



INVESTIGATION OF SELF-HANDICAPPING TENDENCIES OF TEACHER CANDIDATES ACCORDING TO DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES BY CONTROLLING SELF-ESTEEM SCORES

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to analyze self-handicapping tendencies of teacher candidates as to gender, type of accommodation, place of settlement, level of income, satisfaction with the undergraduate program and as to whether the undergraduate program was their ideal or not by controlling self-respect points. The sample of the research consists 4th grade of 280 voluntary selected through random sampling among 1024 students studying in different departments of Aksaray University, Faculty of Education located in Turkey. 94 students (33.6%) were female, 186 (66.4%) were male. Teacher candidates' ages ranged from 20-29. For collection data of students, a scale developed by Rhodewalt and adopted to Turkish by Akın, Abacı ve Akın (2010), and the Self-Handicapping Scale (SHS) developed by Rosenberg and adopted to Turkish by Çuhadaroğlu (1986) the Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) were used in this study. Analysis of the data, analysis of covariance (ANCOVA), Bonferroni test was used to test the source of the difference. The findings obtained from the study show that no significant difference exists in SHS points of teacher candidates corrected according to RSES points as to gender, type of accommodation, settlement they have come from, income level and as to whether the undergraduate program they have studied is their ideal or not. On the other hand, as we examined the means of SHS points corrected according to RSES points, it has been determined that the SHS points of those who were not satisfied with their undergraduate program was higher, but that the effect size of the variable concerning the satisfaction with the undergraduate program on SHS points was small.

Key Words: *self-handicapping, self-esteem, teacher candidates.*

ÖĞRETMEN ADAYLARININ BENLİK SAYGISI PUANLARI KONTROL EDİLEREK KENDİNİ SABOTAJ EĞİLİMLERİNİN ÇEŞİTLİ DEĞİŞKENLERE GÖRE İNCELENMESİ

ÖZET

Bu çalışmanın amacı benlik saygısı puanları kontrol edilerek öğretmen adaylarının kendini sabotaj eğilimleri cinsiyet, barınma şekli, yerleşim yeri, gelir düzeyi, lisans programından memnuniyeti ve lisans

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programının ideali olup olmadığına göre incelemektir. Araştırmanın örnekleme, Türkiye’de Aksaray Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesinin çeşitli bölümlerinde öğrenim gören 1024 öğrenciden seçkisiz örnekleme yoluyla belirlenen 280 gönüllü öğrenciden oluşmaktadır. Öğrencilerin tamamı 4.sınıf öğrencisidir. 94’ü (%33.6) kız, 186’sı (%66.4) erkektir. Öğretmen adaylarının yaşları 20-29 arasında değişmektedir Öğrencilerin Kendini sabotaj düzeylerini belirlemek amacıyla Rhodewalt (1990) tarafından geliştirilen ve Türkçe’ye Akın, Abacı ve Akın (2010) tarafından uyarlanan Kendini Sabotaj Ölçeği (SHS); Benlik saygısını belirlemek amacıyla Rosenberg tarafından geliştirilen ve Çuhadaroğlu (1986) tarafından Türkçe’ye uyarlanan Rosenberg Benlik Saygısı Ölçeği (RSES) ve bağımsız değişkenlerle ilgili bilgi elde etmek amacıyla araştırmacı tarafından geliştirilen Kişisel Bilgi Formu kullanılmıştır. Araştırmada verilerin analizinde Kovaryans Analizi (ANCOVA), farkın kaynağının test edilmesinde Bonferroni Testi kullanılmıştır. Araştırma sonuçlarına göre öğretmen adaylarının RSES puanlarına göre düzeltilmiş SHS puanlarında cinsiyet, barınma şekli, geldikleri yerleşim yeri, gelir düzeyi ve öğrenim gördükleri lisans programının ideali olup olmadığına göre anlamlı bir fark olmadığı bulunmuştur. Bunun yanında RSES puanlarına göre düzeltilmiş SHS puan ortalamaları incelendiğinde lisans programından memnun olmayanların SHS puanlarının daha yüksek olduğu bulunmuş, ancak lisans programından memnuniyet değişkeninin SHS puanları üzerindeki etki büyüklüğünün küçük olduğu görülmüştür. Bulgular doğrultusunda sonuçlar tartışılmış ve önerilerde bulunulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: kendini sabotaj, benlik saygısı, öğretmen adayları

1. Introduction

Self-handicapping has been defined firstly by Jones and Berglas (1978). Jones and Berglas (1978) argued that self-handicapping was related with alleging a pretext against a failure that the individual might experience. When the definition is analyzed, it is explained as follows: “the individual tries to protect his/her self-sufficiency feeling, kindly by finding or producing barriers that reduce the possibility of good performing. If the individual fails, he/she externalizes the source of his/her failure by imputing his/her failure to this barrier. If the same individual displays a good performance, he/she would have proven that he/she has succeeded in spite of negative conditions (the barrier that he/she has created himself/herself). In both cases he/she would get the best (Jones & Berglas, 1978, p. 201)”.

Synder and Smith (1982) emphasize that self-handicapping might become chronic. The individual uses relatively consistent and also chronic barriers that reduce the individual’s performance and cause his/her failure but that are perceived by other people as if they were not arising from his/her inefficacy but from other factors. Arkin and Baumgardner (1985) lay emphasis on the self-protecting aspect in the essence of the self-handicapping concept.

“The individual creates a barrier that reduces his/her performance or looks actively for such a barrier in order to protect his/her self-respect level and remove threats aimed at his/her personality. By doing so, the individual aims at getting a convincing explication that legitimates his/her failure (p. 170).”

Tice (1991) defines the self-handicapping concept as an attitude that the individual performs with the intent of protecting or increasing the eigenvalue feeling when he/she faces a

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threat against his/her personality. Perceiving failure as a circumstance that emerges out of the individual's control and success as a circumstance that can be controlled by the individual supports the personality (Rhodewalt & Vohs, 2005).

The tendency of self-handicapping is shown both by people who have low self-respect and those who have high self-respect. According to many researchers, the power behind self-handicapping is expressed as protecting and increasing self-respect (Arkin & Baumgardner, 1985, Harris & Snyder, 1986, Jones & Berglas, 1978, Snyder & Smith, 1982; McCrea & Hirt, 2001). Zuckerman and Tsai (2005) have assessed the advantages and disadvantages of the concept of self-handicapping and finally determined that although self-handicapping had a self-respect protective function in the short term, it was producing threatening results in the long term. Also McCrea and Hirt (2001) emphasized that the basic factor which motivates self-handicapping was to protect self-respect. While some researches stated that there was no relation between self-respect and self-handicapping (Harris & Snyder, 1986), some researchers suggested that there was a relation between self-respect and self-handicapping (Mello-Goldner & Jackson 2000; Jones & Rhodewalt, 1982; Prapavessis & Grove, 1998; Tice & Baumeister, 1990; Bailis, 2001). While some researchers suggested that people who had low self-respect showed a self-handicapping attitude, some researchers stated that people who have high self-respect showed self-handicapping attitude (Berglas & Jones, 1978; Beck et. al., 2000; Tice & Baumeister, 1990; Jones & Rhodewalt, 1982; Rhodewalt & Davison, 1986; Nurmi et. al., 1995; Back et. al., 2000; Urda & Midgley, 2001; Zuckerman, 1998; Snyder & Higgins 1988; Rhodewalt, Morf, Hazlett & Fairfield, 1991).

There is a complex structure between self-respect and self-handicapping. A person who adopts self-handicapping behavior should have a positive self-concept that he/she would protect. It can be thought that self-handicapping levels of people with low self-respect increase when they face threats related to their personality. Because these people feel themselves less secure compared with people having high self-respect. People with low self-respect would have more recourse to self-handicapping strategies in order to justify their failures as they expect the failure probability more than people with high respect (Baumeister, Tice & Hutton, 1989; Shields, 2007). In contrary to this, Baumeister et. al.(1989) stated that people with high respect were much more interested in self-handicapping attitudes. It is stated the reason why people with high self-respect used self-handicapping strategies was to show that they were successful despite all obstacles, that this situation was a result of their superior abilities and to expose these abilities to other people (Shields, 2007). According to Tice and Baumeister (1990) people with high respect might have tendency of proving that their possible success was arising from their natural abilities by making a slight effort. Also Baumeister (1997) indicated that when people with high self-respect who were not used to fail faced an unsuccessful situation, they were experiencing more destruction compared to people with low self-respect. Rhodewalt et. al. (1991) studied the nature of the relation between self-handicapping and self-respect. They determined that the relation between self-handicapping and self-respect was not high. The advantages and cost of self-handicapping bring along the question whether this kind of tendency can protect self-respect or not. The researches studying the effects of self-handicapping on the personality show that self-handicapping has a balancing function between self-respect and failure, that it increases self-respect after success and that it effects the assessments of people on the abilities of the individual (Abacı & Akın, 2011). Prapavessisa and Grove (2011) analyzed the effect of self-handicapping on the self-respect in a study that they conducted with tennis players and found out that people with low self-respect had a self-handicapping tendency. In the research they conducted with university students, Newman and Wadas (1997) established that those who had undecided self-respect were using self-handicapping

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strategies. In the study they made with 142 university students, Martin and Brawley (2002) concluded that self-handicapping and self-respect were related.

Different conclusions have been reached in researches that studied the relation between self-handicapping and gender. While in some researches it is emphasized that men have much more tendency of self-handicapping than women (Berglas & Jones, 1978; Harris & Synder, 1986; Nidgley & Urdan, 1995; Urdan et. al., 1998), some researches have shown findings quite on the contrary (Sheppard & Arkin, 1989; Strube & Roemmele, 1985; e.g., DeGree & Snyder, 1985; Smith et al., 1982; Smith et al., 1983). While in some researches it has been pointed out that there was no significant difference between men and women in what concerns the frequency of having recourse to self-handicapping strategies (Midgley et. al. 1996), in some researches it has been concluded that men have recourse to self-handicapping strategies more than women (Doebler et. al., 2000; Harris & Synder, 1986; Kimble et. al., 1998; Lucas & Lovaglia, 2005; Midgley et. al., 1996; Urdan et. al., 1998).

Tice (1991) argued that an individual should have a self-consciousness to make self-handicapping. Kimble, Kimble and Croy (1998) stated that self-handicapping started during the sixth grade period.

In Turkey researches have been carried out on self-respect and gender, social support, subjective well-being, self-despair, making team sport, loneliness, fatigue, assertiveness, physical appearance, relations with the opposite sex, attachment, timidity, having an adequate monthly income, number of sibling, birth order, mother and father care, abidance attitudes of university students (Saygın, 2008; Ottekin, 2009; Erşan, Doğan & Doğan, 2009; Maşrabacı, 1994; İnelmen, 1996; Hamarta, 2004; Aker, 2004; Atılğanlık, 2004; Yüksel, 2002; Karahan et. al., 2004; Özkan & Özen, 2007, Turan, 2010). Besides, the rareness of studies in Turkey about the self-handicapping concept draws attention. The first study was carried out by Anlı (2011). Anlı (2011) analyzed the relation between self-handicapping and psychological well-being levels of university students and studied whether there was a significant difference between these two concepts as to gender, perceived income level and parental attitudes. At the end of his study, he determined a negative relation at a significant level between self-handicapping and psychological well-being. Anlı (2011) studied university students' self-handicapping points as to gender and concluded that there were significant differences in favor of men but that there was no significant difference as to the perceived income level and parental attitudes. Second study was carried out by Sahranç (2011). Sahranç (2011) analyzed the relation between self-handicapping and depression, anxiety, and stress levels of university students. The relation between self-handicapping and depression, anxiety, and stress were examined using correlation and structural equation modeling. Sahranç (2011) found that self-handicapping positively related to depression, anxiety, and stress. According to path analysis results, depression, anxiety, and stress were predicted positively by self-handicapping. Apart from this, no other study analyzing self-handicapping and self-respect together has been detected. Consequently, we think that this study will fill a gap in this field. In this research, self-handicapping tendencies of teacher candidates have been studied as to gender, type of accommodation, place of settlement, level of income, satisfaction with the undergraduate program and as to whether the undergraduate program was their ideal or not by controlling self-respect points.

2. Method

Research Model and Participants

The general survey model has been used in this research. The sample of the research consists of 208 voluntary students selected through random sampling among 1024 students

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studying in different departments of Aksaray University, Faculty of Education located in Turkey. All of students are 4th grade students. 94 of those (33.6%) are girls, 186 of those (66.4%) are boys. The ages of teacher candidates range from 20 to 29 (M=21.600, Sd= 1.599).

Instruments

Self-Handicapping Scale (SHS): The scale which is developed by Rhodewalt (1990) and adapted to Turkish by Akın, Abacı & Akın (2010), is a 6-point Likert type assessment instrument. SHS consists of 25 descriptive items that assess a series of self-handicapping strategies. After that the 3rd , 5th , 6th , 10th , 13th , 20th , 22nd and 23rd items taking place in the scale are graded reversely, a total self-handicapping point is obtained by adding the points of all items. The lowest point that could be obtained is 25 and the highest point is 150. High points show that the person concerned has a high tendency of oral and behavioral self-handicapping. The structure validity of the Turkish form of SHS has been studied by Akın, Abacı and Akın (2010) by conducting an exploratory and confirmatory analysis. Factor loadings of 25 items range from .34 to .69. Adaptive index values have been found to be RMSEA= .037, NFI= .98, CFI= .99, IFI= .97, AGFI= .94. In this study, the internal consistency coefficient was found to be .76.

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES): Developed by Rosenberg (1963) and adapted to Turkish by Çuhadaroğlu (1986), the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale has 12 subscales and 63 items. In this study, the Self-Esteem subscale made up of 10 items was used. It is a four-point Likert type scale and consists of Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Agree (3) and Strongly Agree (4) ratings. A higher score received from the scale indicates that the self-esteem of the individual is high. In the test-retest that was done four weeks after, the correlation between the two measurements was found to be $r=.71$ (Çuhadaroğlu, 1986). In this study, the internal consistency coefficient was found to be .67

Data Analysis

In the study, the Covariance Analysis (ANCOVA) was used in the data analysis and the Bonferroni Test was used in testing the source of the difference. The aim of the covariance analysis is to control statistically a variable / variables which has/have a relation with a dependent variable apart from a factor or factors the effect of which had been tested (Büyüköztürk, 2003). In this study, self-respect points ($r=.203$, $p<.01$) that are in relation with self-handicapping have been controlled. The covariance analysis also reduces error variance; equalizes regressions between different groups and might be more beneficial in the cases where the sample size is small (Keskin, 2006: 185). Before the analysis, whether or not data were meeting the basic assumptions of parametric tests has been studied. Whether the data showed a normal distribution has been analyzed in terms of skewness and kurtosis values for all independent variables. The skewness values range from $-.314$ to $.060$ and the kurtosis values range from -1.158 to $.063$. It is argued that the skewness and kurtosis coefficients should ideally range between $+1$ and -1 , but that the values between $+2$ and -2 are also acceptable (Karaatlı 2006: 6). The homogeneity of variances has been analyzed with “Leven’s Test of Equality” and the equality of slopes of regression lines has been studied with “Tests of Between-Subjects Effects”. It has been seen that the intragroup regression coefficients for the variance of undergraduate programs studied by teacher candidates were not equal and this variable has not been included into the analysis. It has been observed that the variances and intragroup regression coefficients were equal for the variables of gender, type of accommodation, settlement where they come from, level of income, satisfaction with the undergraduate programs they had studied and whether the undergraduate program was their ideal or not. Data have been analyzed by using the SPSS-WINDOWS 16.0 package software.

Procedure

The scales have been practiced on teacher candidates studying the 4th degree in different departments of Aksaray University, Faculty of Education during the 2011-2012 academic fall term, one week before their mid-term exams. Practicing the scales lasted about 25-30 minutes. Before the practice, they were informed about the objective of the research as well as the filling out of the scales and their oral consent was taken. Other volunteers were selected from the same license program in the place of teacher candidates who did not want to participate to the study. A total of 25 teacher candidates refused to answer the scales.

3. Results

Correlation among the variables

As we examine Table 1, we observe that there is a positive relation between the SHS points and RSES points of teachers ($r = .203$; $p < .01$).

Table 1: Means and standard deviations for RSES^a, SHS^b and Correlations

	M	SD	RSES	SHS
RSES	27.950	4.794	1.00	
SHS	85.725	12.882	.203*	1.00

* $p < .01$

^aRSES= Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, ^bSHS= Self-Handicapping Scale

Examination of the mean of SHS points corrected according to the RSES points of teacher candidates

The mean of SHS points corrected according to the RSES points of teacher candidates as well as their standard deviations are indicated in Table 2 according to their gender, type of accommodation, the settlement they have come from, their level of income, their satisfaction with the undergraduate program they have studied and whether the undergraduate program they have studied is their ideal or not.

Table 2: Means and standard deviation values of SHS points corrected according to the RSES points

Variables	SHS				
	N	M	SD	Corrected M	
Gender	Female	94	84.361	13.031	84.398
	Male	186	86.414	12.786	86.396
Type of accommodation	With their family	29	82.620	13.164	84.147
	Public dormitory	88	84.818	13.218	84.413
	Private dormitory	27	85.777	14.621	86.017
Settlement they have come from	With friends	136	86.963	12.882	87.066
	Province	155	84.780	13.044	85.059
	District	71	89.267	11.485	88.672
	Town/village	54	83.777	13.479	83.762

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Income levels	0-750	101	83.920	12.239	84.274
	751-1300	107	86.803	12.131	86.588
	1301 and higher	72	86.652	14.633	86.475
Satisfaction with undergraduate programs	Yes	182	84.692	13.913	84.603
	No	43	91.000	7.925	90.478
	Undecided	55	85.018	11.551	85.720
Whether the undergraduate program is their ideal or not	Yes	140	85.828	13.583	85.782
	No	140	85.621	12.189	85.668

As we observe the means of SHS points corrected according to RSES points, we determine that the SHS points of men, those who accommodate together with their friends, those who have spent the big part of their lives in districts and those who are not satisfied with their undergraduate programs are higher. In order to examine whether this difference is significant or not, the ANCOVA analysis has been carried out and its results are shown in Table 3.

Examination ANCOVA results according to demographical variables of SHS points corrected according to RSES points

Table 3: ANCOVA results according to demographical variables of SHS points corrected according to RSES points

	F	P	Sd	Eta-square(η^2)
Gender	1.563	.212	1/277	.006
Type of accommodation	1.236	.297	3/275	.013
Settlement they have come from	2.779	.064	3/275	.020
Income levels	1.020	.362	3/275	.007
Satisfaction with the undergraduate program	3.821	.021*	2/276	.028
Whether the undergraduate program is their ideal or not	.006	.940	1/277	.000

*p<.05

Note. SHS= Self-Handicapping Scale; RSES= Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

When we examine ANCOVA results, we determine that no significant difference exists in SHS points corrected according to RSES points as to gender, type of accommodation, settlement they have come from, income level and as to whether the undergraduate program they have studied is their ideal or not. As to whether teacher candidates are satisfied with the undergraduate program

they have studied, a significant difference has been determined in SHS points corrected according to RSES points ($F(2-276)=3.821$, $p<.05$, $\eta^2=.028$). As we look to the source of the difference with the Bonferroni test, we determine that the SHS points corrected according to RSES points of those who are not satisfied with their undergraduate program ($M=90.478$) is higher than the ones of those who are satisfied with their undergraduate program or those who are undecided.

The Eta square value obtained is interpreted in the direction of the “d” index of Cohen (1988) which is one of the effect size indexes. Cohen (1988; q.n. Erkuş, 2005) has determined certain points of intersection for the interpretation of “d”: The effect sizes were grouped as “small” in $d=.02$, “medium” in $d=.05$ and “big” in $d=.08$. In this case, as we consider the Eta square value obtained ($\eta^2=.028$), we observe that the effect size of the variable concerning the satisfaction with the undergraduate program on SHS points is small.

4. Discussion

The findings obtained from the study show that no significant difference exists in SHS points of teacher candidates corrected according to RSES points as to gender, type of accommodation, settlement they have come from, income level and as to whether the undergraduate program they have studied is their ideal or not. On the other hand, as we examined the means of SHS points corrected according to RSES points, it has been determined that the SHS points of those who were not satisfied with their undergraduate program was higher, but that the effect size of the variable concerning the satisfaction with the undergraduate program on SHS points was small. As we look at the literature, no study examining the level of self-handicapping and self-esteem of individuals according to their satisfaction with the undergraduate program they have studied has been detected within the country or abroad.

In this study, as we controlled the self-esteem points of teacher candidates, it has been determined that there was no significant difference in self-handicapping points as to gender. As we look at the literature in Turkey, a single study examining the self-handicapping and self-esteem has been detected within the country. In the first and only study conducted in Turkey until now by Anlı (2011), the self-handicapping points of university students have been examined as to gender and significant differences in favor of men have been determined. If we handle the subject in the light of the international studies conducted, different results have been obtained in studies examining the relation between gender and self-handicapping. While certain studies showed that men have a higher self-handicapping tendency than women (Berglas & Jones, 1978; Snyder et al., 1985; Harris & Snyder, 1986; Dietrich, 1995; Midgley & Urdan, 1995; Urdan et al., 1998), certain studies (Sheppard & Arkin, 1989; Strube & Roemmele, 1985; e.g., DeGree & Snyder, 1985; Smith et al., 1982; Smith et al., 1983) did not support that result. Also, while certain studies (Midgley et al., 1996) indicated that no significant difference exists between men and women as to the frequency of having recourse to self-handicapping, other studies (Doebler et al., 2000; Harris & Snyder, 1986; Kimble et al., 1998; Lucas & Lovaglia, 2005; Midgley et al., 1996; Urdan et al., 1998) pointed out that the frequency of having recourse to self-handicapping strategies was higher in men as compared with women. In the three studies they conducted, Hirt et al. (2003) found out that women were evaluating more negatively their self-handicapping strategies as compared with men.

In this research, as we controlled the self-esteem points of teacher candidates, we determined that there was no significant difference in the self-handicapping points according to the level of income. As we examine the literature, in Turkey Anlı (2011) found out that self-handicapping was not differing according to the level of income and this result is in parallel with the finding of the study. On the other hand, in the research they made Midgley et al (1996) indicated that a negative relation existed between self-handicapping and the socio-economic level.

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Apart from the variables examined above, when we study the literature on the other variables examined in the framework of this research, no study has been detected in Turkey or abroad having examined the level of self-esteem and self-handicapping of university students as to whether the undergraduate program they studied was their ideal or not, their types of accommodation and the settlement where they have spent the biggest part of their lives.

5. Conclusion

Restrictions and suggestions of the study might be indicated as follows:

As the sample of this research is restricted with the students of Aksaray University, it is difficult to generalize the findings to students present in other educational institutions. Thus, it is possible to conduct the new studies on a bigger student sample studying in different universities and increase the generalizability of the results. Furthermore, it is possible to suggest realizing the study with individuals studying in different educational levels.

In the framework of preventive/protective counseling, students with a high self-handicapping level can be determined among university students and counseling programs might be organized for them individually or in groups. Certain programs aimed at preventing the generation of or reducing self-handicapping might be prepared. For instance, educations on subjects such as productive working habits, positive coping strategies, increasing self-esteem and time management might be given.

In this research, we controlled self-esteem points and studied the self-handicapping tendencies of teacher candidates as to gender, type of accommodation, place of settlement, level of income, satisfaction with the undergraduate program and whether the undergraduate program was their ideal or not.

In the next researches, it might be suggested to conduct studies which examine the relations between self-handicapping and self-esteem with different demographic variables such as the education status of parents, the academic success of the student, the academic suspension behavior of the student, personality traits, number of sibling, birth order.

In conclusion, this research has set forth findings concerning the relations between the self-handicapping and self-esteem points of university students. On that sense, it is believed that the study would fill an important gap in the field of education and consultative psychology.

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