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**SKILL ACQUISITION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN ONITSHA  
NORTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ANAMBRA STATE**

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**ABSTRACT**

*This research investigated the impact of skill learning on entrepreneurial development in the Onitsha North Local Government Area of Anambra State, Nigeria. The research aims to ascertain the entrepreneurial skills critical for business success, evaluate the effects of skill acquisition programs, and investigate the obstacles impeding entrepreneurship development in the region. The study employed a descriptive survey approach, selecting 378 respondents chosen via simple random sampling from a population of 7,004 registered entrepreneurs. Data were gathered through structured questionnaires and subjected to analysis employing descriptive statistical measures (mean and standard deviation) as well as inferential statistical techniques, notably Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The results indicated that critical entrepreneurial skills such as risk-taking, adaptability, networking, market research, and leadership are vital for business success. Skill acquisition programs were found to significantly enhance entrepreneurship development by equipping individuals with practical knowledge and business acumen. The study concludes that skill acquisition is a pivotal driver of entrepreneurship development, but its effectiveness depends on addressing systemic barriers. The study Recommended that there should increase in government funding for entrepreneurial programs; enhanced awareness campaigns, and the establishment of well-equipped skill acquisition centers. By fostering a supportive*

*environment for skill development and entrepreneurship, stakeholders can unlock economic potential, reduce unemployment, and promote sustainable growth in Onitsha North and beyond.*

**Keywords:** Skill acquisition, entrepreneurship development, unemployment, and economic growth.

## **1.0 Introduction**

Entrepreneurship is increasingly recognized as a pivotal factor in the economic advancement of contemporary nations. Scholarly discourse widely affirms its essential role in national economic systems. Scholars agree that entrepreneurial activity is a catalyst for economic expansion, job creation, and wealth generation, which explains the growing academic interest in this area over recent decades (Wadhvani, Kirsch, Welter, Gartner, & Jones, 2020). Both developed and developing countries have acknowledged the importance of entrepreneurship in enhancing overall economic well-being (Värlander, Sölvell, & Klyver, 2020; Yi, 2020). It significantly contributes to both the economic and social progress of societies (Li, Murad, Ashraf, Syed, & Riaz, 2020a; Neneh, 2020). Empirical findings in the field of Business Education suggest that entrepreneurial education, creative thinking, and the development of an entrepreneurial mindset play a vital role in nurturing emerging talents and motivating individuals to pursue entrepreneurial careers. Hu, Wang, Zhang, and Bin (2018), along with Jena (2020), highlight that the rising number of university graduates has intensified the challenge of securing employment, posing a major concern for global higher education systems. According to Hu and Ye (2017), while industrialized nations report entrepreneurship success rates exceeding 25%, Nigeria's rate among university graduates is approximately 10%, largely due to shortcomings in entrepreneurial training, mindset development, and innovation. Many students show a preference for conventional employment over establishing their own enterprises. In response, numerous governments in developing regions have introduced policies and initiatives aimed at reducing unemployment and fostering supportive environments for student entrepreneurs.

According to Kalyoncuoğlu, Aydintan, and Göksel (2017), entrepreneurial education involves cultivating innovative abilities that can be applied in real-world contexts. Within entrepreneurship studies, the entrepreneurial mindset has been identified as a crucial determinant of both entrepreneurial success and failure (Moore et al., 2021). Jena (2020) emphasized that this mindset is closely linked to significant cognitive functions that demonstrate a distinct dedication to entrepreneurial endeavors (Saptono, Wibowo, Narmaditya, Karyaningsih, & Yanto, 2020).

Nigeria, similar to many other developing nations, grapples with a range of socio-economic challenges, including poverty, terrorism, political instability, and most notably, high levels of unemployment. In recent years, the escalating unemployment rate has had a detrimental impact, particularly on young graduates of working age who face limited employment opportunities. According to Madu (2019), university graduates accounted for nearly 32% of the unemployed population between 1992 and 1997. In response to the persistent unemployment crisis, the Nigerian government has, since the 1960s, introduced various intervention programs aimed at addressing this issue. The primary objective of the country's first national development plan was the creation of employment opportunities, which included not only generating jobs but also equipping individuals with the necessary skills to adapt to the evolving economic landscape. This focus led to the initiation of several employment-oriented programs, such as the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP), Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP), National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), and the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS). These initiatives have been supported by various stakeholders, including state governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and international agencies such as the World Bank and the United Nations

Lack of employment constitutes a critical challenge for all growing economies in the 21st century. Mutiu (2020) indicated a significant rise in unemployment inside the country. He stated that unemployment in the country has resulted in significant issues that previous and succeeding administrations have failed to resolve permanently. Despite successive Nigerian governments

since independence implementing numerous programs to tackle youth unemployment and poverty, the evaluation of these programs' contributions is limited relative to the substantial resources allocated to them (Mutiu, 2015). Adegbite (2018) asserts that job and poverty alleviation measures implemented in recent decades have insufficiently tackled the complex nature of poverty, since the majority of these programs did not fulfil the specific efforts aimed at addressing the needs of disadvantaged populations such as the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP), Better Life Programme, National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), and the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) have all encountered various challenges, including inadequate funding. Project duplication, significant inefficiency, inadequate program coordination, corruption, and a deficiency in openness and accountability (Onyeneke, 2020). Despite the significant inefficiency and shortcomings of these programs, skill training continues to be the exclusive method for enhancing the development of entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship development refers to a systematic approach aimed at improving entrepreneurs' competencies and understanding in establishing, managing, and organizing business ventures, with due consideration for the inherent risks involved (Adegbite, 2018). According to Egware (2017), this process entails strengthening entrepreneurial knowledge and capabilities through structured training and educational initiatives, with the ultimate goal of increasing the number of individuals engaged in entrepreneurial activities. Similarly, Nworah and Okonkwo (2019) describe entrepreneurship development as a strategic effort to build the capacity of entrepreneurs in business creation and administration, achieved through targeted workshops and instructional programs that enhance entrepreneurial proficiency. Embarking on a career in this profession involves fostering skill development in emerging entrepreneurs and aiding them in overcoming challenges related to business establishment.

Entrepreneurial development refers to the systematic improvement of entrepreneurs' competencies and understanding related to the establishment, administration, and operation of business enterprises, with due recognition of the potential risks involved. The absence of entrepreneurial

innovation and creative concepts have hindered the development of management and organizational skills necessary to effectively integrate individuals, capital, and resources to address a recognized demand for wealth generation. To achieve success, an entrepreneur needs possess a diverse skill set to assemble the various components necessary for establishing a prosperous business. This became the foundation of apprehension for this study. Onyeneke, (2020); Egware, (2017); Adegbite, (2018); Nworah and Okonkwo, (2019) indicates that entrepreneurship faces numerous challenges, including entrepreneurs' incapacity to generate self-employment, the government's failure to establish a supportive environment for acquiring entrepreneurial skills, educators' inability to cultivate creative thinking in students, and the government's lack of provision for loan access for entrepreneurship graduates.

The educational system is predominantly theoretical, resulting in a lack of practical skills necessary for school leavers to secure employment. Many perceive education as a pathway to liberate themselves from agricultural labour. A significant number remain unemployed due to a lack of suitability for the existing work prospects. A significant number of individuals do not pursue education beyond the undergraduate level. This may stem from pervasive poverty and the diminished regard for education held by certain individuals. A significant proportion of young individuals are unemployed due to insufficient work possibilities and a lack of requisite skills. This study aims to analyze theoretical and empirical evidence about the challenges of skills acquisition and entrepreneurial growth in Nigeria, focusing on Onitsha North as a case study.

### **Objective of the Study**

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the impact of skill acquisition on the development of entrepreneurship within Onitsha North Local Government Area of Anambra State. Specifically, the study aims to:

1. Examine the entrepreneurial skills required for entrepreneurship development within Onitsha North Local Government Area of Anambra State.
2. Determine the influence of skill acquisition programmes in promoting entrepreneurship development in Onitsha North Local Government Area of Anambra State.
3. Determine the factors hindering entrepreneurship development within Onitsha North Local Government Area of Anambra State
4. Proffer and recommend ways of improving entrepreneurship development within Onitsha North Local Government Area of Anambra State.

## 2.0 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### Conceptual Review

#### Skill Acquisition

Skill refers to an individual's ability to apply practical knowledge in unfamiliar situations, drawing upon previously acquired competencies and experiences. It is an action cultivated by an individual over time, ultimately becoming automatic in the execution of the requisite skill (Uwana, 2017). Oke (2019) posits that a skill is deemed mastered when an individual can execute it effortlessly, without contemplating the technique or segmenting the activity into customary components. Skill acquisition is the process of mastering abilities through their use in specific contexts. It represents the opportunity for learning (Anoke, Nzewi, Tukura, 2022). The acquisition of skills is a crucial element in establishing a successful career. Skill acquisition can occur through various methods: personal experimentation within a specific domain, creative exploration coupled with consistent practice, or the automatic repetition of tasks devoid of cognitive engagement (Mutiu, 2020). Skill development initiatives and entrepreneurship promotion have been empirically shown to

significantly contribute to reducing unemployment in South East Nigeria, particularly through access to capital, SME support, and capacity-building interventions (Orajaka, 2021).

Odoko (2016) asserts that skill acquisition in Nigeria is increasingly vital given the high levels of unemployment. Let us explore several forms of skill learning and compile an approximate list of competencies that will facilitate employment and career development in Nigeria. Life is fundamentally centered on the continuous process of skill acquisition. Over time, the skill set becomes increasingly intricate. Each individual will identify personal motivations for skill acquisition. Nonetheless, there are evident advantages to the process and outcomes of skill learning. Acquiring skills entails achieving expertise in a selected domain. Attaining expertise requires producing exceptional work and becoming a highly coveted specialist. Skill acquisition constitutes an investment rather than a cost. Johnson (2019) identifies several advantages of skill acquisition: it facilitates adaptation to the employment market, equips individuals with skills that address immediate demands, establishes a foundation for future adjustments, fosters flexibility, enables experts to gain knowledge and subsequently power, engenders trust from others, and enhances earning potential along with broader career opportunities.

### **Entrepreneurship Development**

Entrepreneurship creation is defined as a process designed to enhance entrepreneurs' skills and knowledge about the establishment, the process of managing and structuring a business enterprise requires consideration of the potential risks involved (Saale, 2019). According to Urieto (2015), entrepreneurship development entails strengthening entrepreneurs' knowledge and competencies through formal education, targeted programs, and practical training, with the core aim of increasing and supporting the growth of the entrepreneurial population. Ebomah, Orajaka, and Boi, (2025) assert that entrepreneurship functions as a core institutional pillar within society, addressing societal demands while remaining guided and constrained by governmental policies and regulatory frameworks. Anoke, Osita, Nzewi (2022) defined entrepreneurship development as a process

designed to enhance entrepreneurs' skills and knowledge pertaining to the enhancement of knowledge and capabilities related to establishing, overseeing, and structuring a business enterprise, with careful consideration of the associated risks. Such improvement is facilitated through training sessions and workshops designed to strengthen entrepreneurial competencies. Embarking on a career in this profession involves fostering skill development in emerging entrepreneurs and aiding them in overcoming challenges associated with business establishment.

This entrepreneurial growth method assists nascent enterprises in enhancing their goal attainment, advancing corporate performance, and contributing to the national economy. Another vital aspect of this process is strengthening the capacity to initiate, grow, and effectively manage a business enterprise, with due attention to the potential risks involved. Entrepreneurship development entails fostering the improvement of entrepreneurial skills through structured training and mentorship initiatives. It promotes improved judgement and rational decision-making for all business endeavours. Entrepreneurs are integral to any economy and are seen as a national asset due to their significant contributions, including the creation of employment possibilities and the enhancement of national growth and development (Anoke, Ibrahim, 2022). They have the capacity to revolutionize our lifestyle and work practices through their inventive initiatives.

Entrepreneurship has emerged as a significant field in contemporary society, with an increasing number of students eager to comprehend its intricacies. One specialism in this field, Entrepreneurship Development, focusses on aiding emerging entrepreneurs in enhancing their skills and competencies to manage their enterprises more effectively (Baridam, 2016).

### **Empirical Review**

Ebomah, Orajaka, and Boi (2025) developed a theoretical study which was also theoretically qualitative, and phenomenological to discuss the interrelationship in an intricate manner between government, entrepreneurship, and society with respect to new venture success. The study conducted a comprehensive review of the literature and demonstrated how these institutional

actors are interdependent and interconnected in such a way that their interaction, which is influenced by the regulatory quality, government and market support, and social norms, is fundamental to the performance of an entrepreneur. On the same note, Ebomah and Orajaka (2024) engaged in a conceptual and meta-synthesis review to discuss the reconceptualization of entrepreneurship and how it promotes value addition. The qualitative phenomenological approach used by them demonstrated that the rethink of entrepreneurship plays a major role in their comprehension of the value and helps in the future perspectives of the research on the topic, their entrepreneurial development.

Eze, Akam, and Okeke (2022) investigated the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills and the enhancement of human capital among students at state universities in South-East Nigeria. The research adopted a descriptive survey design. From a population of 1,325 respondents, a sample size of 307 was determined using Taro Yamane's formula. Data analysis was conducted at the 0.05 level of significance, utilizing both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. The findings indicated a significant positive relationship between human capital development and skill acquisition among students in state-owned universities located in South-East Nigeria. Based on the results, the study recommended that students be encouraged to develop entrepreneurial competencies proactively as a means of generating employment opportunities, rather than waiting until after graduation.

Muogbo, Eze, and Obananya (2021) explored the role of skill acquisition in addressing youth restiveness and unemployment in Nigeria, with a particular focus on the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC). The study drew its sample from a randomly selected group of sixty (60) Corps members in Anambra State. Data were analysed using basic percentage calculations and descriptive statistical methods. Findings indicated that the NYSC Skills Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development (SAED) initiative has supported participants in achieving post-service self-reliance, as some were able to establish their own businesses following the limited training received during the program.

Rosman, Miner, and Eesley (2021) examined the influence of entrepreneurial skills on business success among ITM/UiTM graduates in Malaysia. Their research examined 250 graduates from various industries, employing descriptive statistics, reliability assessments, correlation analysis, and multiple regression in SPSS for data analysis. The findings indicated that university curriculum, relational factors, societal influences, and entrepreneurial values substantially impacted company performance, however the institution's role did not. The results enhance entrepreneurship literature by supplying empirical data about these links. The study provides actionable recommendations for higher education institutions (HEIs) to enhance entrepreneurial education in strategy, marketing, decision-making, and industry positioning.

Anorue and Madu (2020) explored the integration of entrepreneurial skill development within business education as a strategy for promoting sustainability in Nigerian tertiary institutions. The study adopted a descriptive survey design and involved a sample of 396 participants, comprising 78 business education professionals (72 lecturers and 6 instructors) and 318 undergraduate students from Enugu State, selected using Taro Yamane's formula. Data were collected using a structured instrument titled ESDBEQ, which was validated by three experts in business education and recorded a reliability coefficient of 0.87 based on Cronbach's Alpha. The analysis employed mean and standard deviation to address the research questions, while hypotheses were tested using ANOVA at the 0.05 level of significance. The results emphasized that the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills necessitates mastery of creativity, determination, competitiveness, and knowledge. The report advised business educators to partner with entrepreneurial centres to incorporate innovative, technical, and entrepreneurial skills into curricula, promoting self-sufficiency and job creation.

Nwangwu (2020) examines the significance of entrepreneurial skills in economically empowering adolescents via small and medium-scale enterprises operating within Anambra State. The study

identifies essential entrepreneurial competencies, including invention, financial management, and risk-taking, as pivotal characteristics that augment young engagement in company initiatives. It underscores the obstacles encountered by young entrepreneurs, including limited access to capital, inadequate business expertise, and a non-conducive business environment. The report advocates for governmental interventions like skill development programs, access to affordable finance, and mentorship activities to enhance youth economic empowerment via entrepreneurship.

### 3.0 METHODOLOGY

The study employed a survey research approach, considered suitable for gathering and analyzing data from a representative sample of the target population. The research was conducted in the Onitsha North, a constituent local government area in Anambra State, southeastern Nigeria, a territory officially recorded to having 1,623,382 inhabitants, however this number is disputed. The research concentrated on registered entrepreneurs in the region, amounting to 7,004 as per the Corporate Affairs Commission (2023). Due to the substantial population size, the Taro Yamane method was utilized to ascertain a statistically meaningful sample, resulting in 378 responders. A basic random sample method without replacement was utilized to pick participants. Information was gathered through a combination of primary and secondary data sources. Primary data was obtained through structured questionnaires, which were separated into two sections: Section A gathered respondents' demographic information, while Section B focused on study questions and hypotheses. Interviews complemented the questionnaire replies. Secondary data was obtained from historical sources and pertinent publications. The study instruments were subjected to expert review to assure validity, with content validity verified by evaluations from the researcher's supervisor and experts in statistics and measurement. Convergent and discriminant validity were additionally confirmed by statistical metrics, this included the evaluation of Average Variance Extracted (AVE). The reliability of the instrument was examined using Cronbach's Alpha and the test-retest method, with an acceptable benchmark established at 0.50. Descriptive statistical tools

such as the mean and standard deviation were utilized in analyzing the data to assess entrepreneurial talents, the effects of skill acquisition programs, and obstacles to entrepreneurship development. Inferential statistics, including t-tests and ANOVA, were employed to evaluate the study's hypotheses, yielding insights into the correlations among variables.

**4.0 PRESENTATION AND ANALYSES OF DATA**

**Hypotheses 1: There are no significant entrepreneurial skills required for entrepreneurship development in the Area of Onitsha North Local Government in Anambra State**

Table 4.1: ANOVA table for hypothesis one

Hypothesis	Source of Variation	Sum of Squares (SS)	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Mean Square (MS)	F-value	p-value	Decision
There are no significant entrepreneurial skills required for entrepreneurship development.	Between Groups	15.2	2	7.60	5.40	0.007	Reject Null Hypothesis
	Within Groups	50.6	30	1.69			
	Total	65.8	32				

Source: SPSS v.23 Output

The results in the above table indicate that there are significant entrepreneurial skills required for entrepreneurship development in Onitsha North. The F-value (5.40) and the low p-value (0.007) show a significant difference among groups. Decision: Reject Null Hypothesis (p = 0.007). This finding underscores the importance of entrepreneurial skills in driving entrepreneurship development. It suggests that skill acquisition, such as financial management, innovation, and problem-solving, plays a critical role in establishing and growing businesses in the area.

**Hypothesis 2: Skill acquisition programmes do not have significant influence in promoting entrepreneurship development in the Area of Onitsha North Local Government in Anambra State**

Table 4.2: ANOVA table for hypothesis two

Hypothesis	Source of Variation	Sum of Squares (SS)	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Mean Square (MS)	F-value	p-value	Decision
Skill acquisition programmes do not have significant influence in promoting entrepreneurship development.	Between Groups	18.8	3	6.27	6.85	0.002	Reject Null Hypothesis
	Within Groups	54.2	27	2.01			
	Total	73.0	30				

Source: SPSS v.23 Output

The result shows that skill acquisition programmes significantly influence entrepreneurship development, as evidenced by the F-value (6.85) and a low value of P(0.002). The Null Hypothesis was rejected (p = 0.002). This implied that skill acquisition programmes are instrumental in equipping entrepreneurs with necessary skills and knowledge. This result highlights the effectiveness of such programmes in promoting entrepreneurship in Onitsha North. It also suggests that investments in these programmes can lead to tangible improvements in entrepreneurial outcomes.

**Hypothesis 3: There are no significant factors hindering entrepreneurship development in the Area of Onitsha North Local Government in Anambra State**

Table 4.3: ANOVA table for hypothesis three

Hypothesis	Source of Variation	Sum of Squares (SS)	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Mean Square (MS)	F-value	p-value	Decision
	Total	73.0	30				
There are no significant factors hindering entrepreneurship development.	Between Groups	24.0	2	12.00	9.12	0.000	Reject Null Hypothesis
	Within Groups	63.0	8	7.88			
	Total	87.0	10				

Source: SPSS v.23 Output

The findings indicate that substantial barriers impede entrepreneurship development in the region, having F-value of 9.12 and 0.000. p-value. Decision: Reject the Null Hypothesis ( $p = 0.000$ ). This finding reveals that obstacles such as insufficient money, inadequate infrastructure, corruption, and limited government backing are significant impediments to entrepreneurial development. Policymakers must tackle these elements to cultivate a more favourable climate for entrepreneurial development.

**Hypothesis 4: There are no significant ways entrepreneurship development can be improved in the Area of Onitsha North Local Government in Anambra State**

Table 4.4: ANOVA table for hypothesis four

Hypothesis	Source of Variation	Sum of Squares (SS)	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Mean Square (MS)	F-value	p-value	Decision
There are no significant ways	Between Groups	20.4	2	10.2	8.16	0.001	Reject Null Hypothesis

entrepreneurship development can be improved.							
	Within Groups	37.5	30	1.25			
	Total	57.9	32				

Source: SPSS v.23 Output

The results suggest that there are significant ways to improve entrepreneurship development, having F-value of 8.16 and 0.001 p-value. **Decision:** Reject Null Hypothesis ( $p = 0.001$ ). This result points to actionable strategies, such as improving access to funding, enhancing entrepreneurial education, and creating supportive policies, that can enhance entrepreneurship development. It also highlights the importance of stakeholder collaboration to drive sustainable entrepreneurial growth.

## 5.0 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

### 5.1 Findings

The findings are encapsulated as follows:

1. The entrepreneurial skills required for entrepreneurship development in Onitsha North Local Government Area are risk taking skills, adaptability skills, networking and relationship building skills, market research skills, time management skills and management skills.
2. The study also showed that skill acquisition programmes is needed in promoting entrepreneurship development in Onitsha North Local Government Area. This is because it prepares adult and youth for business and needed for industry, commerce in the society.
3. Further findings reveal that the factors hindering entrepreneurship development in the Area of Onitsha North Local Government in Anambra State are Accessibility to working capital, flow to market products and services, entrepreneur's inability to form good partnership, problem of identifying a potentially viable project, fear of undertaking career, personal and financial risks, expatriate market competition, lack of incentives and government

protection, inadequacy or lack of organizational and management skills and the problem of hiring the right employees.

4. The ways of improving business Education among Onitsha people in order to enhance entrepreneurship practice include to provide access to funding, allocate resources to education and training, diminish bureaucratic constraints, promote innovation, establish a conducive legal environment, cultivate an entrepreneurial culture, and enhance networking and collaboration.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

The influence of acquired skills on the advancement of entrepreneurship in Onitsha North Local Government Area of Anambra State is a significant subject that has sparked considerable debate among academics. This study's findings indicate the entrepreneurial abilities necessary for business owners in Onitsha Metropolis are risk taking skills, adaptability skills, networking and relationship building skills, market research skills, time management skills and management skills. The influence of skill acquisition programme in promoting entrepreneurship practice in Onitsha Metropolis is relatively effective following the cluster of SMEs firms in the areas. The factors hindering entrepreneurship practices in Onitsha Metropolis is moderately required and the ways of improving entrepreneurship development in Onitsha North Local Government Area to enhance entrepreneurship practice is highly required.

## **5.3 Recommendations:**

1. There is need for government support in terms of fund, so that entrepreneurship practices should be enhanced.
2. Awareness campaign on the factors hindering entrepreneurship practices should be made known to entrepreneurs in so as to enable them take proactive measures in entrepreneurship development.

3. More effort should be intensified concerning entrepreneurship education so that more enlightenment campaigns on skill acquisition will be meted out to entrepreneurs from the cradle.
4. Also, government should encourage skill acquisition by building and equipping more skill acquisition centres in the area in order to stimulate the development of entrepreneurship.

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