Public Road Transport Performance and Travellers Satisfaction in Urban Areas: The Case of Public Bus Transport in Dar es Salaam

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Abstract

The objective of this study was to examine the performance of public bus transport on travellers' satisfaction. A total of 140 bus commuters in Dar es Salaam region were interviewed. Questionnaire was employed as a major instrument in collection of primary data while documentation was used for secondary data. Regression analysis and Chi square test were used in analysis of data. Findings revealed that public bus transport performance in urban areas was very poor and travellers were highly dissatisfied with the kind of service the industry was rendering. Conclusively, the study has revealed that there is a weak positive relationship between user satisfaction and performance of public buses. The study recommends opening new routes especially in new areas and improving efforts to overcome traffic congestions.

Introduction

Transportation in urban areas has been very critical and of major concern in almost all mega cities in the world (Githui *et al*, 2008). Due to the rapid and uncontrolled urban growth and vehicle increase there has been a conspicuous impact both positively and negatively (Githui *et al*, 2008). Most commuters in various parts of the world express their level of dissatisfaction with the quality of services offered by urban public transport operators (Richard, 2005). In developing countries, public's travel demands in cities have increased leading to complexity in the provision extra capacity to handle and control the situation effectively (Githui *et al*, 2008). Problems of access to can be linked to economy problems, lack of equity in the provision of services, and poor or unaffordable transport links to enable mobility (Baker *et al*, 2009). Additionally, the issue of seat availability and geographical reach of public bus services seems to be a challenge due to low density of paved roads, unplanned growth, poor road surface and narrow streets (Kumar *et al*, 2008). People tend to complain about poor quality of roads, buses overcrowding, unpredictable irregular services and inadequate terminal facilities (Kumar *et al*, 2008).

Vikash (2003) argued that the demand for public transport during peak hours is very high compared to its capacity, thus leads to poor provision of service especially during these peak hours. There is therefore a big gap between transportation needs and the means to satisfy those needs (Olvera *et al*, 2003). Dar es Salaam city is one of the main cities in Africa faced by tremendous population growth accompanied by rapid and unplanned urban growth (Olvera *et al*, 2003). As population continues to increase and as the city continues to grow, more people live and work in the city and make more trips within the urban area, often over longer distances. Consequently, the limited capacity of existing transport infrastructure is stretched to the limit and thus, it has become a constraint to cope with the public demand for travel. Basing on these, the performance of public transportation in Dar-es-Salaam in social, economic and environmental aspects is thus distressing (Kanyama *et al*, 2005).

The most common form of public transport in Dar es Salaam are privately owned buses commonly known as "daladala" which play specifics routes. The starting station and destination place are marked on the front of the vehicle. Most of the "daladala" workers

are not paid in salary basis but they receive commission or the excess amount after the owner has collected his required sum each day (Howe *et al*, 2000). Working under commission payment encourages loading too many passengers far beyond the bus capacity, which in turn leads to over speeding, poor parking and frequently vehicle stoppages to pick up or alight passengers on the way to their destinations (Howe *et al,* 2000). Boarding the "daladala" in different areas in the city such as city centre, Mbagala and Kariakoo is a competitive undertaking. Normally there are a scrambles to get on the bus especially during the peak hours. The public transport fee in Tanzania can be seen as small amount but it deters many of the urban poor from travelling, as a round trip would present up to 22% of their average daily wage (Olvera *et al,* 2003). Furthermore with current increase in public transport fares which was accelerated by an increase in fuel prices, combined with the deep downturn in the economy and prevalence of city congestions during peak hours, have raised questions about the performance of public transport in urban areas. Although this has been an issue of great concern there were limited documentations on how the performance of public transport in Dar es Salaam affecting travellers service satisfaction. This paper therefore examined how public bus transport performance influences the travellers' satisfaction in Dar es Salaam.

Public Transport and Customers' Satisfaction: Theoretical Perspectives

Public transport is a shared passenger's transportation service which is available for use by the general public as distinct from mode such as taxicab, car pooling or hired buses which are not shared by strangers without private arrangements. Scholars have defined public transportation as a type of transportation focusing on the aspect of being accessible to the public and often financed by public bodies, and on the passive transport of people. White (2002) defined it as "a type of transport which includes all modes available to the public, namely scheduled bus services, coach and rail operators, taxis, private hire buses and coaches and those buses which are providing school services, irrespective of ownership".

On the other hand, customer's satisfaction is a measure of the degree to which a product or services meets the customers' expectations and may lead to attitudes towards complimenting or complaining behaviour. Jauhari and Dutta (2009) defined customer satisfaction as "a notion of customers if they perceive the service experience to be in line with their expectations". Customer satisfaction can be viewed as personal feelings of pleasure or disappointment from comparing a service perceived in performance or outcome in relation to customer expectations (Kotler, 2000). The most popular view of customer satisfaction in academia is that customer satisfaction is the judgmental borne out of the comparison of pre purchase expectations with post purchase evaluation of the product or service experience (Oliver, 1977). Ame (2005) pointed out that customer satisfaction may be conceptualized in two ways. It can be viewed as post evaluation judgment concerning a product or service for specific purchase occasion; on the other hand as cumulative customer satisfaction via overall evaluation based on total purchase and consumption experience with goods or service over time. In this study, customer satisfaction is conceptualized as the ability of public bus service performance in terms of public bus infrastructures and superstructures to meet travellers' expectations in Dar es Salaam.

Different theories can be used to explain the relationship between public bus transport performance and travellers' satisfaction. However, in this paper we used demand theory

expectation disconfirmation theory and service quality model. Demand theory is the analysis of the relationship between demand for goods or services and factors that affects that demand of such goods or services. The theory shows that the level of demand of public transport can have an impact on the quality of service to be offered by public transport. For example, during the peak hours the demand for public transport in Dar es Salaam is usually very high, resulting to poor provision of public transport services. During the peak hours bus operators carry more passengers than capacity of their vehicles, resulting to passengers' low level of satisfaction. The low level of satisfaction may be attributed to lack of comfortability and fear for accidents.

Expectations confirmation theory explains that expectations coupled with perceived performance, lead to post purchase satisfaction. This effect is mediated through positive or negative disconfirmation between expectation and performance. If a product outperforms expectations (positive disconfirmation) satisfaction will result. If a product falls short of expectations (negative disconfirmation) the customer is likely to be dissatisfied (Spreng *et al*., 1996). Disconfirmation is therefore hypothesized to affect satisfaction, with positive disconfirmation leading to satisfaction and negative disconfirmation leading to dissatisfaction. In this regard, travellers' judgment on satisfaction originates from comparison of the level of performance perceived by travellers using an evaluative standard.

Service quality model is a mult-item scale developed to assess customer perception of service quality in service and retail business. The approach starts with an assumption that the level of service quality experienced by customers is determined by the gap between their expectations of the service and their perception of what they actually receive from a specific service provider (Parasuraman *et al*., 1988). The service Quality Model proposes five dimensions upon which customer evaluate service quality. These are tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. It is argued that, if the service offered to customers constituents and meet the five dimensions of the service quality model, the customer perception towards the service offered will be positive. Likewise, in public bus transport, service quality may be evaluated by the difference between travelers' expectation of the service and their perception of service experiences.

Empirical Studies

Different scholars have come up with different views on performance of public transport and the satisfaction perceived by the users of public transport. For example, Friman and Fellesson (2009) investigated on service supply and customer satisfaction in public transportation in six different cities in Europe. They interviewed 6021 respondents, which was approximately to 1000 respondents from each city. Friman and Fellesson (2009) found that several correlation analyses showed that the relationship between satisfaction and services performance in public transport was far from perfect. However they only focused on seat availability, frequency of travel and travel time and left out other issues such as waiting time, behaviour of public transport operating staff, distance it took to reach the bus stop, conditions inside the public buses and conditions of bus stops which could have similar influence on customer satisfaction. This study was conducted in Europe whereby the situations of their public transport services are incomparable with that of developing countries. Thus, this paper aimed at bridging these gaps by highlighting the existing relationship between public bus transport performance and travellers' satisfaction.

Matzler *et a*l (2003) conducted a study on the asymmetric relationship between attribute level performance and overall customer satisfaction in the automotive industry. The study used questionnaire and collected data from 259 customers in face to face interview. The study found that the impact of innovation project management and complaints handling on overall satisfaction is high when performance is low, but they do not affect satisfaction when performance is high. Also the study revealed that the only attribute that has a high impact on the overall satisfaction when performance is higher is customer care. This study mainly based on automotive industry. This study based on public bus transport rather than automotive industry.

Another study was conducted by Edvardson (1998) to examine the causes of customer dissatisfaction on public transport. The study compared customer complaints in writings with the customers own account and views of bus drivers. Edvardson (1998) found that quality shortcomings are in most cases recurrent thus companies should focus on aspects related to the drivers, punctuality and use of information coming from customers in the form of complains. Thus based on this study aspects related to drivers and punctuality was applied in the study so as to examine travelers' satisfaction.

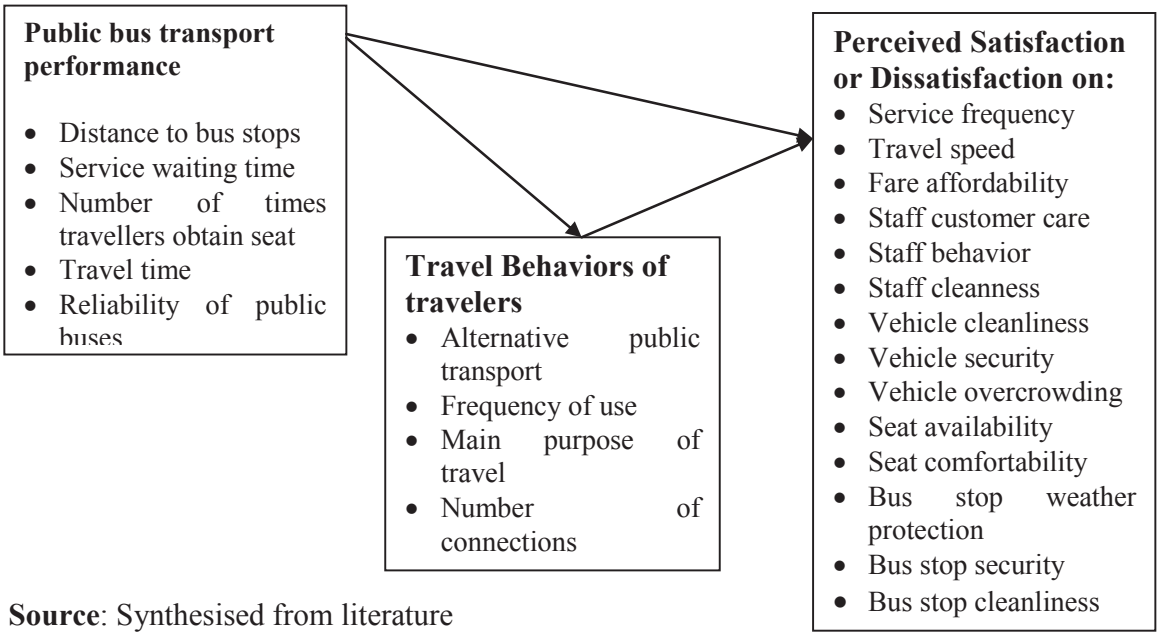
Eboli and Mazulla (2007) investigated service quality attributes affecting customer satisfaction for bus transit service in Cosenza, Italia. A total of 763 students were interviewed. Respondent were asked to rate importance and satisfaction with 16 service quality attributes which were bus stop availability, route characteristic, frequency, reliability, bus stop furniture, bus overcrowding, cleanliness, cost, information, promotion, safety on board, personal security, personnel, complains, environmental protection and bus stop maintenance. Although this study was conducted in developed country, the indicators for satisfactions used are also applicable in developing countries. Thus, some of the indicators were used as relevant for explaining the current study.

Most of the above studies were conducted in cities situated in developed countries which are different from cities in developing countries. Therefore similar studies conducted in developing countries were expected to explain the contrast. That justifies why this study was conducted in Dar es Salaam which may represent many other cities in developing nations.

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework presented in figure 1, summarises the reviewed literature on the relationship between performance of public bus transport services and satisfaction perception of public bus transport users. In this case, customer satisfaction is a dependent variable while public transport performance factors and travel behaviour are independent variables.

Figure 1: Conceptual model



Source: Synthesised from literature

Methodological Considerations

A total of 140 users of public transport were targeted in this study. All 140 questionnaires were returned filled, giving a 100% response rate. However, after further inspection and error detection, only 133 questionnaires were accepted for data analysis giving a response rate of 95% and seven questionnaires were discarded. The choice of this area was due to its convenient to a researcher in terms of time constraints, labour and financial resources that could not allow to choose samples from other regions in Tanzania. The city is also very vibrant in terms of economic activities which attract influx and movements of many people to different parts of the city. Personal interviews were employed in administering questionnaire so as to obtain the first hand information from the respondents.

A number of steps were taken to ensure validity of the study. First, the questionnaire was created based on literature reviewed. Also the questionnaire was pretested and different opinions raised were used to improve the quality of questionnaire. Data were collected from reliable sources from respondents with vast experiences in using public bus transport. Also, data were collected within a short time (one week) to avoid or minimize any major event changes that could occur. Reliability test was also used to determine internal consistence of the scale, which assessed the degree to which the items were homogeneous and how consistent individuals responded to items and questions. The reliability test was done using SPSS and the reliability scale shows Cronbach's alpha of 0.710 which indicates that there is strong degree of internal consistency of variables used in the study. Thus, Cronbach's alpha of 0.710 which was above 0.7 indicates satisfactory internal reliability of data.

The collected data were analysed qualitatively and quantitatively. The tools for data analysis vary depending on the type of data collected. Through the use of SPSS, the analysis of both descriptive and inferential statistics was performed. The study used regression analysis to

examine the relationship between performance of the existing public bus transport and average level of satisfaction. Further Chi square test was used to test dependence of different variables.

Findings

From the collected data, travellers' characteristics were based on gender, age group, education status and employment status. The results show that, 62.4% of the respondents were males and 37.6% were females. Also, 5.7% had ages below 18 years, 66.2% of the respondents were between 18 and 30 years and 28.6% represent respondents aged more than 30 years. A cross tabulation of gender and age shows that 4.8% of males and 6% of females were aged below 18 years old. Also 63.9% of males and 70% of females were aged between 18 and 30 years. In addition, 31.3% of males and 24% of females were aged more than 30. Thus findings implied that most travellers aged between 18 to 30 years commute using public transport ar.

The results on education status show that 9.8% of respondents had not attended any formal schooling, 34.6% had certificates, 15% Diplomas, 29.3% Bachelors Degree, 10.5% Master's Degree and 0.8% had PhDs. These findings show that travellers of different education were included in the sample. However, the study further indicated that public bus transport was mostly used by people with education level below the Master's Degree. Those with education level above the Master's Degree were assumed to posses their own vehicles for mobility and very rarely used public bus transport.

Findings on their employment status show that 30.1% of respondents were students, 18.8% were self employed, 36.1% were full time worker, 5.3% were housewife, 0.8% were retired workers and 9% were non workers. This distribution reveals that respondents who were pupil or students and full time workers represented a larger proportion of users of public bus transport. Also, public bus transport was observed to be the most popular mode of transport for most full time workers and students.

Travellers Behaviour

The study sought to find out the travel behaviour of users of public bus transport. Different behaviour indicators were targeted. These were travellers' preference of alternative mode of public transport apart from public bus transport, how frequency travellers used public bus transport, the main purposes of using public bus transport and the number of possible connections that travellers made per trip before arriving to intended destinations. The results show that 26.3% used Bajaj, and 35.3% of respondents were using motorcycle and 15.8% using other type of transport alternatives such as bicycles, private cars and foot. Findings in table 1 indicate that the alternative mode of public transport which travellers likely opted for apart from public bus transport was the motorcycle, which comprises 35.3% of total respondents

Table 1 Travellers Alternative Transport Mode

Type of Transport	Frequency	Percent
Tax	30	22.6
Bajaj	35	26.3
Motorcycle	47	35.3
Others	21	15.8
Total	**133**	**100.0**

From the findings 48.9% of public bus transport users use them more than twice a day, 40.6% twice a day and 10.5% only once a day. This shows public bus transport is used more than twice a day for majority of users. The findings further show that the primary purpose for most commuters of public bus transport was going to work which accounted for 45% of all respondents followed by 30% of respondents who said that going to school was their primary purpose of using public bus transport. However, 10.5% said that they used public transport for shopping purposes, 8.5% for making visits, 2.3% for leisure and 3% for other purposes. A cross tabulation showing travellers reasons for using public bus transport and their employment status indicated public bus transport choices depended upon travellers' employment status. That is, full time workers use public bus transport when going to their respective working places. Students they used public bus transport for going to school. House wives used public bus transport for shopping purposes, retired workers use public bus transport for visitation purposes.

Furthermore findings revealed that 21.8% of travellers do not need connections, 41% of respondents made two routes, 24.1% three routes and 12.8% more than three routes. Thus, findings indicate that most of travellers normally need to make at least one route in order to arrive at their intended destinations.

Table 2 Number of routes Travellers Made before Reaching Destinations

Number of routes	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
One	29	21.8	21.8
Two	55	41.4	63.2
Three	32	24.1	87.2
More than three	17	12.8	100.0
Total	**133**	**100.0**	

Performance of the Existing Public Bus Transport

The performance of the existing public bus transport was measured using the following variables: distance the traveller walked to reach at the bus stop, duration they spend at the bus stop before obtaining service, seat availability, travel time and reliability of the existing public buses. Findings show that 34.6% of respondents walked less than 500m to reach at the bus stop, 51.1% walked up to one kilometre and 14.3% walked more than one kilometre to reach the bus stop. This indicates that most public bus stops were quite far from traveller's residence. Thus many bus stops are located far away from traveller's destinations which had an impact on total travel time and also the perceived satisfaction of public bus transport.

Results on duration travellers spent at bus stops waiting for services revealed that about 8% of respondents waited for less than 5 minutes to get services, 46.6% waited for 5 to 15 minutes and about 39.8% waited for more than 15 minutes to get public bus transport services. These findings implied that most travellers waited for up to 15 minutes to get service.

Table 3: Duration a Traveller Spent at Bus Stop waiting for Service

Duration	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Less than 5 minutes	18	13.5	13.5
5 to 15 minutes	62	46.6	60.2

15-30 minutes	33	24.8	85.0
More than 30 minutes	20	15.0	100.0
Total	**133**	**100.0**	

The study examined also how many times users of public bus transport got seat in relation to the number of trips they made. Few respondents (about 15.8%) replied that they got seat in every trip they used public bus transport, most of respondents (about 65.4%) said that they got seats once in every two or five trips and 18.8% never got seats whenever they used public bus transport. Thus public bus transport characterized by most of its travellers travelling while standing. Furthermore, findings revealed that 63.2% of all respondents took long time to travel using the existing public bus transport to reach the intended destinations. Although the travel time depended on the respective travellers' locations and distance to their intended destinations, it was observed that the long travel time was due to traffic congestions in the existing roads in Dar es Salaam.

Findings on the reliability of the existing public bus transport indicated that most travellers said that public bus transport was not reliable in their respective areas whenever they wanted to travel. About 65% of the respondents thought that public bus transport were less reliable, least reliable or poor and only 35% thought that public bus transport were ether reliable or very reliable. The result shows that reliability of public bus transport in Dar es Salaam was very low. This was attributed to the distance through which public bus transport travel from the beginning of route to the end. For example, reliability of the "daladala" from Tegeta to Kariakoo, Mbagala to Kariakoo, and Temeke Mikoroshini to Mwenge was very low. Thus, the route distance could be one of the causes. Also high traffic congestions in many roads in Dar es Salaam city was the factor that reduced reliability of public bus transport because many of the public bus were stuck in traffic congestions.

Table 4: Reliability of Public Bus Transport

Reliability	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very reliable	5	3.8	3.8
Reliable	41	30.8	34.6
Less reliable	54	40.6	75.2
Least reliable	15	11.3	86.5
Poor	18	13.5	100.0
Total	**133**	**100.0**	

Travellers Satisfaction with the Existing Public Bus Transport Services

Descriptive analysis was performed in order to examine how respondents' perceived satisfaction on observed variable and specific service quality attribute. Travellers were asked to rate in the scale of 1 to 5 on their level of satisfaction with the identified public transport performance indicators. These indicators include service frequency, travel speed, fare affordability, in vehicle staff customer care, in vehicle staff behaviour, staff cleanliness and vehicle cleanliness. Other indicators were security, vehicle overcrowding, seat availability and conformability. The result on average level of satisfaction for these indicators is presented in table 6.

Generally, users of public bus transport were not satisfied on the performance of public buses. The results show that 64.7% of the respondents were dissatisfied with the services offered by

public bus transport and only 2.3% of the respondents were satisfied and none of the respondent was highly satisfied.

Table 6: Average Level of Satisfaction

Satisfaction level	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Highly dissatisfied	10	7.5	7.5
Dissatisfied	86	64.7	72.2
Neutral	34	25.6	97.7
Satisfied	3	2.3	100.0
Total	**133**	**100.0**	

Relationship between Service Performance and Travellers satisfaction

The study examined relationships between service performance and travellers satisfaction by using regression model through assistance of SPSS. R in Table 7 is the linear correlation between the observed and model predicted value of the dependent variable. For our study, R is equal to 0.330 which depicts that there was a weak positive relationship between service performance and travellers satisfaction in the existing public bus transport. Moreover, the adjusted R square imply that only 7.4% of the travellers satisfaction was contributed by the service performance of the existing public bus transport as presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.330(a)	.109	.074	.588

a Predictors: (Constant), Performance of the existing public bus transport

Source: Field Data (2011)

The F test is statistically significant at 95% confidence interval. Table 8, provides evidence that p-value is less than 0.05 and thus a relationship exists between the two.

Table 8: ANOVA (b)

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	5.372	5	1.074	3.111	.011(a)
	Residual	43.861	127	.345		
	Total	**49.233**	**132**			

a Predictors: (Constant), Performance of the existing public bus transport

b Dependent Variable: Average Level of Satisfaction

Source: Field Data (2011)

Conclusion and Implications

The study revealed that public bus transport service performance affects travellers' satisfaction. The findings are in line with the expectations-disconfirmation theory which explains determinants of travellers' satisfaction with the performance of the public bus transport. Also, the finding supports the service quality model which assesses customers' perception of service quality in service and retail business. Furthermore the study has revealed that there is poor relationship between public bus transport crews and their customers. Also, most travellers are forced to opt for public bus transport due to limitations in their income spending. The study

revealed that the poor service offered by public bus transport especially during peak hours was due to high demand of public bus transport services caused by low reliability of public buses in many areas of the city. This supported the demand theory which explains that the level of demand of public bus transport could have an impact on the quality of services to be offered.

Furthermore, the study has shown that the level of service performance of the existing public bus transport is not so much convincing for most users. Based on the findings public bus transport in Dar es Salaam is characterized by longer distances to reach the bus stops, longer time a traveller needs to wait before getting a public bus transport service and in vehicle overcrowding, as a result, many travellers travel while standing and those who are seated feel uncomfortable. Also, the performance of public bus transport in Dar es Salaam is characterized by longer travel time caused by high traffic congestion, especially during the peak hours. Also the study has revealed that a larger percent of travellers are dissatisfied with the level of existing public bus transport services. From these findings, the study recommends the following:

One of the challenges the study found was the issue of reliability of public buses despite the availability of public bus transport in many areas in the city of Dar es Salaam. However, this indicates that public bus transport cannot satisfy the available demand. Thus public bus transport operators need to invest in this sector. That is the number of supply should be increased so as to meet the emerging demand of public bus transport in urban areas.

Also, traffic congestion has become a stumbling block to more public buses operators. Thus policy makers are advised to take more serious attention by seeking more alternatives to overcome traffic congestions such as construction of flyovers and upgrading new roads.

Equally important, inefficiency of the service provided and poor operations reflects unkind treatment of customers by public bus crews. Thus, owners of public bus transport need to provide extra incentives and customer care orientations to their staff in order to encourage and motivate them for better performance.

With the newly expanding city many areas still lack public bus transport services, forcing people to walk on foot for more than a half a kilometre. Thus, in order to tackle the situation policy makers are advised to open new routes to those areas and allow public bus transport services to operate in those areas.

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