further support to these emerging findings, as strong associations were observed between teachers' emotional resilience and their psychological well-being.

Aguilar (2018) argues that cultivating emotional resilience is often a more complex and time-intensive process than developing pedagogical knowledge or subject expertise. This underscores the need for educational systems to recognize their responsibility in fostering and sustaining teachers' emotional resilience, both through internal organizational mechanisms and external professional structures, rather than leaving the burden of resilience development solely on individual teachers (Hamid & Ghazali, 2018). Simply reducing workplace stressors or providing access to job resources is not sufficient. Instead, school leaders and policymakers must prioritize professional development initiatives that strengthen a wide range of personal and professional capacities. Findings from this study identified several critical organizational and individual resources that support the development of emotional resilience, including occupational self-efficacy, opportunities for constructive feedback, autonomy in the workplace, access to social support networks, and avenues for continuous professional growth. These results highlight the importance of a multi-stakeholder approach in which schools, educational authorities, and professional development providers work collaboratively to create conditions that nurture emotional resilience. At the same time, it is important to recognize that teachers should not be regarded merely as passive recipients of institutional resources. Instead, they play an active role in shaping, applying, and sustaining these resources to enhance both their resilience and their overall well-being.

Conclusion

The present study concentrated on the construct of teachers' emotional resilience, which refers to their inherent capacity to adapt, regulate, and effectively manage emotionally demanding situations encountered in their professional and personal lives. Emotional



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resilience can be understood as a combination of personal and organizational resources that empower educators to maintain emotional stability while skillfully navigating and controlling their emotional responses during periods of stress or adversity. Findings from this study demonstrate that teachers' well-being is directly and positively influenced by their level of emotional resilience. Furthermore, significant and favorable correlations were identified between teachers' emotional resilience and their overall well-being, underscoring the strength of this relationship. In sum, the study contributes to the growing body of research by highlighting specific resources that are closely associated with the development of emotional resilience and the promotion of well-being among teachers. These insights open up meaningful opportunities to design strategies and interventions that not only strengthen teachers' resilience but also improve the quality of their professional lives, ultimately supporting both their personal growth and the effectiveness of the educational environment in which they work.

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